

# The Perfections

## Leading to Enlightenment

*by Sujin Boriharnwanaket*

Translated by Nina van Gorkom

2007 First Edition

ZOLAG • London

First edition published in 2007 by

**Zolag**

32 Woodnook Road

Streatham

London

SW16 6TZ

[www.zolag.co.uk](http://www.zolag.co.uk)

ISBN 1 897633 23 8

Copyright © Sujin Boriharnwanaket

All rights reserved

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

*A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library.*

Printed in the UK and USA by

Lightningsource.

Cover design Sarah Bates

## Contents

<b>Preface</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<i>The Ten Perfections in Daily Life</i> .....	7
Characteristic, Function, Manifestation and Proximate Cause of the Perfections:.....	9
<b>Chapter 1</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<i>The Perfection of Generosity</i> .....	13
<b>Chapter 2</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<i>The Perfection of Morality</i> .....	29
<b>Chapter 3</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<i>The Perfection of Renunciation</i> .....	41
<b>Chapter 4</b> .....	<b>51</b>
<i>The Perfection of Wisdom</i> .....	51
<b>Chapter 5</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<i>The Perfection of Energy</i> .....	71
<b>Chapter 6</b> .....	<b>91</b>
<i>The Perfection of Patience</i> .....	91
<b>Chapter 7</b> .....	<b>125</b>
<i>The Perfection of Truthfulness</i> .....	125
<b>Chapter 8</b> .....	<b>149</b>
<i>The Perfection of Determination</i> .....	149
<b>Chapter 9</b> .....	<b>165</b>
<i>The Perfection of Loving-kindness</i> .....	165
<b>Chapter 10</b> .....	<b>175</b>
<i>The Perfection of Equanimity</i> .....	175
<b>Epilogue</b> .....	<b>187</b>
<i>The Defilements of the Perfections</i> .....	187
<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>189</b>



# **Preface**

Acharn Sujin's book on the Perfections which I translated from Thai, can be of great assistance to understand the significance of the perfections in our daily life as supporting conditions leading to enlightenment. The Buddha taught us satipaṭṭhāna, the development of right understanding of nāma and rūpa in daily life. However, we are often forgetful of the nāma and rūpa which present themselves and our understanding of them is still weak. We need to develop all the perfections along with satipaṭṭhāna so that eventually enlightenment can be realized.

The quotations from the "Basket of Conduct", the Cariyāpiṭaka, from its Commentary and from other texts which we find in this book are most impressive. We can be inspired by the stories of the past lives of the Buddha, when he, as a Bodhisatta, developed all the perfections with utmost endeavour and courage. We can be reminded to be patient, not to be discouraged about the length of time that is needed to develop right understanding and all the perfections.

I am most grateful to Acharn Sujin for helping us with this book carefully to consider the characteristic of each of the perfections and to verify for ourselves which of the ten perfections is still deficient. It is beneficial to be reminded that none of the ten perfections should be neglected and that we should develop them time and again in our lives, whenever the occasion arises.

The text of this book consists of transcriptions of oral lectures given by Acharn Sujin at different occasions. The footnotes are mine. In my translation I have tried to reflect as faithfully as possible the spoken words of Acharn, as they come straight from her heart.

I wish to acknowledge my gratefulness to the Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi who kindly gave permission to quote from his translation of part of the Commentary to the "Basket of Conduct", which is included in his book "The All-embracing Net of Views", The Brahmajāla Sutta and its commentaries, B.P.S. Kandy, Sri Lanka.

I also wish to offer my thanks and appreciation to Kom Tukovinit who gave me great assistance whenever I came across difficult passages in the Thai text. I am grateful to Alan Weller who has made the publication of this book possible.

May this book inspire us to develop all ten perfections with perseverance!  
Nina van Gorkom.

## 6 - *The Perfections*

## **Introduction**

### *The Ten Perfections in Daily Life*

The ten perfections, pāramīs, are most important as conditions for the complete eradication of defilements. We should develop every kind of kusala for paññā to arise which can eradicate all defilements, stage by stage. Kusala is not always a perfection, and, thus, it is necessary to understand correctly when kusala is a perfection and when it is not. Since the ten perfections are essential for the eradication of defilements we should study them, understand their significance and further develop them.

The ten perfections are the following:

generosity, dāna,  
morality, sīla,  
renunciation, nekkhamma,  
wisdom, paññā,  
energy, viriya  
patience, khanti  
truthfulness, sacca,  
determination, aditṭhāna,  
loving-kindness, mettā,  
equanimity, upekkhā.

It is beneficial carefully to study the ten perfections so that we can consider and investigate for ourselves which perfections have not been sufficiently accumulated. We should develop all of them and in this way they can be conditions for the realization of the four noble Truths. If someone's goal is the arising of sati that is aware of the characteristics of realities as they naturally appear in daily life, but if he does not take into

## 8 - The Perfections

consideration the development of the perfections, he will notice that time and again he is overcome by akusala kamma. There are more conditions for the arising of akusala kamma than for the arising of kusala kamma.

We cannot know for how long in the future each one of us will have to develop and accumulate the ten perfections. However, during the lifespan that we can do so, we should develop each of the perfections as much as we are able to. The ten perfections have lobha, attachment, as their opposite and, therefore, we should not forget that we should develop them not because we expect a result of kusala, but because we see the danger of each kind of akusala. We should not develop the perfections because we wish for a result to materialize within the cycle of birth and death, but because our aim is the eradication of defilements and eventually to reach the end of the cycle of birth and death. The end of the cycle can be attained when all defilements have been eradicated completely. So long as we have defilements there is no end to the cycle of birth and death. Thus, one should not develop the perfections in the expectation of a result of kusala in the cycle of birth and death.

Therefore, if a person sees the disadvantage of avarice, he develops generosity, *dāna*. If someone sees the disadvantage of the transgression of morality, *sīla*, he observes *sīla*. He sees that by heedlessness as to action and speech and by the committing of evil deeds and speech, he will come to harm. One may not realize that even speech that was carelessly uttered can harm oneself as well as other people. Therefore, if a person sees the danger of the transgression of moral conduct, he will observe morality and will be evermore heedful as to action and speech. If someone sees the disadvantages of all sense pleasures including those connected with married life, he will be inclined to renunciation, *nekkhamma*. If a person realizes the danger of ignorance and doubt, he will be inclined to the study of the Dhamma so that he will know and understand realities as they are, and this is the development of the perfection of wisdom, *paññā*. If someone sees the disadvantage of laziness, he will be inclined to energy, *virīya*. If a person sees the disadvantage of impatience, he will develop patience, *khanti*. If someone sees the disadvantage of insincerity in action and speech, he will be inclined to truthfulness, *sacca*. If someone sees the disadvantage of indecisiveness, he will be inclined to determination, *adiṭṭhāna*. If a person sees the danger of vengefulness, he will be inclined to loving-kindness, *mettā*. If a person sees the disadvantage of the worldly conditions, such as gain and loss, praise and blame, he will be inclined to equanimity, *upekkhā*. All these qualities are actually the ten perfections



which should gradually be accumulated and developed.<sup>1</sup>

*Characteristic, Function, Manifestation and Proximate Cause of the Perfections:*

We read in the Paramatthadīpanī, the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” Cariyāpiṭaka Khuddhaka Nikāya, about the characteristics of the ten perfections.<sup>2</sup>

1. “Giving (dāna) has the characteristic of relinquishing; its function is to dispel greed for things that can be given away; its manifestation is non-attachment, or the achievement of prosperity and a favourable state of existence; an object that can be relinquished is its proximate cause.
2. Virtue (sīla) has the characteristic of composing (sīlana, observing); coordinating (samādhāna) and establishing (patiṭṭhana) are also mentioned as its characteristic. Its function is to dispel moral depravity, or its function is blameless conduct; its manifestation is moral purity; shame and moral dread are its proximate cause.
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma) has the characteristic of departing from sense pleasures and existence; its function is to verify the unsatisfactoriness they involve; its manifestation is the withdrawal from them; a sense of spiritual urgency (saṁvega) is its proximate cause.
4. Wisdom (paññā) has the characteristic of penetrating the real specific nature (of dhammas), or the characteristic of sure penetration, like the penetration of an arrow shot by a skilful

---

1 The Jātakas, the ‘Birth Stories’, deal with all the excellent qualities the Buddha developed during his former lives, although not exclusively with the ten perfections. The “Basket of Conduct”, the Cariyāpiṭaka, Khuddhaka Nikāya (Minor Anthologies III), describes the perfections and relates how they were developed. The Commentary to this work, written by Dhammapāla in the sixth century, explains them more systematically and in detail. They are also described in an abridged version in the sub commentary (tika) to the “Brahmajāla Sutta”, of the “Middle Length Sayings”(I, no. 1). The ten perfections are also mentioned in the “Chronicle of Buddhas”, Buddhavaṃsa (Minor Anthologies III).

2 For my quotations from the Commentary to the Basket of Conduct and the definitions and descriptions of the perfections, contained in the last part, the Miscellaneous Sayings, Pakiṇṇaka Kathā, I am using the translation of this part of the Commentary by Ven. Bodhi. This translation is included in “The All-embracing Net of Views”, The Brahmajāla Sutta and its commentaries, B.P.S. Kandy, Sri Lanka.

## 10 - The Perfections

archer; its function is to illuminate the objective field, like a lamp; its manifestation is non-confusion, like a guide in a forest; concentration or the four (noble) truths, is its proximate cause<sup>1</sup>.

5. Energy has the characteristic of striving; its function is to fortify; its manifestation is indefatigably; an occasion for the arousing of energy, or a sense of spiritual urgency, is its proximate cause.
6. Patience has the characteristic of acceptance; its function is to endure the desirable and undesirable; its manifestation is tolerance or non-opposition; seeing things as they really are is its proximate cause.
7. Truthfulness has the characteristic of non-deceptiveness in speech; its function is to verify in accordance with fact; its manifestation is excellence; honesty is its proximate cause.
8. Determination has the characteristic of determining upon the requisites of enlightenment<sup>2</sup>; its function is to overcome their opposites; its manifestation is unshakeableness in that task; the requisites of enlightenment are its proximate cause.
9. Loving-kindness has the characteristic of promoting the welfare (of living beings); its function is to provide for their welfare, or its function is to remove resentment; its manifestation is kindness; seeing the agreeable side of beings is its proximate cause.
10. Equanimity has the characteristic of promoting the aspect of neutrality<sup>3</sup>; its function is to see things impartially; its manifestation is the subsiding of attraction and repulsion; reflection upon the fact that all beings inherit the results of their own kamma is its proximate cause.”

Apart from these definitions, many other passages in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”, *Cariyāpiṭaka*, deal in great detail with the perfections. To what extent such details should be studied depends on the ability of each individual to see their value and to investigate realities. Everybody would like to fulfil all ten perfections, but in order to do so, one should very gradually develop and accumulate them.

---

1 Concentration of the eightfold Path performs its function while it accompanies the wisdom of the eightfold Path. The four noble Truths are the object of *paññā*.

2 Being resolute as to the requisites of enlightenment, and these are the ten perfections.

3 Neutrality towards beings.

Before we listened to the Dhamma, akusala citta was likely to arise often, and we did not understand at all how to develop the eightfold Path. When someone has listened to the Dhamma, he acquires understanding of the development of paññā and of the eightfold Path. However, when people have gained already some degree of understanding, they can notice that sammā-sati, right mindfulness, very seldom in a day arises and is aware of the characteristics of realities. Therefore, it is necessary truly to know oneself and to find out the reason why right mindfulness arises very seldom.

It may be that someone has understood the right way of the development of paññā that can eradicate the wrong view of self and realize the four noble Truths. However, what is the reason that right mindfulness does not develop in accordance with one's understanding of the Path? The reason is that everybody has defilements, and this can be compared to suffering from illness. We are like a sick person who does not know how to recover and gain strength. We see that the way we have to travel is extremely far, but when our body is not healthy and strong we cannot travel all the way through and reach our destination. The eightfold Path is the long way we have to travel in order to reach our destination, that is, the realization of the four noble Truths. If we do not examine and know ourselves, we are likely to be a person who knows the right Path but who cannot go along it. We are like someone who does not know the way to gain strength and recover from his ailments. Therefore, listening to the Dhamma and considering it so that we gain understanding, can be compared to the situation of a person who looks for the right medicine to cure his illness. Someone who does not listen to the Dhamma and does not even know that he is sick, will not look for medicine to cure his illness. As soon as he finds the Dhamma and has right understanding of it, he is like a person who has found the right medicine that cures his illness so that he has sufficient strength to travel a long way. The dhammas that make the citta healthy and strong so that one can walk the eightfold Path all the way through are the ten perfections.

We should carefully consider the perfections so that we have correct understanding of them, otherwise we shall not be able to develop them. We may listen to the Dhamma every day, but we should know and consider why we listen: we should listen with the firm determination and intention to have right understanding of the Dhamma so that we can apply it, now and during each life to come. We should know the right purpose of listening: the development of paññā that can eradicate defilements. In this way the perfections can begin to develop while we listen.

## *12 - The Perfections*

When we listen, the perfection of determination can develop. We should know the meaning of the perfection of determination; without mental strength one cannot fulfil this perfection. Some people who perform kusala, such as generosity, express their determination by prayer, but they do not know the meaning of determination. When one has the firm, unshakeable determination to reach the goal, the eradication of akusala, determination is a perfection, and this is an essential condition for the development of paññā.

If we do not study the perfections, we may continue just to listen without knowing the right purpose of it, and because of this we surely shall not realize the four noble Truths. We should consider whether the perfections begin to develop while we listen to the Dhamma. Whenever we have the firm determination to listen with the right purpose, the development of paññā, we develop and accumulate all ten perfections so that they can reach accomplishment.

# Chapter 1

## *The Perfection of Generosity*

The perfection of generosity is mentioned first among the ten perfections. As we read in the definition of *dāna*, given by the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”:

*“Giving (dāna) has the characteristic of relinquishing; its function is to dispel greed for things that can be given away; its manifestation is non-attachment, or the achievement of prosperity and a favourable state of existence; an object that can be relinquished is its proximate cause.”*

Most people know that generosity is the giving away of things for the benefit and happiness of others. Laypeople cannot give away all their possessions because they still cling to sense objects, but when there is an opportunity for generosity they should practise it. If one is unable to give away something one possesses, be it small or great, for the benefit of others, it will be so much harder to give up the clinging and attachment to the *nāma dhammas* and *rūpa dhammas* one takes for self, beings and persons.

Therefore, it is necessary to give away things for the benefit and happiness of others as much as one is able to, in order to eliminate defilements, including attachment to possessions as well as clinging to *nāma dhammas* and *rūpa dhammas* one takes for beings, people and self. Thus, in our daily life we should not neglect the development of the perfection of generosity. We should know whether our generosity is a perfection or not. No matter how much we give away, generosity is not a perfection if we do not see the need to eradicate defilements. People who have understanding of the Dhamma and practise generosity should consider whether their generosity is a perfection. If someone gives away things without expecting a reward, not even rebirth in a heavenly plane, then his generosity can be a perfection. However, if someone wants to receive a reward, when he wishes for rebirth as a millionaire, or for rebirth in different heavenly planes, or if he wants to receive gain, honour and praise, then his life is still bound up with all kinds of expectations, and his goal is not the eradication of defilements. If we reflect about this we can know whether our giving at a specific moment is a perfection or not.

## 14 - The Perfections

The perfection of generosity is a condition to cross over to the further shore, namely, the eradication of defilements, different from the realm of defilements. It is an extremely long way to reach the further shore, the eradication of defilements; it is not easy to reach it. We should clearly understand what the eradication of defilements means. Therefore, we should know whether at the moment of giving we are hoping for a reward or not. Giving that eliminates lobha, attachment, is giving with the aim to eradicate defilements, and that means that we should not expect any kind of reward.

Besides generosity by way of material aid, there is a higher kind of giving, and that is the giving of Dhamma. This is actually the gift of right understanding which will be beneficial both in this life and also in the lives to come. When we give material things to people who are needy and poor, this has only a temporary effect for them. We may not take into consideration the root cause of their poverty. The fact that people are poor is the result of akusala kamma, and so long as one commits akusala kamma there are conditions for rebirth as a poor person.

Besides assistance in a material way, we should help people by going to the root-cause of their poverty, and that is, helping them to have right understanding of the truth of the Dhamma. Thus we shall see that we are really able to help each other in daily life, both with material gifts and with the gift of Dhamma. By the gift of Dhamma we help others to gain right understanding of the Dhamma and to apply the Dhamma as well. Moreover, helping people to gain right understanding of the Dhamma can be a condition for them also to develop more kusala: generosity, morality and mental development.

Therefore, a person practises loving-kindness, mettā, when he helps others in different ways to understand the Dhamma, by propagating it through radio programs, by printing Dhamma books, by Dhamma discussions, by explaining the Dhamma, without expecting a result for himself. In that case his actions of generosity are a perfection, leading to the eradication of defilements. He has the firm understanding that developing kusala not bound up with lobha, attachment, is development of the perfections. Some people who like to propagate the Dhamma want to evaluate the result of their good deeds. However, the true result of someone's efforts has nothing to do with the number of people who listen to the Dhamma he tries to propagate or the amount of good deeds he has performed for this purpose. The result of his efforts manifests itself in the citta of the listener who is thus better able to develop his understanding further and to apply the Dhamma.

When someone who listens to the Dhamma gains right understanding, he accumulates sincerity, and this is the perfection of truthfulness, sacca pārami. He also accumulates the perfection of determination: he has an unshakeable conviction of his aim, that is, the eradication of defilements. We can evaluate the benefit of listening to the Dhamma at this very moment: have we accumulated more kusala and eliminated akusala?

There is another kind of dāna, generosity, and this is abhayadāna, the giving of freedom from danger and fear.

We read in the “Gradual Sayings”, Book of the Eights, H IV, §9, Outcomes of Merit, about eight outcomes (yields) of merit: going for refuge to the Triple Gem and five gifts<sup>1</sup>. We read about these five gifts:

*“Herein, monks, a noble disciple gives up the taking of life and abstains from it. By abstaining from the taking of life, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, gives to them freedom from hostility, and freedom from oppression. By giving to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility and oppression, he himself will enjoy immeasurable freedom from fear, hostility and oppression...”*

The same is said about the abstaining from stealing, sexual misconduct, wrong speech and intoxicants. Thus, sīla can also be considered under the aspect of dāna. Abstaining from deeds that harm others as well as giving protection from danger is included in giving freedom from fear, abhayadāna. Moreover, also forgiving can be seen as an aspect of giving freedom from fear<sup>2</sup>. When we forgive someone, we do not give in to ill feelings or revenge.

If someone does not know that forgiving is a perfection he will not forgive someone else who has done him wrong. If we do not forgive others how can we attain enlightenment and eradicate defilements? If we consider this it may be a condition for the gift of freedom from fear. This is a way of generosity higher than the giving of material things, āmisa dāna. If we cannot forgive someone we do not like, it means also that we cannot develop other kinds of kusala with regard to this person. If we do not forgive him or if we are still angry with him, we cannot be generous to him, we cannot even give him material things. Neither can we give him the gift of Dhamma, Dhamma dāna, in helping him with Dhamma discussion, or advise him as to what is beneficial in life and what is not beneficial.

---

1 I inserted this sutta and my additional remarks. I am using the translation of Ven. Nyanaponika, Wheel no. 238-240, B.P.S. Kandy, Sri Lanka.

2 In Thai to forgive is to give abhāya, freedom from fear or danger. Bhāya is fear or danger, and a is a negation.

## 16 - The Perfections

The gift of freedom from fear is a condition for the perfection of morality, *sīla pāramī*, to develop; it is the condition for abstinence from wrong action and speech. If we do not forgive someone else, our conduct will not be that of a friend and thus kusala cannot develop. How could we then cross over to the further shore, namely, the eradication of defilements?

This shows us that our consideration of the nature of kusala in daily life should be very refined. A person who develops *paññā* that can realize the four noble Truths, should know the nature of his *citta*; he should know when he is mentally ill and has no moral strength. If that is the case, how could he travel the extremely long road that is the eightfold Path? He should consider the nature of his *citta*, so that he can gain strength of *citta* by means of the perfections. He may know that the Path is *satipaṭṭhāna*, the development of understanding of the characteristics of realities; but *sati* does not arise if the perfections are not strong enough for the realization of the four noble Truths. We all should develop the ten perfections with *paññā*, also when we practise generosity in our daily life. We should know the truth, we should know the difference between giving without *paññā* and giving with *paññā*, such as in the case of the Bodhisatta who gave with *paññā*. In this way we can consider and understand the perfection of truthfulness, sincerity for kusala, so that we can follow in the footsteps of the Bodhisatta who developed the perfections during each life. He did not develop in one life just the perfection of morality, and in another life just the perfection of renunciation, but he developed all ten perfections, without exception, during each life.

Now I shall deal with generosity that goes together with sincerity, with the perfection of truthfulness, and in this context we should reflect on the generosity of the Bodhisatta.

The “*Paramattha Dīpanī*”, the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” (*Cariyāpiṭaka*, of the *Khuddhaka Nikāya*) explains about three kinds of *dāna pāramī*, perfection of generosity: the giving of material things (*āmisadāna*), the giving of fearlessness (*abhaya-dāna*) and the giving of the Dhamma (*dhammadāna*). We read about the giving of external objects:

*“When the Great Man gives an external object, he gives whatever is needed to whomever stands in need of it; and knowing by himself that someone is in need of something, he gives it even unasked, much more when asked.”*



A person who is ready to give something useful to someone else when he sees that he is in need, has a refined understanding of the performance of kusala. As soon as he has seen that another person is in need of something, the citta accompanied by compassion arises, and he gives immediately, he does not wait to be asked.

Further on we read in the Commentary:

*“He gives only when there is something to be given.”*

He does not trouble himself nor feel disturbed when at times he wishes to give but he does not have anything he can give. The Bodhisatta gives only when he has something he can give.

We read:

*“When there are things to be given he gives what people like to have, not what they do not want.”*

When other people are in need of something, he gives it away, provided there is something to be given.

We read:

*“He does not give because he expects something in return. And when there is not enough to give sufficiently to all, he distributes evenly whatever can be shared. But he does not give things that lead to affliction for others, such as weapons, poisons and intoxicants. Nor does he give amusing things which are harmful and lead to negligence. And he does not give unsuitable food or drink to a person who is sick, even though that person might ask for it, and he does not give what is suitable beyond the proper measure.”*

If we really want to help someone, such as a person who is ill, we need to reflect with compassion on the way we will give him assistance. We should not just give without any discrimination, but we should also know to what extent our gift is suitable and useful to a sick person. We should know in detail what is kusala, and we should be discriminative, not neglectful of kusala. Just as a doctor should precisely know the condition of a person who is ill and the dosage of medicaments to be taken that is suitable for each individual, even so should we give with discrimination.

The Commentary states:

*“Again, when asked, he gives to householders things appropriate for householders, and to monks things appropriate for monks. He gives to his mother and father, kinsmen and relatives, friends and colleagues, children, wife, slaves and workers, without causing pain to anyone. Having promised an*

## 18 - The Perfections

*excellent gift, he does not give something mean. He does not give because he desires gain, honour or fame, or because he expects something in return, or out of expectation of some fruit other than the supreme enlightenment (in the case of the Bodhisatta). He does not give detesting the gift or those who ask. He does not give a discarded object as a gift, not even to unrestrained beggars who revile and abuse him.”*

Each time we give, we should carefully investigate our citta. The citta should truly be gentle and tender. We should not have contempt for the people who ask for something or dislike the things we give; we should not give discarded objects, not even to unrestrained beggars who revile and abuse us.

Can we follow this up? The person who receives a gift may be annoyed, or sometimes his behaviour may be most impolite. But still, the citta of the person who gives can be gentle and tender. He can give without dislike of the receiver. It may happen that the receiver is unrestrained in his behaviour, that his conduct is improper, or that he reviles the person who gives; he may be angry, he may say that the other person gives too little, or that he does not want to have the things that are given. However, in spite of this, the citta of the giver should be steadfast in kusala.

We read in the Commentary:

*“He gives invariably with confidence, with compassion and respect.”*

In this way one can eradicate one’s own defilements, also when giving. The Commentary states:

*“He does not give through belief in superstitious omens: but he gives believing in kamma and its fruit. When he gives he does not afflict those who ask by making them do homage to him, etc.; but he gives without afflicting others. He does not give a gift with the intention of deceiving others or with the intention of injuring; he gives only with an undefiled mind. He does not give a gift with harsh words or a frown, but with words of endearment, congenial speech, and a smile on his face.*

*Whenever greed for a particular object becomes excessive, due to its high value and beauty, its antiquity, or attachment accumulated since a long time, the Bodhisatta recognizes his greed, quickly dispels it, seeks out some recipients, and gives it away.”*

A person who understands himself well knows the extent of his clinging, he knows when he can give up something or when he cannot. Sometimes he may think of giving, but he is not able to give. However, as we read, it

is different for the Bodhisatta.

The passage quoted above deals with the giving of material goods, āmisa dāna. The Commentary gives many more details of the Bodhisatta's practice while he developed the perfections in order to attain the supreme enlightenment as the Sammā-Sambuddha. However, now only a few details are dealt with so that people can investigate more carefully their own citta in order to develop kusala further.

The Commentary states about the giving of freedom from fear, abhaya dāna:

*“The giving of freedom from fear is the giving of protection to beings when they have become frightened on account of kings, thieves, fire, water, enemies, lions, tigers, other wild beasts, dragons, ogres, demons, goblins, etc.*

*The giving of the Dhamma, Dhamma dāna, is a non-perverted discourse on the Dhamma given with an undefiled mind; that is, methodical instruction conducive to good in the present life, in the life to come, and to ultimate deliverance (diṭṭhadhammika samparāyikaparamattha). By means of such discourses, those who have not entered the Buddha's Dispensation enter it, while those who have entered it reach maturity therein. This is the method:- In brief, he speaks on giving, on virtue, and on heaven, on the unsatisfactoriness and defilement in sense pleasures, and on the benefit in renouncing them.”*

People may have understanding of dāna, of the danger in sense pleasures and the benefit of renouncing them, but when one is unaware and does not listen to the Dhamma, one is bound to be overcome by defilements. When we often listen to the Dhamma, even though we hear what was said before, or when we listen to what has been said about daily life, we are reminded to reflect and be aware of realities, and, thus, there are conditions to accumulate more kusala.

We read further on in the Commentary:

*“In detail, to those whose minds are disposed towards the enlightenment of disciples (sāvakabodhiyam adhimuttacittānam), he gives a discourse establishing and purifying them (in progress towards their goal) by elaborating upon the noble qualities of whichever among the following topics is appropriate: going for refuge, restraint by virtue, guarding the doors of the sense-faculties, moderation in eating, application to wakefulness...”*

One should know the degree of one's understanding. As we read, the Buddha gave a discourse in detail to those whose minds were disposed towards the enlightenment of disciples, he gave a discourse establishing

and purifying them (in progress towards their goal) by elaborating upon the noble qualities as was appropriate to them.

Those who want to develop satipaṭṭhāna, to develop right understanding of the characteristics of the dhammas that are appearing, and to develop the perfections in daily life, are already disposed towards the enlightenment of disciples, and that means that they go for refuge to the Triple Gem, that they observe sīla, guard the doors of the sense-faculties, are moderate in eating and apply themselves to wakefulness and energy, time and again.

We should develop the perfections together with satipaṭṭhāna, life after life. The Bodhisatta had developed the perfections for aeons to an incomparably high degree. He accumulated the perfection of generosity together with paññā and all other wholesome qualities which formed together the conditions (as the khandha of formations, saṅkhārakkhandha<sup>1</sup>) for the realization of the four noble Truths when he attained Buddhahood. The accumulation of the perfection of dāna and the other perfections led to this result.

We read in the Commentary about the Bodhisatta's accumulation of the perfection of giving:

*“When he gives a material gift, the Great Man gives food, thinking: ‘May I, by this gift, enable beings to achieve long-life, beauty, happiness, strength, intelligence, and the supreme fruit of unsullied bliss.’ He gives drink, wishing to allay the thirst of sensual defilements; garments to gain the adornments of shame and moral dread and the golden complexion (of a Buddha); vehicles for attaining the modes of psychic potency and the bliss of nibbāna; scents for producing the sweet scent of virtue; garlands and unguents for producing the beauty of the Buddha-qualities; seats for producing the seat on the terrace of enlightenment; bedding for producing the bed of a Tathāgata's rest; dwellings so he might become a refuge for beings; lamps so he might obtain the five eyes<sup>2</sup>. He gives visible forms for producing the fathom-wide aura (surrounding*

- 
- 1 Conditioned phenomena can be classified as five khandhas, aggregates: the khandha of physical phenomena, rūpakkhandha, the khandha of feeling, vedanākkhandha, the khandha of perception, saññākkhandha, the khandha of formations or activities, saṅkhārakkhandha, the khandha of consciousness, viññāṇakkhandha. The khandha of formations or activities, saṅkhārakkhandha, includes all cetasikas other than feeling, vedanā, and remembrance or perception, saññā. It includes all akusala cetasikas and sobhana cetasikas. Generosity and also the other sobhana cetasikas such as paññā and satī, are accumulated together and condition one another so that finally enlightenment can be attained.
  - 2 These five eyes are the fleshly eye, the divine eye by which he sees the passing

a Buddha); sounds for producing the Brahmā-like voice (of a Buddha); tastes for endearing himself to all the world; and tangibles for acquiring a Buddha's elegance. He gives medicines so he might later give the ageless and deathless state of nibbāna. He gives slaves the gift of freedom so he might later emancipate beings from the slavery of defilements. He gives blameless amusements and enjoyments in order to produce delight in the true Dhamma. He gives his own children as a gift so that he might adopt all beings as his children by granting them an ariyan birth. He gives his wives as a gift in order that he might become master over the entire world. He gives gifts of gold, gems, pearls, coral, etc. in order to achieve the major marks of physical beauty (characteristics of a Buddha's body), and the gifts of the diverse means of beautification in order to achieve the minor features of physical beauty. He gives his treasuries as a gift in order to obtain the treasury of the true Dhamma; the gift of his kingdom in order to become the king of the Dhamma; the gift of monasteries, parks, ponds, and groves in order to achieve the jhānas, etc.; the gift of his feet in order that he might approach the terrace of enlightenment with feet marked with the auspicious wheels; the gift of his hands in order that he might give to beings the rescuing hand of the true Dhamma to help them across the four floods<sup>1</sup>; the gift of his ears, nose, etc. in order to obtain the spiritual faculties of faith, etc.; the gift of his eyes in order to obtain the universal eye; the gift of his flesh and blood with the thought: 'May my body be the means of life for all the world! May it bring welfare and happiness to all beings at all times, even on occasions of merely seeing, hearing, recollecting, or ministering to me!' And he gives the gift of his head in order to become supreme in all the world."

All his deeds of generosity contributed to his realization of the four noble Truths when he became the Sammā-sambuddha. We read further on about the gifts of the Bodhisatta:

*"The gift of sounds (sadda dāna) should be understood by way of the sounds of drums, etc. It is certainly not possible to give a sound as one gives a cluster of lotuses, tearing it out by its bulbs and roots and placing it in the hands. But one gives a gift of sound by giving its base. Thus he makes a gift of sound by presenting a musical instrument, such as drums or tom toms, to the Triple Gem."*

One may offer a drum for the benefit of a temple as an offering of sound,

---

away and rebirth of beings, the wisdom eye, by which he sees all dhammas with their characteristics and their conditions, the Buddha-eye, by which he sees the dispositions of beings and the maturity of their faculties, and the universal eye, his knowledge of omniscience.

- 1 Floods, oghas, are sensual desire, desire for existence, wrong views and ignorance.

## 22 - The Perfections

because it can be used to announce the time, the hours or the watches (of the day and night) and so on. One may play music as an offering of sound to the Triple Gem, by using instruments such as a drum or tom tom. One may arrange for oneself or for someone else to use an instrument such as a drum, with the intention to give sound as an offering.

The Commentary explains further about the ways of offering the gift of sound:

*“... by giving medicine for the voice, such as oil and molasses, to preachers of the Dhamma; or by announcing a lecture on the Dhamma, chanting the scriptures, giving a discourse on the Dhamma, holding a discussion, or expressing appreciation for the good deeds of others.”*

One may invite people to sit close for a Dhamma discussion or ask others to invite them for this purpose. Also when expressing words of appreciation, anumodana, one can give sound as an offering. When one speaks these words aloud or invites others to join in the expressing of them, one offers the gift of sound. This is a condition for others to also take part in the offering of sound by way of the expression of anumodana.

We read in the Commentary:

*“Giving thus, the Great Man does not give unwillingly, nor by afflicting others, nor out of fear, moral shame, or the scolding of those in need of gifts. When there is something excellent, he does not give what is mean. He does not give extolling himself and disparaging others. He does not give out of desire for the fruit, nor with loathing for those who ask, nor with lack of consideration. Rather, he gives thoroughly, with his own hand, at the proper time, considerately, without discrimination, filled with joy throughout the three times (before, during and after giving). Having given, he does not become remorseful afterwards. He does not become either conceited or obsequious in relation to the recipients, but behaves amiably towards them. Bountiful and liberal, he gives things together with a bonus (saparivāra). For when he gives food, thinking: ‘I will give this along with a bonus’, he gives garments, etc. as well. And when he gives garments, thinking: ‘I will give this along with a bonus,’ he gives food, etc. as well...”*

His generosity is boundless, and he gives something else as a bonus to accompany his gift. In our daily life we all should investigate and examine the realities that arise within us as they really are. Although we have listened to the texts about the Bodhisatta’s giving, the way we give depends on conditions and we cannot equal the Bodhisatta in generosity.

Further on in the Commentary we read what the Bodhisatta is thinking when he has an object that can be given but his citta is not inclined to give:

*“When the Bodhisatta possesses objects that can be given and suppliants are present, but his mind does not leap up at the thought of giving and he does not want to give, he should conclude: ‘Surely, I have not been accustomed to giving in the past, therefore, a desire to give does not arise now in my mind. So that my mind will delight in giving in the future, I will give a gift. With an eye for the future let me now relinquish what I have to those in need.’ ”*

Thus, we see that giving cannot be forced. A person who has accumulated the inclination to give often, time and again, is able to give immediately, without hesitation, without having to think about it again and again. Therefore, when someone’s mind does not leap up at the thought of giving immediately, or when he hesitates, it can be known that he surely did not accumulate giving in the past.

We read further on:

*“Thus he gives a gift, generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishing; one who gives when asked, delighting in giving and sharing. In this way the Great Being destroys, shatters, and eradicates the first shackle to giving.”*

Here we see that we should investigate our citta when we are not inclined to give. We read:

*“Again, when the object to be given is inferior or defective, the Great Being reflects: ‘Because I was not inclined to giving in the past, at present my requisites are defective. Therefore: though it pains me, let me give whatever I have as a gift even if the object is low and inferior. In that way I will, in the future, reach the peak in the perfection of giving.’ Thus he gives whatever kind of gift he can- generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishing, one who gives when asked, delighting in giving and in sharing. In this way the Great Being destroys, shatters, and eradicates the second shackle to giving.”*

When someone does not give, he may reflect on it; he may realize that he did not accumulate generosity and that, from now on, he will try to accumulate it. Or, he realizes that the things he could give are defective or scarce because he did not give in the past, and that he from now on, even though he has little, should give.

We read further on:

*“When a reluctance to give arises due to the excellence or beauty of the object to be given, the Great Being admonishes himself: ‘Good man, haven’t*

## 24 - The Perfections

*you made the aspiration for the supreme enlightenment, the loftiest and most superior of all states? Well then, for the sake of enlightenment, it is proper for you to give excellent and beautiful objects as gifts.’ Thus he gives what is excellent and beautiful, generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishing, one who gives when asked, delighting in giving and in sharing. In this way the Great Being destroys, shatters, and eradicates the third shackle to giving.”*

Sometimes when a person regrets it to give something away, he should consider what he really wants: does he want to keep that object or does he want to realize the four noble Truths? Reflection in this way could be a condition for the arising of generosity and at that moment a shackle to generosity is destroyed.

We read:

*“When the Great Being is giving a gift, and he sees the loss of the object being given, he reflects thus: ‘This is the nature of material possessions, that they are subject to loss and to passing away. Moreover, it is because I did not give such gifts in the past that my possessions are now depleted. Let me then give whatever I have as a gift, whether it be limited or abundant. In that way I will, in the future, reach the peak in the perfection of giving.’ Thus he gives whatever he has as a gift; generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishing, one who gives when asked, delighting in giving and sharing. In this way the Great Being destroys, shatters, and eradicates the fourth shackle to giving.”*

Some people believe that when they give things away their possessions will vanish, but in reality, it is already in the nature of possessions to vanish. No matter whether we give or do not give, when it is the right time for our possessions to vanish, they will disappear. Some people who have many possessions fear that if they do not share them out they will vanish, and therefore, they believe that they should rather give them away. When calamities are caused by fire, inundation or robbers, or when possessions are confiscated by kings, one may regret it that one did not give things away. We can see that possessions do not vanish because of giving, but that it depends on kamma whether one has possessions or whether one loses them.

It is most difficult to develop the perfections, even though one has listened to the Dhamma and learnt much about the perfections. It depends on the capacity of each individual to what degree he can develop kusala. The perfections should very gradually be developed together with paññā, they should be developed time and again. We know that this is necessary if we realize that we have many defilements and that it is difficult to develop the paññā that can eradicate them. Therefore, during each life defilements should gradually be eliminated,



so that the four noble Truths can be realized when one becomes a streamwinner, sotāpanna. Then one has reached the first stage of enlightenment, and one will not be reborn more than seven times.

We should know what kind of paññā accompanies the perfection of generosity.

The Book of Analysis (the second Book of the Abhidhamma), in Ch 16, Classification of Knowledge, 325) explains about different kinds of paññā, such as wisdom by means of thinking, wisdom by means of hearing, wisdom by means of giving, wisdom by means of sila.

*The “Dispeller of Delusion” (the Commentary to the Book of Analysis, in Ch 16, 412) explains that understanding associated with the intention or volition (cetanā) of giving is “understanding based on giving” or “understanding by means of giving” (dānamayā paññā).*

When we read this we should investigate in detail the paññā which is accompanied by the volition or intention of giving (cetanā of dāna). Paññā cannot arise with akusala citta, it cannot arise when someone expects a result.

We read in the “Dispeller of Delusion”:

*“...that understanding which arises associated in this way with the volition of giving, this is called ‘understanding based on giving’ (dānamayā paññā).*

*But that has three forms, namely, prior volition, volition of relinquishing and subsequent volition, according as it arises in one who thinks: ‘I shall give a gift’, in one giving a gift or in one reviewing after having given a gift.”*

The “Dispeller of Delusion” speaks in detail about paññā which accompanies the kusala cittas that are intent on generosity. Kusala citta can be unaccompanied by paññā or accompanied by paññā. Kusala citta of the sense sphere accompanied by paññā cetasika (mahā-kusala citta ñāṇasampayutta <sup>1</sup>) can be kusala citta of the level of dāna, of sila, or of bhāvanā, mental development, including samatha and satipaṭṭhāna, which is the development of vipassanā. When we develop the perfection of generosity, the aim should be the correct understanding of realities as they are, without any expectation of a result for ourselves. This is the condition for paññā which is understanding based on dāna (dānamayā paññā).

---

1 Mahā-kusala cittas, kusala cittas of the sense-sphere, are classified as ñāṇa vippayutta, unaccompanied by paññā or ñāṇa sampayutta, accompanied by paññā; ñāṇa means paññā.

We read in the “Basket of Conduct”, Division II, the Perfection of Renunciation, no.1, “Conduct of Yudhañjaya”, about the Bodhisatta Yudhañjaya, a King’s son. He saw a dewdrop that vanished by the heat of the sun and this reminded him of impermanence and caused him to wish to renounce worldly life. The Commentary to this section states:

*“Paññā of the beginning stage that considers the impermanence of realities, knows which dhammas are beneficial concerning generosity etc. and which are not. This is the perfection of paññā.”*

Dāna, generosity, is the giving away of objects for the benefit and happiness of others. When we give things away we are not selfish. Paññā of the beginning stage considers the impermanence of realities. Did we ever consider at the moment of giving that there is nothing lasting? Even possessions that we still have today and that we have not yet given away may vanish before we can give them away, because they are impermanent. Even we ourselves who have not yet given away things are impermanent, we may die even before we have the opportunity to be generous. When we reflect on the impermanence of those who give and those who receive, kusala citta may motivate us to give assistance to others. When we give away things that are beneficial to others with the understanding of the impermanence of everything, the perfection of wisdom can develop. We can only know for ourselves whether we consider impermanence at such moments. When we meet people who are poor, we can reflect on the unsatisfactoriness of life and on impermanence before giving, at the moment of giving and after having given, thus at the three moments of wholesome intention, kusala cetanā, with regard to giving.

Some people feel joy with regard to some kinds of dāna, not to all kinds, and when they recollect their generosity afterwards they are delighted and have attachment to their generosity. This shows that there may be wholesome intention, kusala cetanā, before giving, and at the moment of giving, but that afterwards there may not be kusala citta.

We should investigate, when we recollect our generosity after we have given, whether the citta is kusala citta or akusala citta. We may be happy when we consider that we have done something beneficial, that we have given assistance to people so that they are free from suffering. Others may not give assistance to them because they may not know of their needs. When we have given assistance to people and we recollect the kusala we have performed, we may feel delighted, but this is non-self, anattā; it is beyond control whether happiness arises or not. Happy feeling may arise because we had an opportunity to help someone who

was in need and whom we should give assistance. However, if we desire to recollect our kusala in order to have benefit for ourselves, it is not the perfection of generosity. The difference between generosity that is a perfection and that which is not, is very subtle.



## Chapter 2

### *The Perfection of Morality*

The Commentary to “The Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of morality as follows:

*“Virtue (sīla) has the characteristic of composing (sīlana, observing); coordinating (samādhāna) and establishing (patitṭhana) are also mentioned as its characteristic. Its function is to dispel moral depravity, or its function is blameless conduct; its manifestation is moral purity; shame and moral dread are its proximate cause.”*

The transgression of morality, sīla, such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, is motivated by akusala: by attachment (lobha), aversion (dosa), and ignorance (moha). When someone commits evil deeds he lacks mettā, loving-kindness towards others. All akusala kammās are conditioned by clinging to visible object, sound, smell, flavour, tangible object and the wrong view that there is self, being or person.

The streamwinner who has realized the four noble Truths and attained the first stage of enlightenment, has eradicated the defilements in accordance with that stage of enlightenment. He observes the five precepts perfectly, he cannot transgress them any more. If one is not a streamwinner which precepts can one observe? Even before we are a streamwinner, we should not transgress the precepts. The coarse defilements can be subdued and worn away until paññā will be developed to the degree of a perfection and is able to realize the four noble Truths.

The perfection of sīla is an excellent quality, a supporting condition for reaching the further shore, namely the eradication of defilements. We read about Akitti’s sīla in the Commentary to the “Basket of conduct” <sup>1</sup>:

*“When the Buddha was the ascetic Akitti, he dwelt in a Kāra wood with strength and energy to fulfil the ascetic practices (tapa), that is, the perfection of sīla. Sīla is indeed called asceticism, because it burns the impurity of akusala. Even so the perfection of renunciation and the perfection of energy are called asceticism (tapa), because they burn by their strength the impurity of clinging and laziness.”*

---

1 See the Akitti Jātaka, no. 480.

### 30 - The Perfections

The ten perfections are supporting conditions for each other, also at the time the Buddha was the ascetic Akitti. He accumulated the perfection of sīla together with the other perfections, such as renunciation and energy. We read:

*“At the time he was the ascetic Akitti he built a hermitage beside a great Kāra tree. When this tree gave fruits he fed on them, and when there were no fruits he fed on its leaves sprinkled with water. Thus he had time and opportunity to apply himself to the attainment of jhāna.*

The ascetic Akitti searched for Kāra leaves that were sufficient for only one meal a day, because he found that searching for food for two meals would not lead to the eradication of defilements.”

This is the perfection of patience, because his life was not involved with the urge to eat. We read:

*“His behaviour caused Sakka, the King of the devas, to wonder why the ascetic Akitti had such pure conduct of action, speech and thought, was devoid of attachment in his life, and had Kāra leaves as his only food, which were ascetic practices most difficult to perform.”*

We should know the aim of our practice, such as the observing of sīla, morality. People who want to give up attachment to visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object should know why they are doing this. We read:

*“When Sakka saw this, he wondered why the ascetic Akitti observed such practice. He thought that the ascetic Akitti practised in this way because he desired to become Sakka, King of the Devas.*

*Sakka, in the guise of a brahmin, came to see the ascetic Akitti, thinking, ‘If the ascetic Akitti wishes to become Sakka, he will give me his sodden Kāra leaves, but if he has not such a wish, he will not give them away.’ ”*

*Sakka thought that if Akitti would aspire to become Sakka he would fulfil the perfection of generosity, dāna, and give away his food. We read:*

*“When the ascetic Akitti noticed that the brahmin was in need of food, he took the sodden Kāra leaves and gave them all to the brahmin. He did the same the second day and the third day.”*

Here we see that the kusala he performed at those times were actually the perfections of generosity, dāna, of morality, sīla, of renunciation, nekkhamma, of patience, khanti, of energy, viriya, of determination or steadfastness, aditṭhāna, and of truthfulness, sacca, that is, sincerity in the performing of kusala. He fulfilled the perfections in order to attain

Buddhahood. All perfections are interrelated and they support one another.

Akitti was steadfast in generosity, he did not hesitate because of avarice. He did not long for anything in life, not even for something very slight. This is the perfection of sincerity. We read:

*“The ascetic Akitti was unshakable in generosity while he offered his sodden Kāra leaves for three consecutive days.*

*He fulfilled the perfection of loving-kindness, mettā, by his disposition to give assistance to all beings. He fulfilled the perfection of equanimity, upekkhā, by evenmindedness or neutrality, not being disturbed by controversial conduct of people or by trying events.”*

Sakka begged for food for three consecutive days, but the ascetic Akitti was unshakable in his determination to give, and he gave, no matter who was asking. We read:

*“As regards the perfection of paññā, he knows which dhammas are beneficial conditions for the fulfilment of the perfections and which are not. He abandons the dhammas which are not beneficial and he directs his practice towards those which are beneficial. When Sakka knew the disposition of the ascetic Akitti, he offered a boon, whereupon the Great Being, the ascetic Akitti, explained the Dhamma with regard to the receiving of boons.”*

Further on in the Commentary we read:

*“Sakka noticed that the ascetic Akitti dwelt in contentedness. He asked him: ‘What, great Brahmin, are you wishing for, that you are dwelling here all alone in the heat?’ ”*

Sakka interrogated Akitti because he wanted to know about his sincerity in practising virtue to the highest degree, so that even Sakka called him great Brahmin. We read:

*“Akitti answered, ‘Sakka, King of the devas, rebirth is dukkha, the breaking up of the body is dukkha, and dying with delusion is dukkha. Therefore I dwell here all alone.’ ”*

*Sakka answered: ‘Well spoken Kassapa<sup>1</sup>, you expressed this very well. I will give you a boon, choose whatever you wish.’ ”*

One may have wonder what this means. Here the firm determination for the development of kusala is shown of the ascetic Akitti who wishes for a

---

1 This is the name of his clan, the Kassapa clan.

boon. The boon that he wishes for are all ten perfections. We read:

*“The ascetic Akitti said, ‘Sakka, lord of the devas, you have offered me a boon. People who have children, a wife, possessions and all kinds of pleasant things, are attached to them, even though their attachment does not cause any harm. However, I wish to be free from all degrees of attachment to such things. That is the boon I would like to have.’ ”*

This shows that he had a precise understanding of his citta: he did not wish to have attachment even if it would not cause any harm. Someone who has no firm determination in the development of the perfections may believe that attachment makes life comfortable and pleasant, and that, so long as attachment does not cause any harm, there is no danger in it. However, Akitti wanted to be free from all attachment. This is the steadfastness in kusala to the degree of a perfection. We read:

*“Thereupon Sakka said, ‘You have well spoken, Kassapa. What else do you wish for?’”*

Do we wish for a boon that will be a condition for kusala to become more steadfast, just as in the case of Akitti? What he just asked was not sufficient yet. The following boon that the ascetic Akitti wished for shows again the meaning of kusala to the degree of a perfection. We read that Akitti said:

*“ ‘Sakka, the lord of all devas has offered me a boon. Lands, goods and gold, cows, horses, slaves and relatives decay and pass away. May I not have such unsatisfactoriness.’ ”*

The loss of possessions is akusala vipāka, the result of akusala kamma that has been performed by oneself. There will not be such loss if one does not commit akusala kamma. We read that Akitti asked as a boon:

*“ ‘May there be not any akusala kamma that could cause such loss.’ ”*

*Sakka said, ‘Kassapa, what else do you wish?’*

*The ascetic Akitti said, ‘Please give me this boon: may I not see or hear a fool nor be in his company, and may I not like to converse with him.’*

*Sakka asked, ‘What is the reason Kassapa, that you do not like fools nor wish to see them?’ ”*

If we wish to develop the perfection of renunciation we should consider this passage. If we associate with fools we cannot develop renunciation. The perfections are interrelated and from the beginning we should consider all of them. We read:



*“The ascetic Akitti said, ‘Fools advise to do what is improper, they are likely to be engaged with improper activities <sup>1</sup>; it is difficult to advise them to perform good deeds. When someone speaks to them in a wholesome way, hoping that they will become righteous, they retort with anger. Fools do not know the rules of right conduct (vinaya). It is beneficial not to see fools.’*

*Sakka asked: ‘Kassapa, what else do you wish for?’*

*The ascetic Akitti said: ‘Sakka King of the Devas, if you like to give me a boon, I would ask you the following boon: people should see wise men, they should listen to them, seek their company and cherish conversations with them.’ ”*

Sakka questioned Akitti so that he would give a clear explanation for the benefit of those who wish to have precise understanding and who study the Dhamma.

We read:

*“Sakka asked Akitti, ‘Kassapa, please explain the reason why you like to associate with the wise, why you wish to see the wise?’*

*The ascetic Akitti said, ‘The wise advise to do what is proper, they are not engaged with improper activities. It is easy to encourage the wise. They do not retort well-spoken words with anger. They know well right conduct. It is good to associate with the wise.’*

*Sakka asked, ‘What else do you wish for?’*

*The ascetic Akitti said, ‘When the night is spent and the sun, the ruler of the world, rises, may divine food and holy mendicants appear, and may the food that I will offer not become exhausted. May I not repent my deed but give with a pure mind. This is a boon I wish for.’*

*Sakka asked, ‘What else do you wish for?’*

*The ascetic Akitti said, ‘Sakka, King of the Devas, if you want to give me a boon, may you not visit me again.’ ”*

This is the last boon the ascetic Akitti asked for. This shows that he was not heedless with regard to the akusala he had accumulated. Sakka was most surprised because everybody wishes to see sons and daughters of devas, divine beings. Some people develop kusala to the degree of calm

---

1 The Commentary explains that they do not induce others to have confidence (in kusala), to develop sila and pañña, but that they induce others to what is improper.

### 34 - The Perfections

in order to see devas. But the ascetic Akitti wished that Sakka would not visit him again. We read:

*“Sakka said, ‘Many people wish to see, because of their righteous conduct, sons and daughters of devas. What is the danger in seeing me?’*

*The ascetic Akitti answered, ‘I may transgress my vow of asceticism when I see the appearance of devas, beings who are full of glory and delightful to the senses. This is the danger in seeing you.’*

*Thereupon Sakka said, ‘This is good, revered one, from now on I shall not visit you again’ and he departed.*

*The Bodhisatta dwelt in the same place during his whole life. After he passed away he was reborn in the world of the Brahma. The reverend Anuruddha was Sakka, the Buddha was the ascetic Akitti.”*

The ascetic Akitti was heedful, he did not want to see what could be a danger to him. We can learn a lesson from this story, we should consider the perfections with regard to our own life. We have a long way to go in order to attain the realization of the four noble Truths and the eradication of defilements. If we do not understand what the perfections really are, we do not have firm determination to study the Dhamma in order to have right understanding, to apply the Dhamma and to practise it with sincerity, which is the perfection of truthfulness. We should study and practise without being disturbed by the worldly conditions of gain, loss, honour, dishonour, praise, blame, happiness and misery. If we are unshakable by these worldly conditions, we are beginning to develop the perfections so that they become more firmly established.

If we consider the perfections developed by the Buddha life after life, as related in the “Basket of Conduct”, we can see that our own development of the perfections is still very insignificant compared to his development, that there is an immense difference. Therefore, we should continue further to develop all the perfections. We should not have expectations with regard to right understanding of the characteristics of nāma and rūpa which arise and fall away very rapidly at this moment. The truth cannot be realized immediately, but understanding must be developed very gradually during an endlessly long time.

We read at the end of the Commentary to the “Conduct of Akitti”:

*“There may be confidence in him (the Bodhisatta), confidence that it is possible to be freed from dukkha, but one may merely express words about this confidence and not act accordingly by the practice in conformity with the*

*Dhamma ' just as the Buddha did."*

Thus, it is not sufficient merely to have confidence in the perfections the Buddha developed during his former lives, but we should also apply these perfections in daily life. We may express our confidence by words but, even though we speak with kusala citta, if we do not act accordingly by the right practice, we shall not reach the goal.

We may consider the perfections that we are beginning to develop. We are interested in listening to the Dhamma and learning about the practice in accordance with the Dhamma. We need the perfection of energy, viriya, in order to be able to listen. If there is no energy or right effort, we do not come to listen to the Dhamma, but we rather listen to another subject that gives us pleasure and entertainment. When we listen to the Dhamma we also need the perfection of patience, khanti, because sometimes we have to listen to what does not interest us so much. Without patience we cannot develop the other perfections such as the perfection of morality, sīla. Without the perfection of sīla we shall transgress morality by our deeds and speech.

It is most important with whom we associate. The ascetic Akitti said with regard to himself that he did not wish to see, to hear or to be close to fools. The Commentary to the "Basket of Conduct" compares association with fools to the tasting of water that has a bitter, unpleasant flavour, and association with wise persons to the tasting of sweet water.

Also the Bodhisatta had at times to associate with fools. For example, during one of his lives the Bodhisatta belonged to a clan of people with wrong view. In his life as the brahmin youth Jotipāla he was born into a family of people who had wrong view and no confidence in the Buddha<sup>2</sup>. Jotipāla followed his parents in their disdain of the Buddha. The brahmins who had wrong view had no confidence in the Buddha Kassapa, who was the last Buddha before the Buddha Gotama.

The Commentary to the "Discourse on Ghaṭikāra", Middle Length Sayings, the "Papañcasūdanī", states that Bodhisatta had accumulated the perfections until his life as Jotipāla, when he came into contact with people of wrong view. The Commentary compares the accumulated perfections to a brightly shining fire which during that life came into contact with water and was therefore extinguished by it so that the rays

- 
- 1 Dhammanudhamma paṭipatti: the practice of the Dhamma in conformity with the Dhamma (anudhamma). The practice of the Dhamma so that one attains supra mundane Dhamma, enlightenment.
  - 2 See Middle Length Sayings II, no. 81, On Ghaṭikāra.

of light disappeared and only black charcoal was left<sup>1</sup>.

We do not know our past lives but we can learn from the story of the Bodhisatta as Jotipāla: although he had accumulated the perfections to a high degree, he still associated with fools. We can learn that we should not be heedless and see the danger in association with fools.

We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”, in the “Miscellaneous Sayings”:

*“Now comes the method of practising the perfection of virtue (sīla). Since the Great Man desires to adorn beings with the adornment of the virtue of the omniscient, at the beginning he must first purify his own virtue. Herein, virtue is purified in four modes:*

1. *by the purification of one’s inclinations (ajjhāsayavisuddhi);*
2. *by the undertaking of precepts (samādhāna);*
3. *by non-transgression (avītikkamana);*
4. *by making amends for transgressions (patipākatikaraṇa).”*

In this way we can check sīla in our daily life. We should know whether our sīla is pure. We read:

*“For someone who is dominated by personal ideals, is naturally disgusted with evil through the purity of his own inclinations and purifies his conduct by arousing his inward sense of shame (hiri). Someone else who is dominated by consideration for the world, afraid of evil, purifies his conduct by receiving precepts from another person and by arousing his sense of moral dread (ottappa) <sup>2</sup>. Both establish themselves in virtue through non-transgression.*

*But if, due to forgetfulness, they sometimes break a precept, through their sense of shame and moral dread, respectively, they quickly make amends for it through the proper means of rehabilitation.”*

In these ways sīla is purified. We read further on about the virtue of the Bodhisatta:

- 
- 1 See also “Milinda’s Questions” II, The Dilemmas , Fifth Division, 6: Birth as Jotipāla.
  - 2 The “Atthasālinī” ( I, Part IV, Ch I, 125-127) explains that hiri, shame, has a subjective origin; its proximate cause is respect for oneself. Whereas ottappa, fear of blame or moral dread, has an external cause, it is influenced by the world; its proximate cause is respect for someone else. Hiri and ottappa always arise together, but they have different characteristics.

*“When he speaks, his statements should be truthful, beneficial, and endearing, and his talk measured, timely, and concerned with the Dhamma. His mind should always be devoid of covetousness, ill-will, and perverted views. He should possess the knowledge of the ownership of kamma<sup>1</sup>, and have settled faith and affection for recluses and brahmins who are faring and practising rightly...*

*By desisting from false speech his word comes to be authoritative for others. He is regarded as reliable and trustworthy, one whose statements are always accepted. He is dear and agreeable to deities. His mouth gives off a sweet fragrance and he guards his bodily and vocal conduct. He achieves distinguished characteristics, and eradicates the mental impressions of the defilements<sup>2</sup>.*

*By desisting from slander he obtains a retinue and following that cannot be divided by the attacks of others. He possesses unbreakable faith in the true Dhamma. He is a firm friend, as exceedingly dear to beings as though they were acquainted with him in the last existence. And he is devoted to non-defilement.*

*By desisting from harsh speech he becomes dear and agreeable to beings, pleasant in character, sweet in speech, held in esteem. And he develops a voice endowed with eight factors<sup>3</sup>.*

*By desisting from idle chatter he becomes dear and agreeable to beings, revered, held in esteem. His statements are accepted and his talk measured. He acquires great influence and power, and becomes skilful in answering the questions of others with the ingenuity that creates opportunities (to benefit others). And when he reaches the plane of Buddhahood, he becomes capable of answering the numerous questions of beings, speaking numerous languages all with a single reply.*

*Through his freedom from covetousness he gains what he wishes and obtains whatever excellent possessions he needs. He is honoured by powerful khattiyas<sup>4</sup>. He can never be vanquished by his adversaries, is never defective in his faculties, and becomes the peerless individual.”*

- 
- 1 Kammassakatā ñāṇa, understanding that kamma is the cause of vipāka, result. Beings will receive the appropriate results of their deeds.
  - 2 The Pāli has: vāsanā. Even arahats who have eradicated all defilements may still have a way of speech or action that is not agreeable to others. This is not motivated by akusala, but it is due to their habits in the past which have been accumulated. Only a Buddha can eradicate vāsanā.
  - 3 The eight qualities of the Buddha’s voice: it is frank, clear, melodious, pleasant, full, carrying, deep and resonant, and does not travel beyond his audience.
  - 4 The khattiyas where those of the highest social rank. All kings and chieftains were khattiyas.

If one develops kusala without expecting any result for oneself, the result will be in conformity with the kusala one performed. Someone may speak well, expressing himself with beautiful words, but when he speaks he should think of the well-being of the listener, he should know whether the listener will be ill at ease or happy. If there is sati-sampajañña (sati and paññā) he will refrain from speech that causes the listener to be uncomfortable, even though he does not speak an untruth. If sati-sampajañña arises it will cause one to speak in a beneficial, agreeable way. If someone does not expect any result for himself, his kusala will bring its result, as the Buddha explained. We read further on in the Commentary:

*“Through his freedom from ill-will he gains a pleasant appearance. He is esteemed by others, and because he delights in the welfare of beings, he automatically inspires their confidence. He becomes lofty in character, abides in loving-kindness, and acquires great influence and power.*

*Through his freedom from wrong view he gains good companions. Even if he is threatened with a sharp sword, he will not perform an evil deed. Because he holds to the ownership of kamma, he does not believe in superstitious omens. His faith in the true Dhamma is established and firmly rooted. He has faith in the enlightenment of the Tathagatas, and no more delights in the diversity of outside creeds than a royal swan delights in a dung heap.”*

Here we see the refinement of the citta that is averse from wrong view. One should not associate with people who have wrong view. People who do not understand which cause brings which effect, may cling to superstitious omens. They may listen to the Dhamma and have confidence in it, but if they are not firmly established in their confidence in the true Dhamma they may still be carried away by superstitious beliefs and lack understanding of cause and effect.

Sīla is twofold: as avoidance (vāritta) and as performance (cāritta). Sīla as avoidance is abstaining from evil. Sīla as performance is the right conduct one should follow. We may abstain from akusala and not transgress the precepts, but with regard to sīla as performance (cāritta), we should consider the Bodhisatta’s conduct, so that we shall further develop kusala. We read further on:

*“Herein, at the appropriate time, a bodhisattva practises salutation, rising up, giving respectful greetings (añjali), and observing courteous conduct towards good friends worthy of reverence. At the appropriate time he renders them service, and he waits upon them when they are sick. When he receives well-spoken advice he expresses his appreciation. He praises the noble qualities of the virtuous and patiently endures the abuse of antagonists. He remembers*

help rendered to him by others, rejoices in their merits, dedicates his own merits to the supreme enlightenment, and always abides diligently in the practice of wholesome states. When he commits a transgression he acknowledges it as such and confesses it to his co-religionists. Afterwards he perfectly fulfils the right practice.

He is adroit and nimble in fulfilling his duties towards beings when these are conducive to their good. He serves as their companion. When beings are afflicted with the suffering of disease, etc., he prepares the appropriate remedy. He dispels the sorrow of those afflicted by the loss of wealth, etc.- Of a helpful disposition, he restrains with Dhamma those who need to be restrained, rehabilitates them from unwholesome ways, and establishes them in wholesome courses of conduct. He inspires with Dhamma those in need of inspiration. And when he hears about the loftiest, most difficult, inconceivably powerful deeds of the great bodhisattvas of the past, issuing in the ultimate welfare and happiness of beings, by means of which they reached perfect maturity in the requisites of enlightenment, he does not become agitated and alarmed, but reflects: 'Those Great Beings were only human beings. But by developing themselves through the orderly fulfilment of the training they attained the loftiest spiritual power and the highest perfection in the requisites of enlightenment. I, too, should practise the same training in virtue, etc. In that way I, too, will gradually fulfil the training and in the end attain the same state.' Then, with unflagging energy preceded by this faith, he perfectly fulfils the training in virtue, etc.

Again, he conceals his virtues and reveals his faults. He is few in his wishes, content, fond of solitude, aloof, capable of enduring suffering, and free from anxiety. He is not restless, puffed up, fickle, scurrilous or scattered in speech, but calm in his faculties and mind. Avoiding such wrong means of livelihood as scheming, etc., he is endowed with proper conduct and a suitable resort (for alms). He sees danger in the slightest faults, and having undertaken the rules of training, trains himself in them, energetic and resolute, without regard for body or life. He does not tolerate even the slightest concern for his body or life but abandons and dispels it; how much more, then, excessive concern? He abandons and dispels all the corruptions such as anger, malice, etc., which are the cause for moral depravity. He does not become complacent over some minor achievement of distinction and does not shrink away, but strives for successively higher achievements. In this way the achievements he gains do not partake of diminution or stagnation.

The Great Man serves as a guide for the blind, explaining to them the right path. To the deaf he gives signals with gestures of his hands, and in that way benefits them with good. So too for the dumb. To cripples he gives a chair, or a vehicle, or some other means of conveyance. He strives that the faithless

*may gain faith, that the lazy may generate zeal, that those of confused mindfulness may develop mindfulness, that those with wandering minds may become accomplished in concentration, and that the dull-witted may acquire wisdom. He strives to dispel sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness-and-worry, and perplexity in those obsessed by these hindrances, and to dispel wrong thoughts of sensuality, ill will, and aggression in those subjugated by these thoughts. Out of gratitude to those who have helped him, he benefits and honours them with a similar or greater benefit in return, congenial in speech and endearing in his words.*

*He is a companion in misfortune. Understanding the nature and character of beings, he associates with whatever beings need his presence, in whatever way they need it; and he practises together with whatever beings need to practise with him, in whatever way of practice is necessary for them. But he proceeds only by rehabilitating them from the unwholesome and establishing them in the wholesome, not in other ways. For in order to protect the minds of others, bodhisattvas behave only in ways which increase the wholesome. So too, because his inclination is to benefit others, he should never harm them, abuse them, humiliate them, arouse remorse in them, or incite them to act in ways which should be avoided. Nor should he place himself in a higher position than those who are of inferior conduct. He should be neither altogether inaccessible to others, nor too easily accessible, and he should not associate with others at the wrong time.*

*He associates with beings whom it is proper to associate with at the appropriate time and place. He does not criticize those who are dear to others in front of them, nor praise those who are resented by them. He is not intimate with those who are not trustworthy. He does not refuse a proper invitation, or engage in persuasion, or accept excessively.”*

Sīla of performance, cāritta sīla, is subtle and refined, and we should consider it at the present moment with sati. For example, when a dear friend does something wrong, one may be off guard and blame him immediately in front of others. But when sati arises, one will wait for the proper opportunity and speak to him later on. This shows that defilements have to be worn off time and again, until they eventually will be completely eradicated.



## Chapter 3

### *The Perfection of Renunciation*

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of renunciation as follows:

*“Renunciation (nekkhamma) has the characteristic of departing from sense pleasures and existence; its function is to verify the unsatisfactoriness they involve; its manifestation is the withdrawal from them; a sense of spiritual urgency (sarivega) is its proximate cause.”*

The perfection of renunciation is the giving up of pleasure, clinging, and the ways of wrong thinking that are: sensuous thinking (kāma vitakka), thinking of hate (vyāpāda vitakka) and thinking of cruelty (vihimsā vitakka). These unwholesome ways of thinking can be given up by becoming a monk or by the development of satipaṭṭhāna. When someone gives up thoughts of sense pleasures, of hate and of harming others, he is developing the perfection of renunciation.

Generally people believe that one can practise renunciation only by becoming a monk, but in order to understand the real meaning of renunciation we have to consider the different types of citta that are thinking, be they kusala or akusala. We usually think in our daily life in an unwholesome way of the sense objects: of visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object, thus, there is sensuous thinking, kāma vitakka. Can we avoid thinking of sense objects with pleasure, infatuation and clinging?

The opposite of sensuous thinking is thinking of renunciation (nekkhamma vitakka). Renunciation, departing from sense pleasures, is practised not only by entering the state of monkhood, which is a superior state, but it can also be practised by laypeople in daily life. Did we ever consider to abandon sense pleasures? Are we becoming disenchanted with sense objects? We have attachment to visible object, sound and the other sense objects; we do not have to give them up, but do we want more of them? If we have not yet enough of them we give in to sensuous thinking, whereas if we find that we have quite sufficient of them, we have thoughts of renunciation.

When we continue to crave for evermore sense pleasures, it shows that

we have defilements. We should ask ourselves whether we wish to have more defilements. Each time we are attached to visible object and the other sense objects, defilements arise. If we do not realize that we have already a great deal of defilements, the thought of renunciation will not arise. We may want to obtain still more pleasant sense objects and never be contented with what we have already. We do not have to become a monk in order to develop renunciation, but we could ask ourselves whether we have already enough pleasant things. It may happen that we, for example, do not wish to buy more clothing again that merely serves as beautification of the body, and we may consider what we have as more than sufficient. In that case we have renunciation in daily life.

We should begin to investigate and consider with regard to ourselves whether our possessions are already sufficient; we should become contented with what we have. If we obtain more than we need, we could give it away if it can be of use to others. In that way the perfection of renunciation develops. Instead of sensuous thinking there can be thinking of renunciation.

If we want to eradicate defilements it is essential to consider the perfections in our daily life. We should reflect on the Buddha's former lives, on his conduct leading to Buddhahood. We may think the stories about his former lives just very ordinary, but, in fact, these stories deal with the perfections the Bodhisatta developed during all those lives.

We read in the Commentary to the "Basket of Conduct", the "Conduct of Sona Nanda"<sup>1</sup> :

*"At that time the Bodhisatta passed away from the Brahma world and was born as the son of a Brahmin magnate who had a possession worth eighty crores, in the city of Brahmavaddhana. His parents called him young Sona. When Sona could walk, another being passed away from the Brahma world and he too was conceived by the Bodhisatta's mother. When he was born they called him young Nanda. The venerable Ānanda was at that time Nanda.*

*When their parents observed how handsome the boys were they let them be educated in all the liberal arts and they wanted them to marry. However, the Bodhisatta did not wish to marry. He wanted to look after his parents during their whole life, and after their death retire from worldly life. His parents tried to persuade him to marry, but the Bodhisatta was firmly convinced that he should become an ascetic. Thereupon his parents wanted to entrust their possessions to Nanda instead, but Nanda said, 'Since my older brother Sona did not accept your possessions, I will not accept them either, and I shall also*

---

1 See also the Sona Nanda Jātaka, no. 532.

become an ascetic.' The parents were much surprised that their two sons wanted in their young age to give up their possessions and retire from worldly life. When they noticed the firm determination of their sons, and saw that they were able to become ascetics although they were quite young, they also wanted to retire from worldly life. At that time they built a hermitage in the wood and the two brothers looked after their parents. The sage Nanda thought, 'We shall just gather fruits as food for our parents.' He would bring fruits that were left over from the previous day, or that he had gathered on previous days, and give them to his parents to eat early in the morning. When they had eaten them they would rinse their mouths and observe a fast. But the sage Sona went somewhat further away to gather sweet and ripe fruits with a delicious flavour and offered these to them.

His parents said to Sona, "We have already eaten and we are observing a fast, and therefore we have no need of these fruits.' However, the fruits that the sage Nanda had gathered before in order to give to his parents early in the morning were sometimes spoiled.

Thereupon the Bodhisatta thought, 'My parents are delicate, they belong to a high caste, and thus they should not eat fruits that are not good. Sometimes they are spoilt or unripe. Nanda brings all kinds of half-ripe or unripe fruits for them to eat and therefore they will not live long.' He wanted to stop Nanda from doing this, and addressed him with the words: 'From now on, when you have gathered fruits for our parents, you have to wait until I have returned, and then we shall both at the same time supply them with food. They should not merely eat the fruits of Nanda.'

When the sage Sona had spoken thus, the sage Nanda did not follow up what his brother said because he hoped to gain merit for himself. He hoped that his parents would eat only the fruits that he had brought himself. When the Bodhisatta noticed that the sage Nanda paid no heed to his words he told him to go somewhere else, and that he himself would take care of his parents.

When the sage Nanda was dismissed by his brother he took leave of the Bodhisatta and of his parents. He developed the eight attainments and the five higher powers 'and then he wanted to ask his brother forgiveness."

These are the thoughts of someone who has accumulated the perfections and knows what is proper and what not. We read further on about the sage Nanda's thoughts:

- 
- 1 These eight attainments are stages of absorption concentration, jhāna, acquired through the development of samatha, calm. They are stages of material jhāna, rūpa jhāna and immaterial jhāna, arūpa jhāna. The five higher powers, abhiññās, which are mundane, are magical powers, divine ear, penetration of the cittas of others, divine eye and remembrance of former existences.

“He thought, ‘If I wish to ask my brother forgiveness, it should be in the most superior way.’ He was wondering how he should achieve this. He thought that in order to ask his brother forgiveness, he would bring Sakka, the King of the devas, from the heaven of the Thirty-three, but he found this improper. Since he and his brother were still in this world, it was more suitable to bring the chief King Manoja who resided in Brahmavaddhana and who was more powerful than the other Kings. He would tell King Manoja that he wanted to ask his brother forgiveness.

When he had thought about this he went to the palace of King Manoja and said, ‘I will get the sovereignty over all India and offer it to you, but I would pray you to see my elder brother, so that I will be forgiven by him.’ Finally, Nanda could ask his brother forgiveness and was forgiven by him. The Bodhisatta let the sage Nanda look after their mother whereas he looked after their father for as long as they lived. The Bodhisatta taught Dhamma with the graceful poise of a Buddha to King Manoja:

*‘Joy, careless ease, laughter and sport, are the sure heritage*

*Of him that studiously shall tend a mother in old age.*

*Joy, careless ease, laughter and sport, are the sure heritage*

*Of him that studiously shall tend a father in old age.*

*Gifts, loving speech, kind offices, together with the grace*

*Of calm neutrality of mind shown in due time and place*

*These virtues to the world are as a linch-pin to chariot wheel.*

*If these virtues are lacking, parents do not receive respect and reverence from their children.’ ”*

Thus, if someone does not give assistance to his parents in this way, he has no reverence for his parents. We read further on:

*“The parents should be revered, and the wise approve of the man in whom these virtues may be found. They say that the parents are like Brahma, they own a high position and are worthy of respect.*

*Therefore, the wise give respect to them and honour them with service, providing them with food, drink, clothing, beds, by bathing and anointing them, and washing their feet,*

*Sages praise in this world people who look after their parents in this way, and*

*when they part from this world they will rejoice in heaven.”*

The other perfections should also be taken into consideration. The Bodhisatta was a person who did not pay attention at all to sense pleasures, he had the highest degree of respect for his parents, and he never tired of looking after them. Even though he had to take care of them, he still used every opportunity to dedicate himself to attaining jhāna.

Another perfection we should develop in daily life is the perfection of energy, viriya. When the Bodhisatta searched for good fruits to offer to his parents, he needed to have endurance and energy. When we think of the ten perfections in our case, we should consider how our conduct is in the present life that has followed upon our lives of the past and that is conditioned by our accumulations in the past. One life was succeeded by a following life without interruption, and we were born into different lives as such or such person in such or such place.

The perfection of renunciation is the elimination, the giving up and the subduing of attachment to sense objects, the departing from them. We only realize with regard to this life that we cling to visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object. To what extent can we gradually become more detached from these objects? We may see the benefit of developing the perfection of renunciation. Someone may have given up the lay life and become a monk, but if he still clings to the five sense objects just as a layman, there is no difference between being a monk or a layman. Therefore, the perfection of renunciation does not merely mean leaving the household life and becoming a monk. Renunciation means having the energy and courage to eliminate the clinging we all have to visible object, sound and the other sense objects. So long as we have not attained the excellent state of the non-returner, we have not eradicated clinging to sense objects. We should know ourselves as we are, we should know whether we are sincere and have the firm determination to eliminate the clinging to the five sense objects. We are, for example, attached to colour, when we look at pictures, when we find them beautiful and delightful. Generally, when we see something beautiful, we are likely to have enjoyment and clinging, lobha. If there is heedfulness, it can be known that at such a moment this is only a reality, a dhamma, that appears. Attachment can decrease by not trying to obtain the attractive object so that we do not accumulate more attachment. Thus, when there is a pleasant object, we can see it, but when it is not there and we cannot see it, we should not search for it.

We may usually eat delicious food, and when we eat too much it is bad

for our body. However, the citta that is attached to the flavour of food causes us to eat even when we are not hungry. If we can eliminate clinging, if we can have renunciation with regard to flavour, we shall eat just enough to satisfy our hunger, and if possible, we shall not even relish the food so much. Someone may not be hungry, and he knows that he will feel uncomfortable if he still eats. However, because the food is so delicious, he will just savour one morsel. This shows that he does not have renunciation. Whereas, if someone has renunciation, he can begin to train himself by endurance, and thus, he needs to have also the perfection of patience, so that he will eat just sufficiently to satisfy his hunger; he knows when the amount of food is just enough to sustain his body.

We can understand that it is most difficult to be free from clinging to the sense objects, because even training oneself to decrease clinging is already difficult. Therefore, we should develop moral strength so that all the perfections can assist satipaṭṭhāna to be aware more often of the characteristics of realities in daily life.

If we have patience we can endure the experience of heat or cold. When the weather is hot, we do not need to make special efforts to have a cold bath, or when it is cold, we do not need a warm bath. For some people it may be necessary for their body to take care of the right temperature of their bath. However, when this is not the case, we may be attached to the temperature of the water. Some people, when they have a warm bath, feel comfortable and pleasant; even though their body is strong and they do not need a warm bath, they like to have this pleasant sensation. Or sometimes they take pleasure in having a cold bath. When someone understands the perfection of renunciation, he can have more endurance, no matter whether he experiences heat or cold. He also needs the perfections of patience and of energy.

Nobody can tell someone else to give up attachment to sense pleasures, nor can one tell oneself to do this, but it must be paññā which understands the true meaning of the perfection of renunciation.

We read in the “Jatukaṇṇimāṇavapucchā”, Jatukaṇṇī’s Questions, of the Cūlaniddesa, “Khuddhaka Nikāya”:

*“(There is) renunciation, nekkhamma (when there is) seeing, seeing clearly, comparing, considering, developing, so that one clearly understands the right practice, the proper practice, the practice that is an enemy<sup>1</sup>, the practice that is beneficial, the practice of Dhamma according to the Dhamma that*

---

1 An enemy, opposed to attachment.

leads to purity of *sīla*.

*(There is renunciation, when there is) the guarding of the sense doors, moderation in eating, the application of energy so that one is alert and awake, sati-sampajañña (sati and paññā).*

*(There is renunciation, when there are) the four applications of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of success, the five spiritual faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, the eight Path factors<sup>1</sup>, nibbāna and the practice leading to nibbāna.*

*(When there is renunciation) with happiness, (there is) resistance, a refuge, a protection, no danger, unshakableness, the deathlessness, a dhamma departing from clinging, which is like a thread that fastens. Having seen (all this), there is renunciation with happiness.”*

It is not easy to see that renunciation means happiness. We should understand that it must be *paññā* that sees its benefit, that compares and considers the practice, so that one should follow the right and proper practice that opposes attachment and clinging to visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object. One should see the benefit of the practice of Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma and develop the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment.

Therefore, it must be *paññā* which understands and knows that renunciation which departs from sense objects is to be achieved by *sati-sampajañña*, the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment, the attainment of *nibbāna* and the practice leading to *nibbāna*, as stated by the *Cūlaniddeśa*. And all this is practised with happiness, which means, that one should see the disadvantage and danger of defilements. One should have an unshakable determination to develop *paññā* in order to completely eradicate clinging to sense objects. This has to begin by

---

1 The four bases of success, *iddhipādas*, are: wish-to-do, *chanda*, energy, *virīya*, *citta* and *vīmaṃsa*, investigation. The four right efforts, *sammā-padhānas*, are: the effort of avoiding *akusala*, of overcoming *akusala*, of developing *kusala* and of maintaining *kusala*. The five (spiritual) faculties, *indriyas*, are: confidence, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. *Indriya* means leader, ruler or controlling faculty. The faculties are “leaders”, each in their own field. The five powers, *balas*, are the same realities as the five spiritual faculties, *indriyas*, but when the *indriyas* have been developed so that they are unshakable by their opposites, they have become powers. The seven factors of enlightenment are: *sati*, investigation of the Dhamma (*dhamma-vicaya*), energy (*virīya*), rapture (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). All these thirty-seven factors, *bodhipakkhiya dhammas*, are the factors pertaining to enlightenment; if they are developed, they lead to enlightenment.

listening and considering the Dhamma so that one first sees the benefit of the practice. One should realize that renunciation means happiness and that this kind of happiness is without a self who seeks enjoyment. We should understand that detachment from the sense objects leads to the highest calm and well-being.

Each of the perfections should be developed together with paññā, otherwise kusala is not of the degree of a perfection. If one does not see the danger of akusala and if one does not realize the benefit of the perfections, they cannot be developed. In that case paññā is too weak to see the benefit of their development.

If one's goal is the realization of the four noble Truths, one should not only develop paññā but also the perfections. Each of the perfections is an important and helpful condition for the realization of the four noble Truths. Some people may wonder why it is necessary to develop day after day the perfections together with satipaṭṭhāna. Someone who has understanding about the development of the eightfold Path knows that sati should be aware of the characteristics of realities that are appearing, and that paññā gradually considers, notices and understands the characteristics of the dhammas that are non-self, as nāma, the reality which experiences, or rūpa, the reality which does not experience.

Satipaṭṭhāna cannot arise all the time, but still, the fact that one has listened to the Dhamma and accumulated understanding of the development of satipaṭṭhāna, all these factors are conditions for the arising also of other levels of sati. There can be sati of the level of the excellent qualities that are the perfections <sup>1</sup>. Each perfection implies a level of refined sati.

We should develop satipaṭṭhāna together with all the perfections, and this for an endlessly long time. We shall know that satipaṭṭhāna can gradually grow, together with the perfections which we have developed and accumulated.

In order to realize the four noble Truths, all the perfections should be developed, not only generosity and morality, but also renunciation, the giving up of clinging to the sense objects. We also need to have the perfections of energy and patience,

---

1 Each kusala citta is accompanied by sati that is heedful, non-forgetful of what is kusala. Thus, there are many levels of sati: sati of dāna, of sila, of samatha and of satipaṭṭhāna. Sati of satipaṭṭhāna is non-forgetful of the characteristic of reality, nāma or rūpa, that appears.



we should have endurance and we should not be disturbed by the sense objects, be they desirable or undesirable.

We read that the Bodhisatta in one of his former lives considered the true nature of his akusala, he knew that it often arose. He realized how difficult it was to give up clinging to the sense objects. We read in the Commentary to the “Susīma Jātaka”(no. 411) that the Bodhisatta considered the citta which had to strive after the giving up of clinging to sense objects, to visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object:

*“The Bodhisatta considered: a sick person cannot turn himself over by his own strength. The hospital nurse has to attach a string so that he can pull himself up, and he should exhort him with the words, ‘come, pull this string so that you can turn yourself over.’ When he pulls that string he can turn himself over and experiences bodily wellbeing, but he does not find mental ease, be it even slight. This situation is the same as when beings are inflamed because of their defilements: they cannot uplift themselves and turn away from defilements by means of happiness arising from solitude.”*

If there is no clinging to the sense objects, one will have true calm, there will be happiness arising from solitude; one is tranquil and free from clinging to the sense objects. However, in order to become uplifted and turn away from defilements, to become free from clinging, to depart from sensepleasures, we need the assistance of the perfections we have accumulated. Only in that way can we renounce the sense pleasures. We read in the Commentary to the “Susīma Jātaka”:

*“This thought occurred to the Bodhisatta during a past life when King Brahmadata was reigning in Vārānasī. The Bodhisatta was at that time the son of the King’s priest and his name was young Susīma. The King’s son was named young Brahmadata. The two boys grew up together and learnt all sciences at Takkasīla, and when they had accomplished their studies they came home again. Young Brahmadata became viceroy, and at his father’s death he became King and made young Susīma his advisor and priest.*

*One day the King went around the city in procession seated on the shoulder of an elephant while he made the priest sit on the back of the elephant. The queen-mother, when she stood and looked out from the royal window, saw the priest sitting behind the King. She fell in love with him and did not want to eat anymore. The King went to see her and asked what ailed her, but the queen mother did not want to tell him because she was ashamed. Thereupon the King sent his chief queen, and the queen-mother spoke about what had happened. The King entreated the priest to become King and he made the queen-mother his chief queen while he himself became the viceroy.*

*From then on the Bodhisatta was disenchanted with the household life. The queen spoke to him in many ways and used several tricks with him so that he would enjoy his reign, but the Bodhisatta taught Dhamma, he showed the delight and the misery of the sense pleasures, and he returned the kingdom to the viceroy. He became an ascetic sage and cultivated the attainments of jhāna and the supernatural powers, so that he became destined for the Brahma world.”*

At the end of this Jātaka the Buddha explained that the chief queen was Rāhula’s mother, the king was Ānanda and king Susīma was the Buddha himself.

In relating his past lives, the Buddha explained that nobody can know the force of lobha, nor in what way it will arise in each life. Renunciation from sense pleasures is most difficult, and going forth from the household life to become a monk is even more difficult, because the monk should carefully consider and observe the rules of the Vinaya. But anyway, if one wishes to give up sense pleasures, clinging to the sense objects, it is necessary to renounce them by the development of paññā. One should know the characteristics of realities as not a being, not a person, not self. There may be attachment, aversion, seeing, hearing, jealousy, conceit or thinking of the importance of self, all these phenomena are realities that we refer to as different cittas and cetasikas, as different conditions, as realities that through their arising condition one another. All this is complex and deep in meaning. Paññā should be able to penetrate the true nature of dhammas at this very moment and realize them as not a being and not self.

## Chapter 4

### *The Perfection of Wisdom*

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of wisdom as follows:

*“Wisdom (paññā) has the characteristic of penetrating the real specific nature (of dhammas), or the characteristic of sure penetration, like the penetration of an arrow shot by a skilful archer; its function is to illuminate the objective field, like a lamp; its manifestation is non-confusion, like a guide in a forest; concentration or the four (noble) truths, is its proximate cause.”*

Through the study of the Dhamma we gradually come to have more understanding of the vicissitudes of the world, of gain and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, wellbeing and pain. We shall understand that the pleasant “worldly conditions” of gain, honour, praise and wellbeing only lead to dukkha, suffering, if there is no paññā that knows the causes and their appropriate results in life. If someone truly sees the value of paññā and intends to develop kusala, he will not wish for pleasant sense objects as result, but he will aim for the growth of paññā until it has become keen and accomplished to the degree that it can completely eradicate defilements. Satipaṭṭhāna, right understanding of the mental phenomena and physical phenomena of our life, cannot be developed without paññā. No matter how many other excellent qualities someone may have, his defilements cannot be eradicated if paññā does not develop and becomes keener, if paññā does not clearly see the true nature of the realities that are naturally appearing. Thus, we should see the incomparable value of paññā and we should apply ourselves to its development so that it can become fully accomplished. If we develop satipaṭṭhāna time and again, paññā will be gradually accumulated so that it becomes keener, and reaches the degree of a perfection which realizes the four noble Truths.

We read in the “Khuddhaka Nikāya” in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”, the “Conduct of Yudañjaya”, about the beginning of the development of paññā during the life the Bodhisatta was young Yudañjaya <sup>1</sup>:

---

1 See Jātaka no. 460.

*“In his life when the Bodhisatta was Yudañjaya, he was the eldest son of the King and had the rank of the viceroy. He fulfilled every day mahā-dāna<sup>1</sup>, the giving of an abundance of gifts. One day when he visited the royal park he saw the dewdrops hanging like a string of pearls on the tree-tops, the grass-tips, the end of the branches and on the spiders’ webs.*

*The prince enjoyed himself in the royal park and when the sun rose higher all the dewdrops that were hanging there disintegrated and disappeared. He reflected thus: ‘These dewdrops came into being and then disappeared. Evenso are conditioned realities, the lives of all beings; they are like the dewdrops hanging on the grass-tips.’ He felt a sense of urgency and became disenchanted with worldly life, so that he took leave of his parents and became a recluse.”*

From this story we can learn that people have different degrees of understanding. We may see dew drops hanging on grass-tips, but who has paññā to the degree of causing a sense of urgency and disenchantment when he compares his own life with the evanescent dew?

We read:

*“The Bodhisatta realized the impermanence of the dewdrops and made this predominant in accumulating a sense of urgency and disenchantment; it arose once and then became a condition leading to its arising very often.”*

When right understanding with a sense of urgency arises we should not let it pass by without paying attention to it. We should reflect on the conditions for this sense of urgency so that it can arise more often. The thought of death and impermanence can be a condition for further developing the perfections.

The Commentary to the “Conduct of Yudañjaya” explains about the beginning of paññā in that life of the Bodhisatta. We read:

*“By offering mahā-dāna before he retired from the world and by his giving up of the kingdom he fulfilled the perfection of giving.*

*By his restraint in action and speech he fulfilled the perfection of sīla.*

*By his going forth from worldly life and by his attainment of jhāna he fulfilled the perfection of renunciation.*

*In that life he began to develop paññā by wise consideration of impermanence*

---

1 The word mahā-dāna is mostly used for the great offering of gifts to the Sangha.

*so that eventually the higher powers (abhiññās) could be attained; he developed paññā which could distinguish the dhammas that were beneficial from those that were not beneficial for the development of generosity and so on. In that way he fulfilled the perfection of paññā.*

*By energy for the accomplishment of what was beneficial in all his undertakings he fulfilled the perfection of energy.*

*By patience associated with paññā (ñāṇa khanti) and by endurance (adhivasana khanti) he fulfilled the perfection of patience.*

*By not speaking wrongly, not deviating from what he had promised, he fulfilled the perfection of truthfulness.*

*By his unshakable determination in all that he undertook and observed, he fulfilled the perfection of determination.*

*By the power of the divine abiding of loving-kindness, thinking only of the benefit of all beings, he fulfilled the perfection of loving-kindness.*

*By his evenmindedness towards beings' contrarious behaviour, and by the divine abiding of equanimity, he fulfilled the perfection of equanimity.*

*These are the ways by which he fulfilled the ten perfections."*

The perfection of paññā is essential for the development of the other perfections in the right way. We should remember that the goal of the development of the perfections is paññā which penetrates the four noble Truths. Since its development to that degree takes an endlessly long time, paññā, in its turn, is also dependent on the other perfections. We can notice in this life that someone who has developed the perfections will be inclined to listen to the Dhamma, whereas someone who has not developed the perfections does not see the benefit of the development of paññā and does not want to listen to the Dhamma. Even though there is still opportunity to listen to the true Dhamma, he is not interested in listening.

A person who has already developed the perfection of paññā to a certain extent, wishes to understand and to know the true nature of realities, no matter where he is born, or even if he is born into a family where there is wrong view. We read in "The Questions of Piṅgiya" (Cūlaniddesa of the "Khuddhaka Nikāya") that the Brahmin Piṅgiya who was hundred and twenty years old asked the Buddha:

*"I am old and weak, I have lost my beauty, and moreover, my eyesight and my hearing are not clear. Meanwhile, Lord Buddha, may I not go astray, may the Lord explain the Dhamma that he penetrated, the Dhamma that makes an*

*end to birth and old age.”*

A person with paññā would not ask for anything else but hearing the true Dhamma which makes an end to birth and old age. Although Piṅgiya was hundred and twenty years old, he wanted to listen to the true Dhamma. He had accumulated paññā to such degree that he saw the benefit of listening to the Dhamma. We read further on:

*“The Buddha said to the Brahmin Piṅgiya: ‘People are intoxicated, they are oppressed by physical phenomena, rūpas. It can be seen that people are disturbed because of rūpas. Therefore, Piṅgiya, you should not be neglectful, you should give up clinging to rūpas so that you will not be reborn.’ ”*

People who have developed paññā know that dukkha, suffering, arises because of clinging to rūpa. In order to abandon dukkha, we should eliminate clinging to rūpas. The dukkha in our life is caused by rūpas, because we cling and take delight in the sense objects of colour, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object. All these objects are the cause of diverse kinds of dukkha.

Further on we read:

*“The term ‘by rūpas’ (rūpesu) means: by the four great Elements and the derived rūpas that are dependent on these <sup>1</sup>. Beings are disturbed and troubled, they are hurt and killed because of rūpa; rūpa is the condition and the cause of this.*

*Because of rūpa, Kings commit many kinds of deeds, they inflict many kinds of punishment. They have someone beaten by whips, sticks, split rods. They have people’s hands, feet, earlobes, and nose cut off. They have a pot of boiling rice placed on someone’s head....”*

It is because of rūpas that we can experience the effect of being punished, like being beaten by whips etc. We read further on:

*“The skin of the head is stripped off so that its colour is white as a conchshell...their body is cut up and smeared with a biting liquid...They have their skin stripped off, their bones smashed; they have the body sprinkled with hot oil; they let the dogs eat the flesh of their body, they let their body be pierced by spears, or they have it cut up with a knife....*

*All beings are bound to be troubled, harmed and killed, because of rūpa. One*

---

1 The four Great Elements are: Earth or solidity, Water or cohesion, Fire or temperature and Wind, motion or pressure. The derived rūpas are twenty-four rūpas. Rūpas arise and fall away in groups, consisting of at least eight rūpas: the four Great Elements and four derived rūpas.

*can see, investigate and consider this so that paññā develops and one sees clearly that all beings are troubled and harmed in those ways. Therefore the Buddha said that he saw all beings being troubled because of rūpa.”*

When we depart from this world, we do not know where we will go. It may happen that we shall receive punishment in the aforesaid ways. So long as we have a body we do not know what will happen to it, but when there is a cause for receiving tortures, which is the result of akusala kamma, rūpa is the cause, the reason for experiencing painful feeling. We read further on:

*“When the eyesight declines, or even disappears altogether, people are troubled.*

*Apart from trouble caused by the ear, the nose, the tongue, visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object, it is caused by the family (which supports the monk), by the fellow monks of the monastery, gain, honour, praise, wellbeing, robes, almsfood, dwelling, medicines; when these things decline or disappear altogether so that one is without them, people are troubled.*

*Because of these reasons it is said that everybody is disturbed because of rūpa. One should eliminate attachment to rūpa so that one can give it up in this life.*

*With regard to Piṅgiya, he attained enlightenment when the Buddha had finished this Dhamma discourse.”*

We see from this example that although Piṅgiya had accumulated perfections through listening to the Dhamma, he also needed the perfection of energy and of patience because paññā develops only very gradually, it is a long and difficult process. The perfection of truthfulness and the perfection of determination are a necessary foundation for being able to listen to the Dhamma. One should be unshakable in one's determination to listen, no matter in what circumstances one may be.

The perfection of paññā can be developed when we perform deeds of generosity, but we should know to what purpose we give things away: to eliminate defilements. Someone who does not know that paññā has to be developed in order to realize the four noble Truths, gives without paññā, and he may expect a reward for his good deed. However, someone who gives things away with understanding of realities is aware of the fact that, in truth, no beings, people or self are to be found; he knows that birth leads to suffering and trouble, life after life. He knows that the end to rebirth is the end to suffering. This means that seeing, hearing,

smelling, tasting or the experience of tangible object and all the sufferings caused by them will not arise any more. All kinds of kusala have to be developed to the degree of a perfection, so that the four noble Truths can be realized and defilements be eradicated. When someone has become a streamwinner, sotāpanna, he will not more than seven times be reborn and then attain arahatship.

When sati and paññā have become keener and more refined, we shall see that we have many different kinds of defilements through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind, the whole day. It is extremely difficult to eradicate them completely. This can only be achieved by developing every kind of kusala to the degree of a perfection. If someone has right understanding of the significance of the perfections, he will, when he performs generous deeds, not aim for anything else but the realization of the noble Truths so that defilements can be completely eradicated.

We can only know ourselves whether our kusala is a perfection or not. If someone has no understanding of the way to eradicate defilements, his generosity is not a perfection. Someone who has listened to the Dhamma and notices his defilements, may perform kusala of the degree of a perfection, but it all depends on the strength of his paññā. Some people who have just begun to listen to the Dhamma say that they do not need to attain nibbāna, and that they do not need to be a “streamwinner”, sotāpanna, who will not be reborn more than seven times. They want to be reborn more than seven times. Thus, it is evident that in their case paññā of the level of listening is still weak. For the development of the perfections it is necessary that paññā clearly sees the benefit of developing them, be it the perfection of generosity, of sīla, of renunciation or any of the other perfections. Thus, it all depends on the degree of paññā to what extent the perfections can be developed.

We may not have understood that the defilements and all dukkha, suffering, arising in this life originate in “our personality”, which is the nāma dhammas and rūpa dhammas we take for me, for self. The true cessation of dukkha is that nāma dhamma and rūpa dhamma do not have to be reborn.

We read in the “Mahāniddeśa, “Attadaṇḍa Sutta”:

*“The word ‘man’ (nara<sup>1</sup>) is used here with regard to someone who is inclined to nibbāna. This means, that ‘men’ are people in this world who perform generous deeds, undertake sīla, observe the fastday, prepare water for*

---

1 Nara, here translated as man, can mean: valiant, heroic, strong.



*drinking and for other uses, sweep the grounds, pay respect to the stupa, develop kusala of the three dhātus, elements<sup>1</sup>, that should be developed. They do not develop kusala because of rebirth, because of a plane of existence they want to attain, because they want to continue in the cycle of birth and death. They have as their goal to depart from dukkha, they are humble and they are inclined to nibbāna. Because of this goal they will develop all kinds of kusala. They are called 'men', because they are inclined to nibbāna."*

Someone who has not understood the true meaning of dukkha may hope for the end of dukkha in as far as he sees dukkha as merely getting what he does not wish for. Or he may just want to have no more suffering. However, when someone has understanding of the meaning of dukkha, his goal is departing from dukkha, in the sense of being inclined to nibbāna, which is the end of dukkha inherent in all conditioned dhammas. This kind of understanding has as foundation listening to the Dhamma and seeing the danger in akusala, seeing the disadvantage, suffering and danger of rebirth, of the arising of nāma dhammas and rūpa dhammas.

Akusala dhammas arise very often, since they are conditioned by all the akusala we have accumulated. If we see the benefit of the development of the perfections, we should find out whether in our daily life kusala arises often or whether it arises very seldom. When kusala arises we should know whether it has become firmer and whether it has reached already the degree of a perfection. Someone may have performed kusala time and again, also before he listened to the Dhamma but, after he listened to the Dhamma and he learnt that the perfections are an essential condition for the realization of the four noble Truths, his sincerity and unshakable determination to further develop kusala increases.

We read in the Commentary to the "Mahāniddeśa" of the Khuddhaka Nikāya, the Commentary to the "Guhattaka Sutta-niddeśa", "the Cave":

*"The term 'paññā' means: it penetrates. What does it penetrate? It penetrates the noble Truths, the Truth of, 'This is dukkha...'"*

The noble Truth of dukkha is not merely dukkha which is suffering, oppressing us in daily life, such as loss of possessions, blame, pain etc. The noble Truth of dukkha is the truth that nothing is permanent, that whatever arises such as seeing, hearing, thinking, happiness or pain

---

1 These are: kusala which is of the sense sphere, kusala which is rūpa jhāna and kusala which is arūpa jhāna.

arises just for an extremely short moment and then disappears. Knowing, “this is dukkha”, means, knowing that what arises and falls away immediately is dukkha.

We read further on in the Commentary quoted above:

*“This kind of paññā is an indriya, a controlling faculty, in the sense of predominance, because it overcomes ignorance, avijjā.”*

Whenever paññā does not arise, we are overcome by ignorance. The characteristic of paññā is the opposite of that of ignorance. Ignorance can be overcome when paññā arises.

We read further on:

*“This kind of paññā has the characteristic of illuminating and of penetration. As when a lamp burns at night in a four-walled house the darkness ceases, light manifests itself, so paññā has illuminating as its characteristic <sup>1</sup>.”*

So long as the truth has not been realized we cannot speak of illumination. One merely begins to understand realities. However, when paññā has reached a higher level, it has the characteristic of illumination: it can realize the truth when the element of nāma, the element which experiences, clearly appears through the mind-door. Then the characteristic of rūpa does not blend in with the characteristic of nāma-dhātu, the element of nāma. That is the meaning of illumination <sup>2</sup>.

We read further on:

*“To the wise at a single session the ten thousand world-spheres appear as of one light.”*

Paññā which is illumination is understanding which penetrates the characteristics of realities which were never before penetrated. Formerly someone may have heard about these characteristics and understood them in theory, but he may not yet have directly realized them. Paññā can grow and it can become illumination. As we read, even when we sit in one place, the ten thousand world-spheres can appear as of one light. This means that paññā understands thoroughly and penetrates the characteristic of nāma dhamma when nāma dhamma appears. Nāma dhamma arises in the planes of the five khandhas, in the heavenly planes, in the rūpa-brahma planes, in the arūpa-brahma planes<sup>3</sup>, or in

---

1 See also The Expositor, Atthasālinī, I, Book I, Part IV, Ch I, 122.

2 When insight knowledge arises the characteristic of nāma appears through the mind-door and nāma is clearly distinguished from rūpa.

3 Birth in the rūpa-brahma planes is the result of rūpa jhāna, and birth in the

whatever world of the countless worldsystems, but it has one characteristic: nāma dhamma is the reality which experiences, the element, dhātu, which experiences an object. When paññā penetrates the characteristics of realities, ten thousand worldsystems appear as of one light, which means that paññā clearly understands the characteristics of realities, no matter where they arise.

We read further on:

*“A man introduces an oil-lamp into a dark house; the lamp so introduced disperses the darkness, produces light, sheds lustre, makes objects visible, so, understanding as it arises dispels the darkness of ignorance, produces the light of wisdom, sheds the lustre of knowledge, makes plain the four noble Truths. Thus understanding has illuminating as its characteristic.”*

While we are listening to the Dhamma at this moment, we are developing the perfection of paññā together with the perfections of energy and patience, so that in the future paññā that is illumination, that clearly understands realities, will arise.

We read further on:

*“And as a clever surgeon knows which food is suitable, and which is not, evenso is understanding...”*

Here we see that paññā should be developed in daily life so that it thoroughly knows and penetrates the characteristics of realities.

We read:

*“Evenso, understanding as it arises knows states as kusala or akusala, serviceable or unserviceable, low or exalted, black or pure, similar or dissimilar. And this was said by the ‘General of the Dhamma’ (Sāriputta): ‘It knows; thus, monk, it is in consequence called understanding. And what does it know? This is dukkha, etc. Thus it should be expanded. And thus knowing should be regarded as the characteristic of understanding.’*

*Here is another view: Understanding has the penetration of intrinsic nature, unflinching penetration as its characteristic, like the penetration of an arrow shot by a skilled archer; illumination of the object as its function, as it were a lamp; non-perplexity as its proximate cause, as it were a good guide in the forest.”*

This is the characteristic of paññā which knows everything as it really is. When satipaṭṭhāna does not arise, we spend our day with ignorance: we

do not know which kind of akusala citta arises, what degree of lobha accompanies akusala citta, and we cannot clearly distinguish between attachment arising through the eyes, the ears or the mind-door. The whole day we are ignorant of the truth of realities. When paññā arises, it knows precisely which dhammas are kusala and which are akusala. There is no need to ask someone else whether it is kusala or akusala that arises, because paññā is able to understand this. Paññā knows which dhammas are beneficial and which are not.

When akusala citta arises paññā clearly understands it; it knows the danger of akusala and it knows that akusala should not increase. When kusala citta arises paññā clearly understands it and it knows the benefit of kusala. As we read in the Commentary, paññā knows the characteristics of the dhammas that are low or exalted, dark or pure.

We read further on:

*“Again, the development of paññā with the aim to realize the four noble Truths is walking a very long way, namely traversing the cycle of birth and death.”*

If paññā arises we can understand that the cycle of birth and death we have traversed thus far is extremely long. So long as paññā has not become accomplished, the path leading to the end of the cycle is still extremely long. Thus, as we read, for the development of paññā we have an extremely long way to go. We have to go to the further shore, into the direction of nibbāna, where, according to the Commentary, “we never went yet, not even in our dreams”.

We need all ten perfections, because we have such an amount of defilements. It is not sufficient only to develop the perfection of paññā. If we do not understand what the perfections are and in what way we should develop them in our daily life, we cannot realize the four noble Truths, but we have merely vain expectations of achieving their realization. We do not know ourselves and we do not understand that we need the perfections which are a supporting condition for the development of kusala and for the elimination of akusala dhammas.

When we have understood that satipaṭṭhāna should be developed together with the perfections, there are conditions for the perfection of generosity, the giving away of things for the benefit of someone else, for the perfection of sīla, the abstention from akusala kamma and the perfection of renunciation: detachment from visible object, sound and the other sense objects. This is a very gradual process, but at times someone may notice that he is inclined to become more detached from

sense objects, that he has had already enough of them, and that he should not indulge in them too much.

With regard to the perfection of paññā, most people are longing for paññā, but the perfection of paññā, that is, paññā that understands the characteristics of realities, cannot arise if one does not try to develop it. Generally people wish to know the truth of realities, but they should carefully investigate whether, at the moment of seeing, of the experience of the other sense objects or of thinking, they have the sincere desire (chanda) to know and to understand the characteristics of the realities that are appearing at those very moments.

When someone really sees the benefit of paññā he needs to have energy and endurance, because the development of paññā is a difficult task which takes an endlessly long time. Understanding of the level of listening is only a foundation, it is not the perfection of paññā that is the condition for the realization of the four noble Truths. The perfection of paññā evolves with the development of the understanding of the characteristics of realities that are appearing. This includes the development of understanding of the level of listening, of considering realities, and also of the level of awareness of realities at this moment.

We read in the Khuddhaka Nikāya, Cūlaniddesa, “Ajita’s Questions”:

*“Kusalo sabbadhammānaṃ”, means: he is skilful in all dhammas. He knows that conditioned dhammas are impermanent, that conditioned dhammas are dukkha and that all dhammas are anattā.”*

In order to directly understand and penetrate the truth we should study the Dhamma in all details, so that we come to know the precise meaning of the term “all conditioned realities”, saṅkhāra dhammas. This includes everything that appears right now, and this is impermanent, it arises and falls away. The dhammas which arise and fall away are dukkha and all dhammas are anattā, non-self.

We read further on about different ways in which realities are taught:

*“Again, he is skilful in the khandhas (aggregates), the dhātus (elements), the āyatanas (bases), the paṭiccasamuppāda (dependent origination), satipaṭṭhāna, the sammā-padhānas (four right efforts), the indriyas (faculties), the balas (powers), the factors of enlightenment, the path, the*

*fruit, nibbāna. This means, he is in this way skilful in all dhammas<sup>1</sup>.*"

The five khandhas of rūpas, feelings, remembrance, formations and consciousness are present at this very moment. The elements, the āyatanas (bases), the dependent origination, refer to dhammas which are very intricate and arise in interdependence on one another. The four right efforts, the faculties and the powers are related to paññā. There must be right effort with paññā so that the characteristics which are appearing can be understood. The person who is skilful in all dhammas is, as we read, skilful in the factors of enlightenment which pertain to the realization of the four noble Truths, the magga-citta, path-consciousness, which attains enlightenment and the phala-citta, fruition-consciousness, which is the result of the magga-citta, and nibbāna. We are not skilful in all dhammas if we merely listen for a short time.

We read further on:

*"And again, the āyatanas (bases) are: the eye and visible object, the ear and sound, the nose and odour, the tongue and flavour, the bodysense and tangible object, the mind (manaayatana) and dhammas (dhammaayatana), and these are called: all dhammas."*

The person who has developed paññā can, when he listens to the Dhamma and also understands the characteristics of the dhammas that are appearing, realize at that moment the arising and falling away of realities. He is skilful in the āyatanas, such as seeing and what appears through the eyesense at this very moment.

Some people wonder how, in the development of satipaṭṭhāna, one can at the moment of seeing understand the characteristics of the realities that are appearing. There is only one way: when someone has listened to the Dhamma he can be mindful so that he will understand the

---

1 The āyatanas, bases are: the five sense bases, mind-base, including all cittas, the five sense objects, and dhammāyatana including the realities of cetasikas, subtle rūpas and nibbāna.

The four right efforts, sammā-padhānas, are: the effort of avoiding akusala, of overcoming akusala, of developing kusala and of maintaining kusala. The five faculties, indriyas are: confidence, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. The five powers, balas, are the same realities as the five spiritual faculties, indriyas, but when the indriyas have been developed so that they are unshakable by their opposites, they have become powers. The seven factors of enlightenment are: sati, investigation of the Dhamma (dhamma-vicaya), energy (virīya), rapture (pīti), tranquillity (passaddhi), concentration (samādhi) and equanimity (upekkhā).

The Dependent Origination teaches the conditionality of nāma and rūpa in the cycle of birth and death.

characteristic of seeing that sees at this very moment, or the characteristics of the other dhammas that are appearing at this moment. At the moment of understanding realities, satipaṭṭhāna is being developed. Sati is mindful of the characteristic of the reality which experiences or knows, such as seeing, and paññā is able to understand that characteristic, it realizes that it is only a reality which is not self, not a being, not a person.

At whatever moment seeing, hearing, the other sense-cognitions or other types of citta present themselves, the āyatanas can be understood: the eye and visible object, the ear and sound, the other sense-bases and sense objects, citta and dhammas. At those moments paññā begins to develop by knowing the characteristics of realities which are appearing. We can use the word satipaṭṭhāna for this process, but what matters above all is knowing how paññā is to be developed: when seeing appears, one begins to understand the characteristic of seeing, when hearing appears, one begins to understand the characteristic of hearing, and so on for the other sense-cognitions and for other types of citta. The perfection of energy, viriya, should arise together with paññā, otherwise one will make an effort for something else, different from the right effort to understand the characteristics of realities, just as they naturally arise in daily life.

The Buddha's different methods of teaching Dhamma are in conformity with each other, there is no contradiction between them. For example, the Buddha taught mindfulness of death, maraṇa sati. Moreover, he also taught that there are three kinds of death: momentary death (khaṇika maraṇa), conventional death (sammutti maraṇa) and final death (samuccheda maraṇa) <sup>1</sup>. Momentary death is death at each moment, and this means that our life occurs during only one moment of citta. One may say that life lasts long, that a person is very old, but in reality, life is a series of cittas that arise and fall away in succession. If we reduce the duration of life that seems to be very long into just one extremely short moment of citta, we can understand that life occurs during only one moment of seeing. At this moment of seeing, there is just one moment of life that arises and sees; if there would not be seeing there would be no life. Seeing has arisen and sees, and then it dies, it lasts for an extremely short moment. At the moment we are hearing, life occurs only during one short moment of hearing and then there is death.

When someone who develops the perfection of paññā is mindful of death, he should not merely think of death in conventional sense,

---

1 Final death, samuccheda maraṇa, is the final passing away of the arahat who will not be reborn.

sammutti maraṇa. It is not enough to think, even with some degree of detachment, that there is nobody who can own anything, and that one day we shall be separated from all things, that all we used to take for self or mine will disappear. Merely intellectual understanding cannot lead to the eradication of defilements. The true understanding of momentary death, death occurring at each moment of citta, is different from understanding of death in the conventional sense. We should understand momentary death: each moment we are seeing, seeing arises and then dies. It is the same in the case of hearing, the other sense-cognitions and thinking. If we have right understanding of momentary death, we will be able to investigate and know as they are the characteristics of the realities that are appearing. This is mindfulness of death.

There are different levels of mindfulness of death, in accordance with a person's understanding. There is mindfulness of death of the level of someone who develops calm and this is different from the level of someone who develops understanding by considering and investigating the characteristic of death which occurs each moment. If we are mindful of momentary death we come to see the disadvantage of clinging to what falls away immediately.

In the "Dasaṇṇaka Jātaka" (no. 401) the danger and disadvantage of clinging has been explained. We read in the Commentary to the "Dasaṇṇaka Jātaka" :

*"At the time that the Bodhisatta was the wise Senaka, the royal councillor, Mahā-Moggallāna was the wise Āyura, and Sāriputta was the wise Pukkusa. The son of the King's household priest came to wait on the King and when he saw the queen he became enamoured, and when he went home he lay down without taking food. When the King came to know about this, he gave the queen to him for seven days, but asked him to send her back on the eighth day. However, it appeared that the son of the household priest and the queen became enamoured of each other and had fled to another country.*

*The King suffered great sorrow and became very sick. The royal physicians could not cure him. The Bodhisatta knew that the King did not suffer a bodily ailment, but that he was touched by mental sickness because he did not see the queen. He thought of using a specific trick to cure him. He arranged for a display where the King could see a man swallowing a sword with a sharp edge which was thirtythree inches long. Thereupon the King asked the wise Āyura (in the first stanza) whether there was anything harder to do than swallowing this sword. The wise Āyura, who was to be in his last life Mahā-Moggallāna, answered (in the second stanza), that saying, 'I shall give this away', is more difficult."*



This shows that clinging to visible object, sound and the other sense objects is extremely difficult to give up. If someone still clings, how can he say that he will give something away? We read:

*“When the King had heard the words of the wise Āyura, he thought, ‘I have said that I would give the queen to the son of the household priest, and so I have done what is very hard to do.’ Hence his sorrow at heart became a little lighter, since he had done what was hard to do.*

*The King wondered whether there was something else harder to do than saying, ‘I shall give something to someone else’. He considered that speaking in such a way is difficult, but he wondered whether there was something else more difficult. Thereupon the King asked the wise Pukkusa (in the third stanza) whether there was anything else more difficult to do than saying that one would give something away. Thereupon the wise Pukkusa spoke, in order to solve this problem, the fourth stanza: ‘People do not value words that are vainly spoken, and that are without effect. But when someone makes a promise and can decrease clinging, this is more difficult than swallowing a sword or merely promising something.’ ”*

This passage deals with sincerity, with truthfulness pertaining to one’s thinking and to the words one has spoken. Thus, someone may say that he shall give, but it is more difficult to truly give. When confidence in kusala, saddhā, arises, someone may say that he shall give, but afterwards he may not be able to give. It is more difficult to act according to one’s promise. When there is sincerity and truthfulness someone is able to follow up in action what he has promised.

We read that the wise Pukkusa said:

*“ ‘All other things are easy to do, King Māgadha, I have answered you.’ The King, when he had heard this, considered, ‘I first said, I will give the queen to the priest’s son, and then I did according to my word and gave her; surely I have done a difficult thing.’ So his sorrow became lighter.”*

We see that the King could give up attachment. He could take action in accordance with the words he had spoken. This is harder to do than swallowing a sword of thirtythree inches long. We read:

*“Then it came to his mind: ‘There is no one wiser than wise Senaka, I will ask this question of him.’ ”*

Senaka would be in his last life the Sammāsambuddha, the Exalted One.

We read that the King asked wise Senaka: “What is harder to do than giving something away?” One may say that one will give and then do so

according to his words. The King wanted to know whether there was something harder than that. We read:

*“Wise Senaka, when he answered the King’s question, spoke the sixth stanza:*

*‘If a man should give a gift, whether small or great, in charity,*

*Nor regret the giving afterwards, nor sorrow about it.*

*Not having regret is harder than swallowing a sword.*

*It is harder than saying that one will give,*

*It is harder than giving what is dear to one,*

*All other things are easier to do than this.*

*King Magadha, I have answered you.’*

*When the King had heard the words of the Bodhisatta, he reflected, ‘When I gave the queen to the priest’s son I had sorrow about this, and this is not proper. If the queen loved me she would not forsake her kingdom and flee away. But since she acted like this, of what use is it to have sorrow about her?’ When the King reflected in this way all his sorrow disappeared as a drop of water falling off from a lotus leaf. At that moment he was cured of his sickness and became well and happy.*

*He praised the Bodhisatta and spoke the last stanza:*

*‘Wise Āyura and wise Pukkusa answered my questions. The answer of wise Senaka solved my problems completely, saying, when one gives something, one should not regret it afterwards.’*

*The King who was delighted praised him and gave him an abundance of gifts.”*

When the Buddha gave this Dhamma discourse, he explained the true Dhamma and finally told the story of this Jātaka to a monk who wanted to leave the Order because he was tempted by his former wife. In a former life he was the King, and now he attained the first stage of enlightenment, the stage of the sotāpanna. The Buddha said that Mahā-Moggallāna was wise Āyura and Sāriputta wise Pukkusa, and that he, the Tathāgata, was wise Senaka.

We can see that it is important not to have regret after we have given something away. When we have regret, it is evident that we cling and that we have attachment to the object we give away, but this object is only something outside us. In reality there is not anybody who can possess it or who can be the owner all the time. We should be mindful of

the “momentary death” of realities. When we have seen an object just for an extremely short moment, attachment to it arises, but seeing falls away immediately and then visible object does not appear any more. We cannot own visible object.

Paññā and all kinds of kusala must have sufficient strength so that one is able to further develop and accumulate them time and again, for an endlessly long time, from life to life. Paññā has to be developed so that we know the nature of our citta, and understand what is beneficial and what not, when there is kusala citta and when there is akusala citta. We may have regret after we have given something away, because of our clinging. However, when satipaṭṭhāna arises, we can notice that we cling to the nāma and rūpa that appear, and that we do not want to let go of them, that we do not want to give up the idea of self, being or person. The stages of insight are of many degrees, its development is a gradual process, because it is so difficult to give up nāma and rūpa.

The “Dispeller of Delusion”, the Commentary to the “Book of Analysis”, (Ch 4, Classification of the Truths, 85), states about the fourth noble Truth, the Path:

*“...the Truth of the Path has the characteristic of outlet, its function is to abandon defilements, it manifests itself as emergence...”*

The Commentary explains that apart from the Path, there is no other “outlet”, no way out, and that it is not otherwise. The “Dispeller of Delusion” mentions that some people deny the four noble Truths and proclaim that the Truth of dukkha is different and the same for the other three Truths. With regard to the fourth Truth, the Path, the “Dispeller of Delusion” explains that the wise know that the Path is a Truth, that it is truly an outlet.

Each time when sati arises and is aware of the characteristics of realities and investigates them so that the characteristic of nāma, the dhamma which experiences, can be distinguished from the characteristic of rūpa which appears, the Path is developed. This is the Path that is a true way out, leading to the eradication of defilements. Hence it has been said that the wise know that the Path is a Truth, that it is the only way leading to the eradication of defilements.

We read further in the “Dispeller of Delusion” with regard to the origin of dukkha that there is no other source of dukkha but craving; that it does not originate from any other cause, that it is not due to the will of a lord creator, etc.

Dukkha does not come from a cause outside, but all dukkha comes from clinging to realities, from taking them for self or “me”, and at such moments there is lobha, attachment, to this wrong view. If paññā comes to know the truth of non-self, if it is able to eliminate the view that nāma and rūpa are self, and if it understands the characteristics of realities as they truly are, dukkha can decrease. There will be less dukkha even when paññā is still of the level of investigating and considering the realities that are appearing, and begins to understand them as not self, not mine. However, only when the stage of enlightenment of the streamwinner, sotāpanna, has been attained, the wrong view that takes realities for self and all other kinds of wrong view are completely eradicated. So long as one has not become a sotāpanna one takes realities for self, and if wrong view is firmly engrained dukkha will increase.

Before paññā can become accomplished to the degree of attaining the different stages of insight knowledge, we should begin to understand that our life evolves in accordance with kamma and that there is no escape from the conditions for the arising of citta, cetasika and rūpa. We should have a firm understanding of kamma and the factors which are the conditions for life to evolve each day, bound up as it is with joy and sorrow. We are sometimes delighted and thrilled, and sometimes depressed or afraid; at times our expectations come true, at times we are disappointed, there are pleasant and unpleasant events. There are birth, old age, sickness and death. We live in ignorance, but when paññā arises in daily life, it is able to consider the characteristics of realities and to understand them as not a being, a person or self, but only realities which arise because of their own conditions.

Nāma, the element which experiences, arises all the time in our life. We are so used to experiencing objects that we do not realize, when we see at this moment, that seeing is a reality which experiences, or when sound appears and we are hearing at this moment, that hearing is a reality which experiences. Satipaṭṭhāna is awareness of the dhammas which are real in our daily life, and through satipaṭṭhāna paññā can further develop to the degree of realizing the stages of insight. When the khandha of rūpa appears, sati can be mindful of it. When the khandha of consciousness appears, which experiences an object through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense or the mind-door, sati can be mindful. However, there should be awareness and understanding also of the khandhas of feeling, of remembrance (saññā) and formations (saṅkhārakkhandha). If there is no understanding of all five khandhas, defilements cannot be eradicated.

If satipaṭṭhāna does not arise in our daily life, and paññā does not investigate the characteristic of each reality that appears, it is impossible to eliminate wrong view. When remembrance or perception arises, or when there are conditions for liking or for detesting something, for wholesome thinking or for evil thinking, paññā can realize that all these phenomena are truly not self. They are realities each with their own characteristic.

Listening to the Dhamma is most beneficial if we let ourselves be guided by the Dhamma and investigate our own citta. When we hear about a person's death, it can remind us of the truth and to reflect upon ourselves. The person who died may have been full of attachment, he may have liked paintings, music, or other beautiful objects that were enticing. We should reflect upon our own cittas, and consider whether we are like the person who died. We can be reminded of momentary death, of the shortness of each moment of citta that arises and falls away immediately. If we have a great deal of attachment, if we cling to possessions, we should remember that when visible object appears through the eyes, attachment arises just on account of what we see at a given moment; when a beautiful sound appears through the ears, attachment arises just on account of what we hear. When a delicious odour appears only for an extremely short moment, it conditions attachment to that odour. It is the same with flavour and tangible object. We can see in our daily life that even though rūpa arises and falls away very rapidly, there is still attachment to that rūpa which lasts for such a short moment. Attachment to sense objects is bound to arise so long as paññā has not been further developed.

When we notice a person who is full of dosa, we should reflect upon our own citta, we should consider whether we are often angry, or whether we are irritated and disturbed time and again, or whether we are vengeful towards someone else. We should know that, in truth, that person is not to be found. We have met the person we are angry with only during one life, and after this life is terminated he is no longer there. Should we be angry with him after he has passed away? So long as we see that person we may have angry thoughts about him or be irritated about him, but we should remember that he will not be for a long time in this world and that he will depart for ever; from then that person will no longer be there. When we meet someone, we never know whether this is the last time that we see him and if we do not consider this we may treat him badly. Whereas, if we realize that this may be the last opportunity that we see him, it may condition the citta to be humble and gentle, we can have kindness and compassion.

## *70 - The Perfections*

Before we studied the Dhamma we had no understanding of the realities appearing through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense and the mind-door. We had a great deal of ignorance. By listening to the Dhamma we can come to know that realities appear each with their own characteristic and that we should study these realities. We should not merely study them in theory, or merely listen to the explanation about them without carefully considering their true nature. We should remember that at this very moment realities are appearing and that the true characteristics of those dhammas which arise and fall away should be penetrated. Hence we can be reminded that we should listen and thoroughly consider the Dhamma, so that understanding is accumulated. Understanding is a condition for being aware diligently of the characteristics of the dhammas appearing at this moment. If we know that we still have a great deal of ignorance, moha, and that this should be eradicated, we will not be neglectful, but continue to listen to the Dhamma and develop each kind of kusala.

## Chapter 5

### *The Perfection of Energy*

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines energy, viriya, as follows:

*Energy has the characteristic of striving; its function is to fortify; its manifestation is infatigability; an occasion for the arousing of energy, or a sense of spiritual urgency, is its proximate cause.*

The cetasika viriya, energy, accompanies almost all cittas, except sixteen ahetuka cittas, cittas that are unaccompanied by beautiful roots or unwholesome roots. Thus, whenever attachment and delight with regard to an object arises, the cetasika of energy accompanies that citta and performs its function of effort or energy for attachment and delight in that object. Be it akusala citta or kusala citta which arises, viriya cetasika accompanies that citta. When akusala citta arises, viriya cetasika is effort for akusala, whereas when kusala citta arises, viriya cetasika performs its function of effort for kusala. The perfection of energy is effort or endeavour for kusala.

There should be energy or effort for each kind of kusala and when developed, it can become the perfection of energy. When sati arises and is aware of the characteristics of realities that are appearing at this moment, there is not me or self who makes an effort to be aware, but it is the function of right effort, sammā-vāyāma. Right effort, viriya cetasika, arises and endeavours to study with awareness, to notice and pay attention to the reality that is appearing. Right effort is effort or energy for paññā which understands that what appears through the eyes is only a kind of rūpa which does not last; or that the reality which is seeing is only an element, a characteristic of nāma-dhamma experiencing what appears through the eyes. This is the perfection of energy that endeavours to study the characteristics of realities appearing one at a time. It does not matter whether the perfection of energy arising with satipaṭṭhāna occurs often or seldom, viriya is not weary of the task of studying and noticing the reality that appears. When viriya arises, we are not discouraged; viriya is always performing its task even if the process of development of understanding is extremely slow and difficult.

The perfection of energy is most important and it should be developed

together with the other perfections so that the appropriate conditions are accumulated for reaching the further shore, that is, nibbāna. Even kusala which is dāna, generosity, cannot be performed without viriya. People may have kusala citta with the intention to give things away, but it is difficult for them to act in accordance with their good intentions because they are lazy: when there is an object they could give away, they do not give it away. They have confidence in kusala and they have the intention to be generous, but when viriya necessary for the accomplishment of generosity is deficient, they are not able to accomplish generous deeds. Therefore, the perfection of energy is an indispensable support for the other perfections, such as generosity or morality.

Sometimes we may be lax and too lazy to perform kusala, we may think that its performing is troublesome, that we are too tired, or that it is time consuming. At such moments we are overcome by akusala and hence kusala cannot arise. If we know that it is difficult for us to perform kusala because we are inert and lazy, we should at this very moment, immediately, apply ourselves with diligence to kusala. Life is extremely short, as it lasts just for one moment of citta and this moment may be kusala citta or akusala citta, depending on conditions. Thus, we should not give in to laziness with regard to our task of performing kusala. If we are all the time inert and lazy, it is evident that the perfection of energy is lacking and that, therefore, there are no conditions for the elimination of akusala. The only way to eliminate akusala is to be diligent and energetic in the performing of all kinds of kusala as far as we are able to.

Some people regret it that they were wasting their time and did not perform kusala when there was an opportunity to do so because at such moments they were inert and lazy. Then they should consider the perfection of energy and accumulate it so that there are conditions for eliminating all kinds of akusala.

Viriya cetāsika is classified among the cetāsikas which are the “particulars”, pakiṇṇakā. These cetāsikas arise with many cittas but not with all <sup>1</sup>. The six particulars are: applied thinking (vitakka), sustained thinking (vicāra), determination (adhimokkha), energy (viriyā), enthusiasm or rapture (pīti), and wish-to-do or zeal (chanda). Viriya cetāsika arises time and again, it accompanies many cittas in daily life, except sixteen rootless cittas, (ahetuka cittas <sup>2</sup>), and it is the only cetāsika

---

1 Seven cetāsikas, the “universals”, sabbacitta sādharana, arise with every citta. The six particulars accompany kusala cittas, akusala cittas, vipākacittas and kiriya-cittas (inoperative, neither cause nor result), but they do not accompany every citta.

2 Viriya cetāsika does not accompany the sixteen ahetuka cittas which are: the



among the “particulars” which can become a perfection. When viriya which is energy for kusala has been further developed it becomes the perfection of energy, viriya. In that case, viriya is the attendant of paññā and a condition for the realization of the four noble Truths.

Is viriya that arises now kusala or akusala? If it is akusala it is not a perfection. Viriya is among the particulars and thus it can accompany kusala citta or akusala citta, but most of the time it is likely to accompany the akusala citta which is rooted in lobha, attachment. Viriya accompanies akusala citta countless times, but instead of applying energy for akusala, we should endeavour to accumulate the perfection of energy, we should see its benefit.

We read in the “Expositor” (Book I, Part IV, I, 121) about viriya:

*“... energy has exerting as characteristic, strengthening the conascent dhammas as function, and opposition to giving way (to discouragement) as manifestation. It has been said: ‘He being agitated, makes a rational effort,’ hence it has a sense of urgency, or the basic condition of making energy, as proximate cause.”*

We can see that energy arises at the moment of diligence, and that it is the opposite of being lazy. However, according to the Abhidhamma which explains in detail the cetasikas accompanying citta, viriya accompanies akusala citta even when we are lazy, and in that case viriya applies itself to laziness again and again. The Dhamma is very subtle and it should be considered in all details; for example, the characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause of realities should be studied and investigated.

According to the “Expositor” in the same section, the characteristic of viriya is the state of a courageous or energetic person, or the action of a courageous person. When viriya arises one is not inert or lax.

One person may be courageous whereas someone else may be a coward. According to the Abhidhamma, also a coward must have viriya, energy, for cowardice. However, in the case of a courageous person the characteristic of viriya appears clearly since he must strive to accomplish something, in spite of obstacles or dangers. Such courage is the characteristic of viriya cetasika. When viriya goes together with the development of kusala, it can become a controlling faculty, the indriya of

---

five-sense-door advertent-consciousness, pañca-dvārāvajjana-citta, the five pairs of sense-cognitions of seeing, etc., pañca-viññāṇas, the two types of receiving-consciousness, sampaticchana-citta, the three types of investigating-consciousness, santīraṇa-citta.

virīya. The indriya of virīya that arises together with the other indriyas, the indriyas of confidence (saddhā), sati, samādhi (concentration) and paññā when satipaṭṭhāna is being developed, is right effort of the eightfold Path, sammāvāyāma. It is right effort for awareness and understanding of the characteristics of realities, just as they naturally appear at this moment.

When paññā has further developed, virīya becomes a power, bala, which is unshakable, so that there is energy for awareness and understanding of the characteristics of nāma and rūpa in whatever situation. One will not be inclined to think that there cannot be awareness of nāma and rūpa at this moment.

We can investigate the characteristic of virīya when we read the following explanation of the “Expositor” about the controlling faculty, the indriya, of virīya:

*“Virīya is the state of a courageous or energetic man, or it is the action of the energetic, or it is that which should be effected, carried out by method or suitable means. From its overcoming idleness it is a controlling faculty (indriya) in the sense of predominance... Its characteristic is strengthening or support.”*

When virīya arises, someone has the courage to speak, to say what is right, or to act in a wholesome way, not being afraid of trouble, difficulties, or even of losing possessions and becoming poor. This is the characteristic of virīya. Or someone has the courage to explain with regard to the Dhamma the causes which bring their appropriate effects, without paying attention to the fact that he will not be liked by foolish people, or that others will have wrong understanding of his good intention. Someone who is courageous will do what is right with regard to worldly matters as well as Dhamma, because Dhamma is Dhamma: it cannot be changed, it is the truth.

All people have virīya, but if the Dhamma had not been taught the characteristic and the different aspects of virīya could not be known. Virīya has been explained as controlling faculty, indriya, because it is predominant as a support for the nascent dhammas.

Whenever kusala citta arises and someone performs an action with patience and diligence, virīya cetasika gives support at such a moment. One can perform one’s task without becoming disheartened. As the “Expositor” explained, the controlling faculty of virīya has the characteristic of strengthening and giving support.

If one develops paññā one is supported by viriya so that one perseveres in the development of paññā and all kusala dhammas. The “Expositor”(120) uses the simile of an old house that is strengthened and supported by new pillars. Evenso, when someone is supported by viriya, kusala dhammas will not decline in him.

If someone at this moment is bored, lazy, drowsy or disheartened, he should know that he is like an old building that is dilapidated, because he is not able to be firm in kusala and to apply himself to it. Viriya cetasika has the characteristic of strengthening and supporting just as a pillar supports an old house so that it is stable. Thus we see the characteristic of support of viriya. The “Expositor” uses several similes so that we can understand the characteristic of viriya cetasika that arises at this moment.

We read in the “Expositor” (121):

*“As a small army going to battle might be repulsed, then they would tell the king. The king would send a strong reinforcement. The king’s army, being thus supported, would defeat the hostile army. Thus energy does not allow associated states to recede, to retreat; it uplifts, supports them. Hence has it been said that energy has the characteristic of supporting.”*

Viriya is the attendant of paññā. The Venerable Sāriputta explains about the development and accumulation of the perfections leading to the complete eradication of defilements at the attainment of arahatship. We read in the “Kāmasutta Niddesa” (Sutta explanation about Sense pleasures, Mahāniddesa, Khuddaka Nikāya):

*“There is a simile of two cities: the city of bandits and the city of peace. At that time the thought occurred to a general, ‘So long as the city of bandits exists the city of peace is not free from danger. I shall destroy the city of bandits.’ He put on his armor, took his sword and entered the city of bandits. He struck with his sword the post they had erected at the gate of the city. He destroyed the building and the widows of the gateway, removed the bolt, destroyed the wall and filled up the moat. Thereupon he took down the flag they had raised as a symbol of dignity of their city, and he set fire to the city. Then he entered the city of peace, ascended the castle, surrounded by his group of relatives, and he took delicious flavoured food. This is the simile.*

Personality belief, sakkāyadiṭṭhi <sup>1</sup>, can be compared to the city of bandits.

---

1 There are twenty kinds of personality belief, sakkāya diṭṭhi, which are obtained by applying four types of that belief to each of the five khandhas: the belief to be identical with them, to be contained in them, to be independent of them and to be the owner of them.

Nibbāna can be compared to the city of peace. The person who applies himself to mental development can be compared to the general. He thinks, 'Personality belief is a tie and so long as I am bound by that tie I am not free from danger'."

Here we see that the akusala dhamma that should be eradicated first is personality belief which takes realities for self. It must be paññā which sees the difference between the city of bandits and the city of peace. The city of peace is calm, whereas the city of bandits means disturbance, confusion and restlessness. So long as there is wrong view which takes realities for self, being or person, one cannot be free from restlessness, disturbance and worry. Thus, one should understand that all defilements and dukkha are bound up with one's "own person", which is, in truth, nāma dhammas and rūpa dhammas.

One will be completely free from dukkha when one has reached arahatship and nāma dhammas and rūpa dhammas will not arise anymore after death. This cannot be realized without courage, without the perfection of viriya.

We read in the "Exposition of Jatukaṇṇin's Questions" (Mahaa-Niddesa, Khuddaka Nikāya) that Jatukaṇṇin had heard that the Buddha was courageous and that he therefore was called a hero, vīra. The following passage gives the reasons why he was called a hero. There is an association in meaning between the word vīra, hero, and viriya, which is the state of a strong man. All that is said in the passage below refers to viriya cetasika. We read:

*"He had perseverance and was therefore called a hero.*

*He was valiant and was therefore called a hero.*

*He caused others to persevere and was therefore called a hero.*

*He had great capacities and was therefore called a hero.*

*He was brave and always progressing, he was not a coward, not frightened, not fearful, he did not flee, he had eliminated fear and cowardice, he was without any terror, and thus, the Exalted One was courageous.*

*The Exalted One was without the akusala dhammas of this world, he was beyond the suffering of hell, he was endowed with energy.*

*The Buddha had viriya, the four right efforts, he was courageous and steadfast of mind, and therefore he was called courageous."*

Had the Buddha not been courageous, he could not have penetrated the four noble Truths and become the Sammāsambuddha. The development of each kind of kusala and of paññā by investigating and considering the dhamma that appears now is based on viriya, energy, and perseverance. We all should have courage and perseverance so that instead of energy for akusala, energy for kusala can arise, otherwise kusala cannot be developed. Effort or energy as applied in an unwholesome way, life after life, is useless. If we are able to understand the characteristic of viriya as applied in a wholesome way and if we shall further develop this kind of energy, we shall understand the words of the above quoted commentary about viriya: someone with viriya will be progressing, he is not a coward, he is not frightened, he has no fear and he does not flee.

In daily life everybody has come into contact with undesirable objects: for some people these are extremely undesirable, whereas for others these are only slightly so. This may happen when one meets another person on account of whom one is disturbed or feels displeasure. If sati-sampajañña (sati and paññā) does not arise, one does not know that there is akusala dhamma at such a moment and hence kusala viriya has no opportunity to arise and akusala viriya arises instead. There are bound to be conditions for desire and attachment so that akusala continues to arise.

However, if someone has listened to the Dhamma and develops satipaṭṭhāna, sati-sampajañña can arise and be aware of akusala when he is irritated or displeased. We should consider more deeply the meaning of sati-sampajañña. When akusala dhamma arises, sati-sampajañña may consider the Dhamma and realize the disadvantage of the continuation of akusala. At that moment, it may be known that it is not proper to be irritated in whatever respect, be it on account of the action or speech of someone else, or be it because we have noticed something wrong. When, for example, akusala citta with anger arises and sati-sampajañña can be aware of its characteristic, we can see whether there is effort for giving up anger; if one continues being angry it means that akusala viriya is still strong. When kusala viriya has been further developed and awareness can arise, there are conditions for the decrease of displeasure and for mettā. Thus, instead of anger which is an impure dhamma there can immediately be a change to kusala dhamma, dhamma which is pure.

When dosa arises, we have displeasure, but sati-sampajañña can arise and be aware of its characteristic and then we can see the benefit of sati-sampajañña. If someone has listened to the Dhamma and is not inert but immediately gives up akusala, kusala viriya performs at that moment its task of refraining from anger.

This kind of viriya is different from thinking that one should refrain from anger. It arises at the moment of sati-sampajañña, when energy or effort refrains from anger, and it is known that mettā is the opposite of anger. This is effort to forgive, effort for mettā. At such a moment we can remember that everybody, including ourselves, makes mistakes. Therefore, we should not have anger or displeasure on account of someone else or of dhammas which arise and then fall away. However, feeling and remembrance, saññā, are conditions for being slow and inert in letting go of one's thoughts about circumstances and events and in that case akusala dhammas have the opportunity to arise.

When viriya has been further developed, additional aspects and degrees can be discerned, for instance: viriya as a predominant factor (adhipati), as a basis of success (iddhi-pāda)<sup>1</sup>, as a faculty (indriya) or a power (bala).

When viriya has not reached those degrees, one cannot understand the characteristic of viriya that accompanies satipaṭṭhāna and that has become strong.

As we have seen, viriya has been classified among the faculties, indriyas (leaders each in their own field). These are:

the faculty of confidence, saddhā,

the faculty of sati,

the faculty of paññā,

the faculty of energy, viriya,

the faculty of concentration, samādhi.

These faculties arise together and thus, the faculty of viriya which arises together with confidence, sati, paññā and samādhi must be kusala viriya.

Realities can be classified in different ways, for example, by way of the four bases of success, iddhi-pāda (leading to enlightenment):

wish-to-do (chanda)

energy (viriya)

---

1 There are four realities which can be predominance-condition, adhipatipaccaya: wish-to-do (chanda), energy (viriya), citta, which stands for firmness of citta or concentration, and investigation which is paññā (vīmaṃsa). The same four factors can also be classified as bases of success, iddhi-pāda. They are among the factors pertaining to enlightenment.

citta (firmness of citta or concentration)

investigation (vīmaṃsa).

Thus we see that there are different aspects of viriya. The cetasikas which are faculties are not identical with the cetasikas which are bases of success. Such classifications are very detailed, but they show us that kusala viriya is of different degrees.

We read in the “Kindred Sayings”(V, Mahā-vagga, Book IV, Kindred Sayings on the Faculties, Ch I, §8, Point of view) about the five controlling faculties, indriyas:

*“Monks, there are five controlling faculties. What five? The controlling faculty of faith, of energy, of sati, of concentration and of paññā...”*

These are dhammas that are rulers or leaders (indriyas), each in their own field, and they arise at the moment of satipaṭṭhāna, when sati-sampajañña (awareness and understanding) considers the characteristics of realities. We read in the above quoted Sutta about the controlling faculty of faith:

*“But from what point of view, monks, should the controlling faculty of faith be regarded? From that of the four limbs of Streamwinning...”*

When kusala citta arises it must be accompanied by saddhā cetasika, confidence or faith. Kusala citta is of many degrees. The faculty of saddhā, faith or confidence, is a leader in its own field while it performs its specific function. This will be clearer when we consider the four limbs or factors of streamwinning: unshakable confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha and the virtues (sīla) which are agreeable to the ariyans.

Someone may study the Dhamma and have confidence in listening to the Dhamma, but his confidence may not be firm, it may be unstable, uncertain. If he has no right understanding of realities and if he does not know the right practice for the realization of the four noble Truths, he may easily become confused. Confidence which is unshakable and firm, without confusion, is a condition for not deviating from the right Path; it is the confidence of the ariyan, a factor of streamwinning. It is the unshakable confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha and the virtues of the ariyans.

We read further on in the above quoted Sutta:

*“And from what point of view, monks, should the controlling faculty of viriya, energy, be regarded? From that of the four supreme efforts.”*

There are four supreme efforts (sammā-ppadhāna):

the effort to avoid the akusala dhammas which have not yet arisen

the effort to overcome the akusala dhammas which have arisen

the effort to develop kusala dhammas which have not yet arisen

the effort to maintain kusala dhammas which have arisen, not to let them decline, to further develop them, to cause them to increase and to reach completion.

Viriya which is a faculty, indriya, and has become a “leader”, must have been accumulated very gradually so that it could become a faculty. The controlling faculty of viriya should be regarded from the point of view of the four supreme efforts.

We can notice ourselves whether we have viriya which only begins to develop and is still weak, or whether it is already right effort: the effort which avoids akusala not yet arisen, overcomes akusala already arisen, the effort to cause the arising of kusala which has not yet arisen. The kusala dhamma which has not yet arisen refers to samatha and vipassanā and to the path, magga, the fruition, phala, the lokuttara citta which experience nibbāna<sup>1</sup>. As to the words samatha and vipassanā in this context, these refer to satipaṭṭhāna. Samatha and vipassanā are developed together and reach completion together by the four Applications of Mindfulness, they should not be separated from each other. Effort is necessary to maintain the kusala dhammas which have arisen, not to let them decline, further to develop them, to cause them to increase and reach completion.

We should reflect on the different kinds of efforts. If endeavour is only of a very slight degree, the conditions for the arising of the controlling faculty of sati are not sufficient. We read in the above-quoted sutta about the controlling faculty of sati:

*“And from what point of view, monks, should the controlling faculty of mindfulness be regarded? From that of the four applications of mindfulness.”*

Kusala citta cannot arise without sati cetasika, be it at the moment one performs dāna, or abstains from akusala. However, the characteristic of the controlling faculty of sati, the characteristic of its leadership, can be seen in the four applications of mindfulness<sup>2</sup>.

---

1 See the Commentary to the “Book of Analysis”, the “Dispeller of Delusion” II, Ch 8, 292.

2 Sati of satipaṭṭhāna is mindful of nāma and rūpa which appear. The four



We read further on about the faculties of concentration and of pañña:

*“And from what point of view should the controlling faculty of concentration be regarded? From that of the four stages of jhāna.*

*And from what point of view should the controlling faculty of insight be regarded? It should be regarded from the point of view of the four noble Truths.”*

Pañña which is insight knowledge and which knows the true nature of realities as it is developed stage by stage, is the indriya, faculty, of pañña. However it has only reached completion when it has realized the four noble Truths.

In the past, countless people listened to the Dhamma, developed pañña with right effort and realized the four noble Truths. They were wise people who knew how to remind themselves of the truth. We should consider whether we, at the present time, are like those wise people in the past.

The “Anumānasutta”, “Discourse on Measuring in Accordance with”, (M I, 15), deals with the admonishing of monks and with self-examination. We read at the end of the Commentary to this Sutta, the “Papañcasūdanī” :

*“The teachers of old said that the monk should scrutinize himself three times daily. Thus, in the morning he should consider to what extent he still has defilements. If he sees that he still has defilements he should strive to get rid of them. If he sees that he has no defilements he knows that he has been leading the monk’s life in the right way.*

*During the day time and also in the evening he should examine himself again. If he cannot do this three times a day, he should do it twice a day, and if he cannot do that, he should examine himself only once a day. But it is improper not to examine oneself at all.”*

By this passage we can be reminded to examine ourselves so that we know whether our actions were proper or improper. We can understand that we need viriya, effort, so that we are able to investigate our akusala and kusala three times a day, or else twice a day, or if that is not possible, only once a day. Then we are reminded by the teachers of old to

---

Applications of Mindfulness, which are mindfulness of the Body, of Feeling, of Citta and of Dhammas, are actually all conditioned realities. They have been explained under the different aspects of the four Applications of Mindfulness. Sati of satipaṭṭhāna is sati of a level which is higher than sati of dāna or sati of sīla, because when it is developed it leads to the eradication of defilements.

examine ourselves as to the defilements we still have and to reflect on these.

We read in the “Anumānasutta”, “Discourse on Measuring in Accordance with” that Mahā-Moggallāna taught the Dhamma and explained to the monks which person is someone who is “easy to speak to” (susceptible to instruction), and exhorted them to examine themselves as to this <sup>1</sup>. He said:

*“Therein, your reverences, a monk should examine himself thus: ‘Now, am I of evil desires, in the thrall of evil desires?’ If, your reverences, while the monk is reflecting, he knows thus: ‘I am of evil desires, in the thrall of evil desires,’ then, your reverences, that monk should strive to get rid of those evil, unskilled states. But if, your reverences, that monk, while reflecting, knows thus: ‘I am not of evil desires, not in the thrall of evil desires’, then he should abide with rapture and delight, training himself diligently day and night in skilled states.”*

The words, “a monk should examine himself”, make it clear to us that someone else cannot examine in detail our akusala to the same extent as we ourselves. We can examine ourselves and know whether we have evil desires and are in the thrall of evil desires, and moreover, we should be sincere, truthful to ourselves. If we have evil desires, we should strive to abandon those evil, unskilled dhammas. Some people do not like to consider their own akusala, but if a person sees the benefit of the development of endeavour for kusala, he should also notice his own akusala.

If someone has viriya and makes an effort to examine himself he should be sincere and he should not spare himself. If he examines himself in this way and strives to give up akusala, he is a person who is “easy to speak to”, susceptible to instruction.

A person who is difficult to speak to is the opposite, he does not strive to give up akusala. All this pertains to viriya cetāsika.

We read in the “Saddhammapajjotikā”, the Commentary to the “Tuvaṭṭaka Sutta” (Speedy), in the Mahā-Niddesa, Khuddaka Nikāya, an explanation of the faculty, indriya, of viriya <sup>2</sup>:

*“As to the word ‘cetasiko’, this is used in order to show that energy is always*

- 
- 1 A monk who is “difficult to speak to” does not listen and does not want to be corrected. The monk who is “easy to speak to” is meek, he listens and is susceptible to instruction.
  - 2 See also the “Expositor” I, Part IV, Ch 2, 145.

*mental and that it is not bodily. There is only mental energy....”*

Viriya is nāma dhamma (cetasika) which conditions the arising of effort through the body or through citta. Even when we make an effort with the body to do something, we should know that we can make such an effort because of viriya cetasika.

The Commentary refers to the Sutta which deals with someone who makes an alley walk, who is walking up and down, so that he is not indolent or sleepy. From the outward appearance this seems to be bodily energy, but in reality it is because of mental energy, viriya cetasika, that effort through the body can arise.

The Commentary speaks further on about effort which has developed to the degree of the enlightenment factor of viriya (sambhojjhanga), one of the factors pertaining to the realization of the four noble Truths. The Commentary uses the Pāli term viriyārambha. Ārambha can mean beginning, attempt or effort. Viriyārambha is viriya cetasika, it is the putting forth of energy, such as effort to apply oneself to the Buddha’s teachings. We read further on about the characteristic of energy which should be developed <sup>1</sup>:

*“Effort is called ‘ārambha’ because it is striving. The term viriyārambha renders the characteristic of that kind of striving. What kind of striving? It is striving by way of escaping from idleness. Onward effort is so called by virtue of reaching a higher and higher state. Exertion is so called by virtue of rising up and keeping going. Endeavour is so called by virtue of special exertion; zeal, of being zealous; vigour, of firmness; fortitude, of bearing (supporting) citta and cetasikas, or of bearing the continuity of kusala by unbroken procedure.”*

These are the characteristics of viriya. It is the escaping from idleness, progressing towards a higher state, continued exertion without stopping, zeal and fortitude in further progress towards the goal. We read in the Commentary:

*“Another method of exposition: -This viriyārambha is ‘striving’ in expelling lust, ‘onward effort’ in cutting the bonds, ‘exertion’ in escaping from the floods<sup>2</sup>, ‘endeavour’ in reaching the further shore, ‘zeal’ in being a forerunner, ‘ardour’ in exceeding the limit, ‘vigour’ in lifting the bolt (of ignorance), and ‘fortitude’ in producing steadfastness. Verily, let the skin, veins and bones dry*

---

1 See the “Expositor” I, Part IV, Ch 2, 145-146.

2 This is the group of defilements of the four floods (oghas): the floods of sensuous desire, of desire for rebirth, of wrong view and of ignorance.

*up<sup>1</sup> - thus by virtue of unfaltering effort at such time is the 'state of a man of unfaltering effort'."*

The Commentary explains further that energy does not let go of the desire-to-do, chanda (which is necessary to accomplish something), that it does not give up the task, and does not give in to discouragement with regard to the performing of kusala. It uses a simile of an ox which carries a burden and does not let go of it:

*"Just as if they were to say, 'Get a beast of burden, an ox, to draw a burden from a marshy place not beyond the bullock's strength,' and the bullock, pressing the ground with its knees, were to carry the burden and would not allow it to drop on the ground, so energy lifts up and seizes the burden in the matter of doing moral acts. Hence it is said to be 'support of burden'."*

As we read in the Commentary, the teachers of old advised the monks to examine themselves three times daily. If one cannot do this, then one should do this twice or even only once a day, but it is wrong not to examine oneself at all. When we reflect on the "Anumāna Sutta" and its Commentary, we see that people had different degrees of paññā. Someone who has many defilements is a person who is "difficult to speak to"; he does not see his own defilements, he only sees those of someone else. We should find out which defilements we have ourselves. If someone never reflected on this or spoke about this with someone else, he should first of all listen to the Dhamma and reflect on what he heard so that he sees the danger of akusala. Then right effort can arise and be a condition for him to examine himself and consider his own akusala before going to sleep.

This can be applied by a person who is "difficult to speak to" and who has many defilements. If someone has already some understanding of the development of satipaṭṭhāna, he can be aware of the reality which appears. Whatever kind of akusala arises, sati can be aware immediately of its characteristic. When paññā understands the way to know and study the characteristics of realities, it is of a higher level.

After we have studied the Anumāna Sutta, how often in a day do we examine ourselves? For someone who habitually develops satipaṭṭhāna, sati-sampajañña can immediately be aware when akusala citta arises, and he does not need to wait until it is time to examine himself. This is the beginning of the development of satipaṭṭhāna, even if one does not

---

1 The Buddha spoke these words when sitting under the Bodhi-tree before attaining Buddhahood. He would not move even if his skin, veins and bones would dry up.

know yet realities as nāma and rūpa which are non-self. It is already a degree of sati-sampajañña when the characteristic of akusala dhamma is known as it naturally appears.

As we read in the “Anumāna Sutta”:

*“If, your reverences, while the monk is reflecting, he knows thus: ‘I am of evil desires, in the thrall of evil desires,’ then, your reverences, that monk should strive to get rid of those evil, unskilled states. But if, your reverences, that monk, while reflecting, knows thus: ‘I am not of evil desires, not in the thrall of evil desires’, then he should abide with rapture and delight, training himself diligently day and night in skilled states.”*

We should study with awareness the characteristics of realities as they naturally appear. It depends on conditions what degree of sati-sampajañña arises, it may be of the degree of merely reflecting on the akusala that one has committed during the day, or it may be of the degree of immediate awareness of whatever reality appears.

Some people who develop satipaṭṭhāna may desire to see a result of their efforts. They are striving with all their energy, because they believe that in this way the result of their practice will materialize quickly. However, since they are trying very hard they become tired and they have to stop doing so. The result of the development of satipaṭṭhāna cannot be made to occur soon. The development of satipaṭṭhāna is awareness of the characteristics of realities as they naturally appear in daily life, and only in this way can they be understood as anattā. If one is expecting a result of one’s practice and tries to hasten its arising, it is not the development of satipaṭṭhāna.

A person of about eighty years old who had listened to Dhamma lectures at different places deeply considered the development of satipaṭṭhāna. Although he was an elderly person, he was full of energy to listen to the Dhamma and to consider what he had heard. When he heard a radio program on the introduction to vipassanā, he wrote down the address of the “Dhamma Study and Support Foundation” and made an effort to go to the Foundation in order to perform kusala by offering a donation. He left his house at nine in the morning and arrived at the Foundation at two in the afternoon. Here we see the viriya of an elderly person who spent such a long time to reach the Foundation, who had no time for lunch and had to exert himself in many different ways. The perfection of viriya should be developed in daily life. When we perform kusala, viriya is essential; we should go against the current of akusala, against the stream of attachment to comfort and well-being, and in this way kusala

can be accomplished.

For someone who develops satipaṭṭhāna in daily life so that paññā knows more thoroughly the characteristics of realities, the right conditions are present that lead to the result, namely, the realization of the four noble Truths. For him, the result will naturally occur and this is not difficult. However, the conditions leading to such a result are difficult to develop: one should gradually consider and study with awareness the characteristics of nāma and rūpa, as they appear through the sense-doors and the mind-door. This is a very gradual process, and viriya, energy, is necessary to be aware again and again, to be aware very often, since this is the only way for paññā to be able to penetrate the arising and falling away of nāma and rūpa. At this very moment realities are arising and falling away, but if we do not study with awareness and begin to understand the characteristics of nāma dhammas and rūpa dhammas, it will not be possible to realize their arising and falling away. The cause which can bring such a result has to be developed time and again, life after life.

We read in the Commentary to the “Saṃvara Jātaka”(no. 462, Khuddhaka Nikāya):

*“At that time when the Buddha was dwelling in the Jeta Grove, he told the following story about a monk who had ceased to strive. When he was a young man he lived at Sāvattihī, and after he had heard the Buddha preach the Dhamma, he gained confidence and became a monk. Fulfilling the tasks imposed by his teachers and preceptors, he learnt by heart both divisions of the Pātimokkha. After five years when he had learnt the meditation subjects he took leave of his teachers and preceptors because he wanted to dwell in the forest. When he came to a frontier village people took confidence in him because of his deportment and built a hut of leaves for him, so that he could dwell in that village.*

*When it was the rainy season, he developed with strenuous endeavour his meditation subject during three months, but when he did not reach attainment, he thought that he himself was the lowest among the four classes of people, namely those who could only understand the theory of the teachings, ‘pada parama’<sup>1</sup>. Hence he returned to the Jeta Grove in order to*

---

1 As to the four classes of people: some could attain enlightenment quickly, even at the beginning of a discourse; some could attain after a more detailed explanation; some could attain after having heard many explanations and after having considered the truth again and again; Some could only understand the theory, the words, and did not attain during that life. They are called “pada parama”, those for whom the words (pada) are the highest (parama). The monk in the story thought that he was a pada parama.

see the Buddha in person and to listen to his delightful Dhamma Discourses.

*When the Buddha was informed about this he said to that monk, 'The highest fruit in this teaching which is arahatship cannot be realized by someone who is lazy. In the past you were full of energy and easy to teach. Although you were the youngest of all the hundred sons of the King of Vārānasi, you obtained the white umbrella and became the King.'* ”

The Buddha then related the story of the past when that monk was King Saṁvara. The Buddha spoke about his excellent qualities which caused his brothers and the citizens to pay him honour and to make him King, although he was the youngest of the hundred sons of the King of Vārānasi.

King Saṁvara spoke to Prince Uposatha, who was his eldest brother and who was in his last life the venerable Sāriputta, the following words:

“I never grudge, O Prince, great sages who are seeking what is supreme and ready to pay them honour due with humble mind, I fall before their feet.”

When the prince with humble mind paid honour, falling at other people's feet, he must have had viriya, endeavour, to eradicate defilements, such as conceit or attachment to the importance of self, the importance of being a prince, the son of the King of Vārānasi. Here we see that nothing can be accomplished without viriya. Cittas are varied: some people are jealous of those who have knowledge, but they are not envious in other respects. It depends on someone's accumulations on account of which kind of object he has envy. If a person has knowledge and understanding, other people should have respect for his understanding, but some people are still inclined to be jealous. One needs to have viriya, one needs to make an effort to see the danger of jealousy and to get rid of it.

King Saṁvara continued with the words:

*“Wise sages who delight in the excellent teaching of those who seek what is excellent, taught me continuously. I, who was intent on what is right and liked to listen, had no envy.*

*I listened to the words of the wise sages who are seeking what is supreme, I did not despise any counsel and was delighted with the teaching.*

*I did not reduce the allowances of the elephant troops and chariotmen, royal guard and infantry, and I paid them the bonus and reward due to them.*

*Great nobles and wise counsellors are waiting on me and giving me assistance so that the city of Vārānasi abounds with rice, fish and drinking water.*

*Merchants who come from different states prosper, and I assist and protect them. Now you know the truth, Uposatha.”*

Because of these words all people could see that the King was endowed with excellent qualities and therefore worthy to be the King of Vārānasi.

The Buddha, after he had finished the discourse, spoke the following words: “Monk, long ago you followed the instruction, but why do you not now strive?” The Buddha declared the Truths and at the conclusion that monk was established in the fruition of streamwinning. The Buddha identified the persons in that former life: “That monk was prince Saṁvara who became the King at that time, Sāriputta was prince Uposatha, the Elders and secondary Elders were the other princes, the buddhist followers were their followers, and I myself was the courtier who advised the King.”

When enlightenment is attained, this is the result of the development of right understanding. The development of the cause leading to such a result is difficult, but if right understanding has been sufficiently developed, it brings its result without difficulty. Without the right conditions the result cannot arise, no matter how much one tries to hasten its arising. We should continue to apply energy for the development of understanding and we should be truthful with regard to it: we should find out whether we know the characteristics of realities that are appearing right now or not yet. This kind of understanding is not intellectual understanding which stems from listening, but it is of the level of satipaṭṭhāna. Satipaṭṭhāna is developed when sampajañña (pañña) arises together with sati and knows the characteristics of realities appearing at this moment as they are. Pañña develops gradually so that one day the four noble Truths can be penetrated. When the time for enlightenment has come, this result is in accordance with the right cause, and it will arise without difficulty. However, we should have patience and energy to persevere with the development of understanding.

We read in “Ardent Energy” (Gradual Sayings, Book of the Threes, Ch V, § 49) that the Buddha said:

*Monks, on three occasions ardent energy is to be exerted. What three?*

*To prevent the arising of evil, unprofitable states not yet arisen; to cause the arising of good, profitable states not yet arisen; to endure the bodily feelings that have arisen, feelings which are painful, sharp, bitter, acute, distressing and unwelcome, which drain the life away. These are the three occasions...*



*Now, when a monk exerts himself on these three occasions, he is called  
“strenuous, wise and mindful so that he makes an end of dukkha”.*

Even a very short text can remind us of the effort that should be exerted on three occasions, so that patience and endurance can further develop.



## Chapter 6

### *The Perfection of Patience*

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of patience as follows:

*“Patience has the characteristic of acceptance; its function is to endure the desirable and undesirable; its manifestation is tolerance or non-opposition; seeing things as they really are is its proximate cause.”*

The perfection of patience, khanti pāramī, has a wide meaning. Patience is to be developed not merely towards an undesirable object, but also towards a desirable object. We should have patience towards a desirable object so that lobha does not arise, so that there is no attachment and delight in visible object and the other sense objects that appear.

Khanti or patience is kusala, it is a sobhana (beautiful) dhamma which does not arise with akusala citta, with the citta rooted in attachment, but which arises with kusala citta. However, people can also have a great deal of endurance in the akusala way, and this is endurance with lobha, when they want to obtain something. Someone may be able to endure everything in order to obtain what he desires, no matter whether he has to stay awake until late at night or all night. However, can one endure this in order to develop kusala? Endurance with the development of kusala is the perfection of patience, khanti pāramī. With the perfection of patience one can stand heat or cold. This means, that on account of hot or cold weather akusala citta does not arise, that one has no disturbance or annoyance. We should be aware of the characteristic of the citta arising at such a moment, we should know whether it is kusala or akusala. Is there like or dislike of the weather? If we like it there is lobha, attachment, and if we dislike it there is dosa, aversion, and in both cases the perfection of patience does not arise. The perfection of patience is endurance with true calm at such moments, no attachment nor aversion.

When visible object appears, seeing-consciousness experiences it, and it can be known that there is no being, no person, no self. If we have no patience to be aware of the characteristic of the reality appearing at this moment, we cannot reach the further shore, that is, nibbāna.

If we do not have endurance with regard to lobha and dosa, defilements

cannot be eliminated. If we lack patience we cannot reach the further shore, nibbāna, we cannot penetrate the four noble Truths. Learning about the ten perfections will help us to investigate whether we accumulate the perfections which are still deficient and if we see their value and significance there are conditions for them to grow and develop.

We should be patient while we investigate and consider realities thoroughly, so that we acquire right understanding of them and practise in the right way. Without right understanding there are no conditions for the arising of right mindfulness which is aware of the characteristics of realities that appear.

Khanti is endurance and restraint with regard to akusala citta which arises. If sati-sampajañña arises, the perfection of patience will become more refined. We need patience and endurance, because akusala citta arises often in daily life. Patience in our daily life is “adhivāsanā khanti”. The Pāli word *adhivasati* means to inhabit (*vāso* is habitation), and *adhivāsanā khanti* is acceptance and endurance with regard to our living conditions, our environment, the place where we live, thus, the dhamma of each moment. This can be, for example, a change of temperature which may be hot or cold. If sati-sampajañña does not arise, we may say, “It is very hot”, and then akusala citta is likely to have arisen already. If sati-sampajañña has become more refined, we can find out whether our patience in action and speech with regard to our environment is deficient or whether it has grown and developed.

Khanti pāramī, the perfection of patience, can develop when sati-sampajañña arises and knows the characteristic of the citta at that moment. If sati-sampajañña is aware of akusala citta there are conditions for the arising of kusala citta instead. A person may be in the habit of complaining, or of being bad-tempered, but if sati-sampajañña arises he can refrain from akusala and thus, the perfection of patience can further develop.

In daily life we need a great deal of patience, because apart from endurance with regard to our environment or living conditions, we have to be patient and tolerant towards people with different characters and habits. People who are in the habit of doing everything quickly should be patient with people who are slow in their actions. We may meet someone who is of contrarious behaviour, but we should be patient and tolerant towards him and not complain about him. If sati-sampajañña arises there are conditions to refrain from criticizing or blaming such a person, to have mettā and give him guidance, support and advice at the appropriate

occasion. Thus we see that the perfection of khanti should not be lacking in our daily life.

We should have patience and endurance in our manners and behaviour. For example, when people travel together there are bound to be difficulties as regards seats and sleeping places, the means of transportation and appointments. When a person does not complain and does not criticize, when he has sympathetic understanding and assists others, his fellowmen will approve of him and praise him. When akusala dhammas, including lobha and dosa, arise, patience is lacking, whereas when kusala citta arises we can endure difficult situations.

A person can have patience because his sobhana cetasikas (wholesome qualities accompanying kusala citta) have been developed. There is no person, being or self who is patient.

We can have patience even with regard to our speech. Before we are going to speak we should consider whether what we want to say is beneficial or not. If it is useless speech we should have patience and refrain from that speech. Sati-sampajañña performs its function in such situations and we should investigate whether it has further developed.

We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” (Miscellaneous Sayings):

*“The perfection of patience should be considered next: Patience is the unimpeded weapon of the good in the development of noble qualities, for it dispels anger, the opposite of all such qualities, without residue. It is the adornment of those capable of vanquishing the foe; the strength of recluses and brahmins; a stream of water extinguishing the fire of anger; the basis for acquiring a good reputation; a mantra for quelling the poisonous speech of evil people; the supreme source of constancy in those established in restraint. Patience is an ocean on account of its depth; a shore bounding the great ocean of hatred; a panel closing off the door to the plane of misery; a staircase ascending to the worlds of the gods and Brahmas; the ground for the habitation of all noble qualities; the supreme purification of body, speech and mind.”*

As we read, patience is “the unimpeded weapon of the good”: akusala can be destroyed when one is righteous. When patience arises we have no disturbance, because khanti, patience, cannot harm righteous people. “Patience is the unimpeded weapon of the good in the development of noble qualities, for it dispels anger, the opposite of all such qualities, without residue”.

If we are able to be patient, anger cannot arise, there cannot be wrong speech, not even the slightest amount. We shall not utter angry words. As we read, patience is “the adornment of those capable of vanquishing the foe.”

We may well adorn ourselves profusely with things that beautify, but if our action and speech are evil, we are not beautiful. The absence of anger, patience, is the adornment of those capable of conquering others; with this kind of adornment one is beautiful and does not need other kinds of adornment. However, if patience is lacking, one’s action and speech are ugly.

Patience is “the strength of recluses and brahmins”. It is the attainment of strength (*bala sampadā*) of a tranquil person. A tranquil or calm person does not have any disturbance or trouble with regard to anybody, and thus calm which is freedom from *akusala* is the strength of recluses and brahmins.

Patience is “a stream of water extinguishing the fire of anger.” If we are angry, anger can be overcome by the perfection of patience. At such a moment we accumulate conditions for refraining more easily from *akusala*.

Patience is “the basis for acquiring a good reputation, a mantra for quelling the poisonous speech of evil people.”

When we are angry and we utter evil speech, we ourselves are evil people. Whoever utters evil speech is an evil person. Patience is a mantra, a medicine against poison, namely speech of an evil person.

Patience is “the supreme source of constancy in those established in restraint.”

Patience is the nature of those with supreme *paññā*. In order to develop *paññā* it is necessary to have endless patience: patience to listen to the Dhamma and to consider it in all details so as to understand the deep meaning of the teachings and their benefit. In that way we shall know that listening is not enough, that we should also apply the teachings. If someone wishes to have *paññā* he should first of all have endurance and accumulate the perfection of patience.

As we read: “Patience is an ocean on account of its depth.”

Patience is profound. *Akusala* arises more often than *kusala*. When *sati-sampajañña* arises, someone realizes the disadvantage of *akusala citta*, and he has patience to refrain from it, be it *lobha*, *dosa*, jealousy, avarice

or conceit. This shows that patience is profound. If someone has no understanding, he cannot develop the perfection of patience. The perfection of patience and sati-sampajañña are very subtle and refined, they are conditions for refraining from akusala.

Patience is “a shore bounding the great ocean of hatred; a panel closing off the door to the plane of misery.”

Many people are afraid of unhappy planes and they perform kusala so that they will not be born there. However, if someone does not want to be reborn in an unhappy plane, he should be patient and refrain from akusala, because patience is “a panel closing off the door to the plane of misery.”

Patience is “a staircase ascending to the worlds of the gods and Brahmas; the ground for the habitation of all noble qualities; the supreme purification of body, speech and mind.”

We should consider again and again whether we have further developed patience in each situation of our life. When we train ourselves often in good qualities, sobhana cetasikas, when we develop them, they can become our nature. Some people are by nature more patient than others, and this shows that they have developed all kinds of wholesome qualities.

We read further on in the Commentary:

*“Patience should be further fortified by reflection: ‘Those who lack patience are afflicted in this world and apply themselves to actions which will lead to their affliction in the life to come.’ And: ‘Although this suffering arises through the wrong deeds of others, this body of mine is the field for that suffering, and the action which is its seed was sown by me alone.’ And: ‘This suffering will release me from the debt of that kamma.’ And: ‘If there were no wrong-doers, how could I accomplish the perfection of patience?’ ”*

If someone else afflicts or harms us, we should not be angry, but we should realize that this is an opportunity further to develop the perfection of patience so that it becomes accomplished.

We read:

*“Although he is a wrong-doer now, in the past he was my benefactor.” And: “A wrong-doer is also a benefactor, for he is the basis for developing patience.”*

*“All beings are like my own children. Who becomes angry over the misdeeds of his own children?”*

If we consider someone we are angry with as our child, can we continue to be angry with him? If we reflect on this we can see that what has been stated in the Commentary is true.

We read:

*"All those phenomena by which wrong was done, and those to whom it was done--all those, at this very moment, have ceased."*

Whoever may have done wrong to us or may have harmed us, his deeds have ceased at that moment, and therefore we should not continue to be angry. At this moment that person does not do wrong to us; we should not think of what is past already and continue to be angry. If we reflect on the truth in the right way, we shall understand that all those phenomena by which wrong was done, and those to whom it was done--all those, at this very moment, have ceased.

We read:

*"With whom, then, should you now be angry, and by whom should anger be aroused? When all phenomena are non-self, who can do wrong to whom?"*

If someone has listened to the Dhamma he has more understanding than those who have not listened. Therefore, he should realize that it is not proper to be angry because someone else who has no understanding does something wrong. Why should he be angry with someone who lacks understanding? If he remembers this he accumulates the perfection of patience, he is not angry and he can forgive that person.

We read:

*"When the wrong-doer is endowed with noble qualities, I should not be angry with him. When he does not have any noble qualities, then I should regard him with compassion. Because of anger my fame and noble qualities diminish, and to the pleasure of my enemies I become ugly, sleep in discomfort, etc."*

When a person is angry, his good reputation and noble qualities disappear. When because of anger he displays an improper conduct we can see the disadvantage of impatience and the benefit of the perfection of patience.

We read:

*"Anger is the only real enemy, for it is the agent of all harm and the destroyer of all good." And: "When one has patience one has no enemies."*

We still have akusala, we have defilements, and these condition the



arising of displeasure. However, we should know whether the person we are angry with has good qualities. If he has, we should not be angry. If he behaves in an improper way, we should have compassion with him. If kusala citta arises with sati-sampajañña, it is the condition for patience to increase.

We read in the “Basket of Conduct” (Khuddaka Nikāya), II,5, “Conduct of Buffalo-King” that the Bodhisatta was born as a Buffalo <sup>1</sup>. A monkey urinated four times over his shoulder, forehead and eyebrows. A yakkha advised him to kill that monkey, but the Bodhisatta did not give in to anger. He wanted to keep his purity of sīla and did not kill that monkey. He aspired for omniscience. He said:

*“Someone of wisdom, who is forgiving disrespect among low, medium, high, thus obtains, intent of mind, according as he aspired.”*

A wise person will have patience and he can endure words of disdain, no matter whether these are spoken by someone who is higher in rank, who is lower in rank or by an evil person, because one should develop patience with regard to everybody.

We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”, with regard to the “Conduct of Dhamma the Devaputta”<sup>2</sup> that the Bodhisatta was born as Dhamma, a Devaputta (son of a Deva), and Devadatta as Adhamma. Dhamma would on Uposatha days (vigil days) appear among men and propagate what was right, the ten wholesome deeds, whereas Adhamma propagated the ten evil actions. One day their two chariots met in mid-air, and they each claimed the right of way.

We read in the “Dhamma Jātaka”(no. 457) which gives the same story, that Adhamma said to Dhamma, while comparing himself with iron, and Dhamma Devaputta with gold:

*“By iron gold is beaten, nor do we  
Gold used for beating iron ever see:  
If Wrong against Right shall win the fight today,  
Iron as beautiful as gold will be.”*

We read in the Jātaka that Dhamma answered with the stanza:

- 
- 1 I have added the contents of the story, as told in the Basket of Conduct.
  - 2 See Jātaka no. 457, Dhamma Jataka. I have added the contents of the story as told in this Jātaka and also the stanzas. In the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” the word silver is used instead of gold. It is said: “By iron silver is beaten.”

*“If you indeed are mighty in the fray,  
Though neither good nor wise is what you say,  
Swallow I will all these your evil words;  
And willy nilly will make your way.”*

Dhamma did not want to give in to anger, and, according to the Commentary, he aroused patience, loving-kindness and compassion. He gave Adhamma the right of way, but the earth formed a fissure and swallowed Adhamma.

As we read, Adhamma could kill Dhamma, just as iron can beat gold, whereas gold cannot beat iron. People who are on the side of Adhamma, who are wrong, think that they are like iron and can make iron appear as beautiful as gold, thus, they make akusala appear as good.

When someone has done wrong, he is likely to be blamed by society. If we believe that we should join in judging that person and blaming him time and again, the citta is akusala and then we are actually on the side of Adhamma, not of Dhamma. If sati-sampajañña arises, we can have loving-kindness and patience; we can refrain from blaming someone else, so that aversion and other kinds of akusala do not increase.

As we read, Dhamma answered that he would have patience and endure the coarse speech of Adhamma.

We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” (Miscellaneous Sayings):

*“Again, only the man of wisdom can patiently tolerate the wrongs of others, not the dull-witted man. In the man lacking wisdom, the wrongs of others only provoke impatience; but for the wise, they call his patience into play and make it grow even stronger.”*

How shall we live from now on? If we have right understanding, we can patiently tolerate the wrongs of someone else, but if we lack understanding, impatience will increase. We read further on:

*“Only the man of wisdom is skilful in providing for the welfare of all beings, without discriminating between dear people, neutrals, and enemies.”*

All the teachings are beneficial. We can see that the Buddha helped his followers in explaining the Dhamma and exhorting them time and again to consider the benefit of kusala dhammas. We read in the text: “Only the man of wisdom is skilful in providing for the welfare of all beings,

without discriminating between dear people, neutrals, and enemies.” This reminds us that we should be skilful in providing for the welfare of all beings, that we should be impartial in giving assistance to others, and not only help our close friends.

When someone is really skilful, he has patience so that he is intent on what is beneficial. When he is impatient this is of no benefit to him.

We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”, no. 1, the Conduct of Akitti:

*“Sīla has been called ‘tapa’, ascetism or austerity, because it burns<sup>1</sup> the impurity arising from akusala. Because of the splendour and power of the perfection of patience and the perfection of viriya, also these perfections have been called tapa, ascetism: they burn the impurity of craving and laziness. The Bodhisatta developed those perfections to the highest degree when he was in this life. It should be said that he developed them by the power of the perfection of patience (khanti pāramittānubhāvena), because the restraint by patience leads to what is supreme. The Exalted One said: ‘patience is the highest ascetism’ (khanti paramaṃ tapo).”*

The first words of the “Exhortation to the Pāṭimokkha” are, “Patience is the highest ascetism”. If patience and endurance are lacking, the perfections cannot lead to the realization of the four noble Truths. We should think of the patience of people at the time when the Buddha had not yet finally passed away. When we read the Suttas and reflect on them in detail we can see the patience and endurance of people at that time who applied the Dhamma in their conduct and practice.

We read in the “Discourse on the Analysis of the Elements” (Middle Length Sayings III, no 140):

*“Thus have I heard: At one time the Lord, walking on tour among the people of Magadha, arrived at Rājagaha and approached the potter Bhaggava; having approached, he spoke thus to Bhaggava the potter: ‘If it is not inconvenient to you, Bhaggava, I would spend one night in your dwelling.’*

*‘It is not inconvenient<sup>2</sup>, revered sir, but there is here one gone forth who came before you to stay. But if he allow it, do stay, revered sir, according to your pleasure.’ ”*

We see the patience of the Buddha who wandered for the benefit of others in teaching the Dhamma, so that he could help those who were

---

1 Tappati is the passive form of tapati. Tappati means to burn, to shine.

2 The P.T.S. English translation has “It is not convenient to me, revered sir. For there is here...” I follow the Pali text here.

able to realize the four noble Truths. He walked on tour in Magadha, he stopped in the city of Rājagaha and came to see the potter. He did not go to a place that was pleasant and comfortable. He asked for a sleeping place in the potter's workshop just for one night.

We read in the Commentary to this sutta, the “Papañcasūdanī” that the potter Bhaggava thought:

*“Monks usually have different inclinations: some like to keep company, and others like to be alone. If the monk who came here first is someone who wants to be alone, he will say, ‘Revered sir, do not enter here, because I am already in this dwelling’, so that the person who comes afterwards will go away. If this would happen, both people would quarrel. Thus, what has been given should be considered as such, and what has been done cannot be altered.”*

The Commentary states:

*“Therefore, he said, ‘It is not inconvenient, revered sir, but there is here one gone forth who came before you to stay. But if he allows it, do stay, revered sir, according to your pleasure.’ ”*

We read further on in the Sutta:

*“At that time there was a young man of family called Pukkusāti who had gone forth from home into homelessness through faith in the Lord. He was the person who had arrived first at that potter's dwelling. Then the Lord approached the venerable Pukkusāti:*

*‘If it is not inconvenient to you, monk, I will spend a night in this dwelling.’*

*‘Spacious, friend, is the potter's dwelling; let the venerable one stay according to his pleasure.’ ”*

We read in the Commentary to this Sutta:

*“King Pukkusāti reigned over his kingdom in the city of Takkasilā and King Bimbisāra reigned over his kingdom in the city of Rājagāha, and they were of the same age. Between them there was a deep bond of affection, although they had never seen each other. Their friendship was established by means of the merchants who travelled between their two countries for the purpose of trade.*

*King Bimbisāra received from King Pukkusāti as a gift eight precious garments, of which he offered four to the Exalted one and kept four for his own use in his palace. To him the following thought occurred: ‘When I shall send a present in return it should be better than the one King Pukkusāti has sent to*

me before. My friend sent me a priceless present, and what should I send to him? In the city of Rājagaha not any object more precious than that is to be found.' King Bimbisāra had excellent qualities and also, since the time he had become a sotāpanna, nothing else but the Triple Gem could arouse joy. He uttered his wish to select the 'Gems' he would offer as a present to King Pukkusāti.

Usually there are two kinds of jewels <sup>1</sup>. The jewel without consciousness is gold, silver, etc. The jewel with consciousness is bound up with the faculties <sup>2</sup>. The jewels without consciousness are used for decoration of those with consciousness. Of these two kinds of jewels, the jewel with consciousness is accounted the foremost.

The Jewel with consciousness is twofold as the animal jewel and the human jewel. The animal Jewel which includes the Elephant-Jewel and the Horse-Jewel is used for the conveyance of humans. Therefore, the human Jewel is accounted the foremost.

The human jewel is twofold as the woman jewel and the man jewel. The woman jewel performs service for the Wheel-Turning Monarch <sup>3</sup>. Therefore, the man jewel is accounted the foremost of these two jewels.

The man jewel is twofold as the house-living jewel and the homeless jewel. A Wheel-turning Monarch is the foremost among the house-living jewels, but since he pays homage with the fivefold prostration even to a novice (sāmañera) who has gone forth on that day, the homeless jewel is accounted the foremost.

The homeless jewel is twofold as the "learner" and the "non-learner" <sup>4</sup>.

Of the two homeless jewels the value of the jewels of even hundred thousand learners does not equal the value of the jewel of one non-learner, and therefore, the non-learner is accounted the foremost."

The learner, sekkha, is the ariyan of the stage of the sotāpanna, streamwinner, up to the stage of the anāgāmi, non-returner. The non-learner, asekkha, does not need anymore to train himself and follow the practice leading to the eradication of defilements, because he has

1 See also the Commentary to the "Minor Readings", the "Illustrator of Ultimate Meaning", Ch VI, The Jewel Discourse.

2 Living beings with faculties, indriyas, such as eye sense, etc.

3 A Universal King ruling over the four continents, who possesses the jewels of the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the gem, the woman, the treasurer and the advisor.

4 The sekkha, learner, has attained enlightenment but not to the degree of arahatship, whereas the asekkha, non-learner, has attained arahatship.

eradicated all defilements completely. The non-learner is the arahat. We read in the Commentary:

*“The jewel of the non-learner is twofold: the jewel of the Buddha and the jewel of the disciple. Of the non-learner jewels, the value of the jewels of even hundred thousand disciples does not equal the value of the jewel of the Buddha. Therefore, the jewel of the Buddha is accounted the foremost.*

*The Buddha jewel is twofold: the jewel of the Silent Buddha (Paccheka Buddha) and the jewel of the Fully Enlightened One. As to the Buddha jewel, the value of the jewels of hundred thousand Solitary Buddhas does not equal the value of the jewel of the Fully Enlightened One. Therefore, the jewel of the Fully Enlightened One is accounted the foremost.*

*Thus, as it is well known, there is no jewel equal to the jewel of the Buddha, not in this world nor in the worlds of devas.*

*King Bimbisāra who was a sotāpanna thought, ‘Nothing else is more precious than the Triple Gem’. Therefore he asked the merchants who were citizens of Takkasilā, ‘Are the three Jewels of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha known in your country?’*

*The merchants from Takkasila said, ‘In our country one has never heard of them. Where could they be seen?’*

*That was the reason that King Bimbisāra gave the order to make a sheet of gold of four cubits long, a span in breadth and a thickness which was just right: not too thin, not too thick. He washed his head in the early morning, he observed the Uposatha (vigil day), took breakfast and then he had inscriptions engraved on the sheet of gold. He had inscriptions made relating the excellent qualities of the Buddha, the development of the ten perfections, the excellent qualities of the Dhamma, the thirtyseven factors of enlightenment, the four satipaṭṭhānas, the eightfold Path, the excellent qualities of the Sangha and Mindfulness of Breath-ing.”*

The excellent qualities of the Sangha at that time were the qualities of the ariyans who were contented with the four requisites <sup>1</sup>, who could subdue the hindrances, attain jhāna, acquire supernatural powers, and become “great men” (mahā-purisa <sup>2</sup>). King Bimbisāra considered that he would have a present made superior to anything else: the excellent qualities of the Triple Gem which he had inscribed on the golden sheet.

We read in the Commentary:

---

1 The four requisites of the monk: clothing, food, dwelling and medicines.

2 Great men or heroes: with distinctive qualities.

*“He then wrote as follows: ‘The teachings of the Lord Buddha are well spoken, they liberate beings from dukkha. If you, my friend, can really grasp this, may you then enter monkhood!’*

*The King had wrapped around the golden sheet a blanket of animal hair of a delicate texture and had it placed into a strong box. This box was placed into another box of gold, and this golden box into a silver box, and each box was successively placed into another precious box: made of silver, pearl, coral, ruby, emerald, crystal, ivory, of all kinds of gems, and then placed into a box made of a bamboo matting. This he had placed into a strong container, this again into a golden container, and then successively into other containers, in the same way as before in the case of the boxes. The container made of all kinds of gems he had placed in a container made of bamboo matting, and this in a container of hardwood. Thus each container was placed in another one in the same way.*

*The box made of all kinds of gems which was placed in a box of bamboo matting was wrapped around with cloth and stamped with the royal seal. The King gave orders to the courtiers to adorn his auspicious elephant and place the throne on his back, to put over it the white multilevelled royal umbrella, to decorate the streets in the city with beautiful ornaments and banners, and pay respect with perfums, incense and flowers all along the way the royal present would be carried. With regard to the King himself, he was adorned with all kinds of ornaments and surrounded by his troops carrying musical instruments. The King considered that he would accompany his present until the border area of his country and that he would give an official letter to the attendants so that they would offer this to King Pukkusāti. The contents of that letter were as follows:*

*‘When you will receive this present, do not receive it in the quarters of the female royal servants, but may you go to the royal palace and receive it there.’*

*When the King had given the official letter, he thought, ‘The Teacher goes now to the border country’, and he paid respect by the fivefold prostration, kneeling and placing his hands and head on the floor, and then he returned.”*

The present which is superior is the Triple Gem. We have met each other life after life in the cycle of birth and death, in some lives as friends, in other lives as enemies or as parents and relatives. However, to be born as friends in the Dhamma who are co-operating to spread the teachings is most beneficial. Such a life is superior to other lives in the cycle of birth and death, where we were born elsewhere without such an opportunity.

We read further on in the Commentary:

“As regards King Pukkusāti, he arranged for decorations beginning with the border area. He arranged that the city would be decorated so that the royal present from King Bimbisāra could be received. When the royal present arrived in Takkasilā it was a day of vigil (uposatha). The courtiers who received the royal present announced the contents of the royal official letter to the King. After the King had listened to this he considered the duties he had to fulfill towards the courtiers who had come to offer the royal present. He let the royal present be carried to the palace and he said, ‘Let nobody enter here’. He asked people to guard the gate, he opened the window (used for receiving at official occasions), he had the royal present placed on a high bed, and he himself sat down on a low seat. He broke the royal seal, and he took off the coverings. When he opened the boxes subsequently and saw the box made of bamboomatting, he considered, ‘I believe that other Gems do not have such accompaniments, and thus we should listen to this Jewel. This Jewel was certainly born in the Middle Country.’

When he had opened those boxes and broken the royal seal, he took away from both sides the delicate blanket made of animal hair, he saw the golden sheet and unrolled this. He considered:

‘These letters are really beautifully carved out in all details: they are of equal size, neat and quadrangle. I will start to read them from the beginning.’ An intense feeling of joy arose in the King when he read and reread about the excellent qualities of the Buddha who appeared in this world.

The tips of the ninety-nine thousand bodyhairs stood on end. Because of his extreme delight and rapture the King did not know whether he should stand or sit down.

When intense rapture arose within the King he said: ‘We heard the teachings which are difficult to come across, even in a hundred thousand aeons, and this could happen because of a friend.’ When the King was unable to read on, he sat down until his rapture quieted down. Then he started to read on about the excellent qualities of the Dhamma: ‘The Dhamma that was wellspoken by the Buddha...’ The King experienced intense rapture and he sat down again until the strength of his rapture quieted down. After that he read about the excellent qualities of the Sangha, ‘The ariyan disciples practise in the right way...’ and he experienced intense rapture in the same way.

Then he read about the meditation subject of Mindfulness of Breathing, and finally he attained the fourth and the fifth stage of jhāna. The King spent his time with the happiness of jhāna. Other people could not see him, except for the royal page. About one month passed in this way. The citizens assembled at the royal courtyard and announced with acclamations: ‘Since the day the King has received the royal present he has not looked anymore at the city nor



*at the shows of the dancing girls nor has he given judgement. May the King return the royal present to his friend.'*

*The citizens said further: 'Usually Kings try to deceive even with presents. They try to get hold of the kingdom of other Kings. What should our King do?'*

*The King heard the sound of these acclamations and he considered: 'Shall we maintain the Kingdom or shall we maintain the teachings?' After that he thought, 'We shall maintain the teachings of this Teacher.'*

*He took his sword which he kept on a bed and cut off his hair. He requested his royal page to buy two yellow robes and an earthenware alms bowl at the market. He dedicated himself to the Teacher with the words, 'Arahats in the world, we dedicate ourselves in going forth.' He put on one yellow robe and then donned another one. He carried his bowl on his shoulder and left his palace.*

*The citizens saw three dance girls standing at the three doors, but they could not recognize the King who came out of the palace. They thought that he was a Silent Buddha who had come to preach Dhamma to the King."*

King Pukkusāti left his royal palace and all his possessions in order to go forth. He must have had the utmost patience to change his usual way of life and status, in order to be able to realize the four noble Truths. If one has not accumulated such patience one is not able to act like King Pukkusāti.

We read further on:

*"The son of a prominent family (the King who had gone forth as a monk<sup>1</sup>) thought, 'Our teacher left the homelife and went forth alone, he went on his way alone. I feel shame and awe with regard to the Teacher. I heard that after our Teacher had gone forth he did not go on a vehicle and he did not use any footwear, not even one layer, nor did he use a paper sunshade.'*

*That son of a prominent family thought, 'I am travelling far and therefore I should not go alone. I shall follow a group of merchants.' When the son of a prominent family who was delicate by nature walked on very hot ground, the soles of both of his feet were with pus and wounds, and therefore, he experienced painful feeling.*

*When the merchants had set up a camp, and sat down to rest, the son of a prominent family went away to sit at the root of a tree. There was nobody there to take care of his legs or massage his back. That son of a prominent*

---

1 "Son of a noble family" is generally used to refer to the monk who is actually the Buddha's son.

family attained the fourth *jhāna* with Mindfulness of Breathing and he could thus suppress the hardship of his journey, his tiredness and agitation. He spent his time with the joy of *jhāna*.

The next day at dawn he took care of his bodily needs and followed again the group of merchants. When it was time for breakfast, the merchants took the bowl of the son of a prominent family and placed in it hard food and soft food as an offering. This food consisted of raw husked rice that was not delicious, curry that was like a heap of gravel, soup with very salty ingredients. The son of a prominent family reflected on his resting place, and the hard and soft food were like divine nectar to him while he swallowed everything with a great deal of water.

He travelled one-hundred and ninetytwo leagues<sup>1</sup> in all, and although he passed close to the gates of the Jeta Grove, he did not enquire where the Teacher was staying.

Why did he not enquire?

The answer is that he revered the Teacher, and also because of the royal official letter sent by the King which seemed to convey that the Teacher had appeared in Rājagaha, since it stated, 'The *Tathāgata* has appeared in this world.' Therefore he understood that the Buddha was dwelling in the city of Rājagaha. Although he went near the gate of the Jeta Grove, he travelled on fortyfive leagues more. At sundown the son of a prominent family reached Rājagaha and there he asked where the Teacher was staying.

When a villager learnt that he came from the northern country (Uttara Pradesh) he informed him as follows, 'You have passed the city of Sāvattthī and travelled on fortyfive leagues to Rājagaha, but the Teacher is dwelling in Sāvattthī.'

The son of a prominent family, Pukkusāti, thought, 'Now it is not the right time to return to the city of Sāvattthī, and today I shall first take lodging here. Tomorrow I shall go to the Teacher's dwelling place.' He asked the villager where recluses who arrived at an inappropriate time could find a lodging.

The villager answered that he could dwell in this potter's workshop.

Then the son of a prominent family asked the potter whether he could dwell there. He entered and sat down, in order to make use of the lodging in the workshop of that potter.

In the morning before Pukkusāti went to stay in the potter's workshop, the Buddha investigated the world and saw the son of a prominent family,

---

1 One yojana or league is 7.3 kilometre.

*Pukkusāti. He considered, 'This son of a prominent family left his kingdom as soon as he had read the official letter that his friend sent him. He went forth and dedicated himself specifically to me, and he travelled all of the hundred and twentyone leagues to the city of Rājagaha.*

*If I do not go there he will not realize the fruits of a recluse (he will not realize the four noble Truths); he will not realize the three fruits of a recluse, that is, he will not attain the third stage of enlightenment, the stage of the non-returner (anāgāmi). He will die without any refuge after he has dwelt there just for one night. When I have gone there he will realize the three fruits of a recluse. Since I have developed all the perfections during four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons only for the benefit and support of people, I shall help the son of a prominent family, Pukkusāti.'*

*In the early morning the Buddha saw to his bodily needs and surrounded by bhikkhus he went on his almsround in the city of Sāvathī. After he had received almsfood he returned from his almsround and entered his fragrant chamber. He paused after the exertion of walking just for a moment and he did not say anything to the elderly monks. The Venerable Sāriputta, the venerable Moggallāna and other monks were present. The Lord took his bowl and robe and went out alone. While on his way, he did not fly through the air nor did he make the stretch he walked shorter <sup>1</sup>. He considered again: 'That son of a prominent family has shame and awe for me, he does not even sit in a vehicle, on an elephant, horse, chariot or golden palaquin, etc. and finally, he does not even use one layer of footwear, nor does he carry a sunshade. Therefore, I should walk afoot.' Thus, the Buddha travelled just by walking. The Buddha hid the splendour of his Buddhahood: his eighty minor attributes, his halo of two yards and the thirtytwo characteristics of a Great Man <sup>2</sup>. He travelled in the guise of an ordinary bhikkhu, as the full moon which is hidden by a misty cloud.*

*In less than one day (after the meal), he walked fortyfive leagues and reached at sundown the workshop of that potter.*

*When the Buddha walked in this way he did not intimidate people, saying, 'I am the Sammāsambuddha.' Thus, he just went to the potter's workshop and stood at the gate. In order to give the son of a prominent family an opportunity <sup>3</sup>, he said: 'Bhikkhu, if it is not inconvenient to you, I would like to lodge in this dwelling for just one night.'*

*Pukkusāti answered: 'Spacious, friend, is the potter's dwelling; stay, friend, according to your pleasure.'*

---

1 By supranatural powers.

2 These are specific bodily features of a Buddha.

3 An opportunity to share his residence with the Buddha.

*The Lord of the World who was of a most delicate constitution had left his fragrant Chamber which is like a divine dwelling, he spread out a covering of grass in the potter's workshop, where ashes were scattered all over the place, which was dirty because of broken utensils, dry grass and so on and which was like a heap of garbage. He spread out his ragrobe and sat down as if he had entered his fragrant chamber with a divine odour, just as if it was a divine dwelling. Thus he sat down."*

If we want to develop the perfection of patience, we should not forget to accumulate endurance in each situation, be it with regard to seats, beds or anything else in our environment. We read further on:

*"The Buddha was born into a prominent family and also Pukkusāti had grown in the womb of a mother of prominent family, a Khattiya family <sup>1</sup>. The Buddha attained what he had aspired to, and so did the son of a prominent family. Each of them had left his kingdom to become a monk. The Buddha was of a golden complexion and so was the son of a prominent family. Both of them possessed specific attainments (samāpatti). Both of them were Kings... both of them had left their status of royalty to go forth... They entered the potter's workshop and sat down in that way. For that reason the potter's workshop became extremely beautiful and delightful.*

*To the Buddha the thought did not occur that he was of delicate constitution, that he had travelled all the way of fortyfive leagues within one day, and that he would take first the 'lion's posture' <sup>2</sup>, just for a moment, so that he could recover from tiredness caused by his journey. Therefore, the Buddha sat down and entered fruition attainment (phala samāpatti) <sup>3</sup>. As regards Pukkusāti, it did not occur to him that he had travelled all the way of hundred and twentynine leagues and that he should first take a rest, just for a moment, to dispel the tiredness caused by his journey. He sat down and entered the fourth jhāna with Mindfulness of Breathing.*

*Question: Did the Buddha not come there with the thought to teach Dhamma to the son of a prominent family? Why did he not teach?*

*Answer: He did not teach because the son of a prominent family was tired from his journey, and thus he had not sufficient calm to receive the teaching of Dhamma. First he should be able to overcome the tiredness of his journey and become calm...."*

---

1 The khattiya clan was the highest clan.

2 The Buddha's sleeping posture on his right side.

3 Ariyans who have attained jhāna can have fruition-consciousness, lokuttara vipākacitta, which experiences nibbāna, arising again many times after the moment of enlightenment.

Further on we read:

*“When the Buddha had emerged from his fruition attainment he saw that Pukkusāti was thoughtful as to the position of his hands and legs, that his head was stable, and that he sat steadfast like the foundation of a dam firmly constructed. He was immovable like a golden statue.*

*The son of a prominent family had a posture that inspired confidence. If a posture inspires confidence it is in that way.*

*Of the four postures three are not beautiful. When someone walks, his hands swing, his legs move and his head shakes. When someone stands, his body is harsh and rigid, and when he lies down, his body is not beautiful.*

*However, when a monk has brushed and swept the place where he will rest at day time, after his meal, when he has spread out a cloth to sit on, well cleansed his hands and legs and sits crosslegged in the lotus position, then his posture is indeed beautiful. The son of a prominent family sat down crosslegged and entered the fourth jhāna with Mindfulness of Breathing in that way.”*

We read in the Sutta, the “Analysis of the Elements”, that at that time the Buddha asked Pukkusāti:

*“On account of whom have you, monk, gone forth? Who is your teacher? Whose Dhamma do you profess?”*

*Pukkusāti answered: “There is, friend, the recluse Gotama, son of the Sakyans, gone forth from the Sakyan clan; concerning this Lord Gotama a lovely reputation has gone abroad thus: He is indeed the Lord, perfected one, fully Self-Awakened One, endowed with right conduct and knowledge, well-farer, knower of the worlds, matchless charioteer of men to be tamed, teacher of devas and mankind, the Awakened One, the Lord. On account of this Lord have I gone forth, and this Lord is my teacher; I profess this Lord’s Dhamma.”*

*“But where, monk, is this Lord, perfected one, fully Self-Awakened One, staying now?”*

*“There is a town called Sāvattihī, friend, in the northern districts; this Lord, perfected one, fully Self-Awakened One, is now staying there.”*

*“Have you, monk, ever seen this Lord? If you saw him would you know him?”*

*“No, friend, I have never seen this Lord, so I would not know him if I saw him.”*

We read further on in the Sutta:

*“Then it occurred to the Lord: ‘This young man of respectable family has gone forth on account of me. Suppose I were to teach him Dhamma?’ And the Lord addressed the venerable Pukkusāti, saying: ‘I will teach you Dhamma, monk; listen carefully, pay attention and I will speak.’*

*‘Yes, friend,’ the venerable Pukusāti answered the Lord in assent...”*

The Buddha then taught him the Sutta on the “Analysis of the Elements”<sup>1</sup>

We read further on in the Sutta:

*“Then the venerable Pukkusāti thought: ‘Indeed it is the Teacher who has come to me; indeed it is the Well-farer who has come to me; indeed it is the Fully Self-Awakened One who has come to me,’ and rising from his seat, arranging his robe over one shoulder and bowing his head to the Lord’s feet, he spoke thus to the Lord:*

*‘A transgression, revered sir, has overcome me in that foolish, errant and unskilled as I was, I supposed the Lord could be addressed with the epithet: friend. Revered sir, may the Lord acknowledge my transgression as a transgression for the sake of restraint in the future.’*

*‘Indeed, monk, a transgression overcame you in that... you supposed I could be addressed with the epithet: friend. But if you, monk, seeing this transgression as a transgression, confess it according to the rule, we acknowledge it for you. For this is growth, monk, in the discipline for an ariyan, that whoever, seeing a transgression as a transgression confess it according to the rule, he comes to restraint in the future.’*

*‘Revered sir, may I receive ordination in the Lord’s presence?’*

*‘But are you, monk, complete as to bowl and robe?’*

*‘Revered sir, I am not complete as to bowl and robe.’*

*‘Monk, Tathāgatas do not ordain anyone not complete as to bowl and robe.’*

*Then the venerable Pukkusāti, having rejoiced in what the Lord had said, having given thanks for it, rising from his seat greeted the Lord and, keeping his right side towards him, departed in order to search for bowl and robe. But while he was touring about in search of a bowl and robe a cow swerved and deprived him of life.*

---

1 In this Sutta the Buddha taught Pukkusāti about the six elements of earth, water, fire, wind, space and consciousness. He taught that these should not be seen as mine, I or myself. He taught about feelings and their conditions, about arūpa jhānas, and about the fact that these are conditioned dhammas. He spoke about the cessation of birth and the unconditioned dhamma.

*Then a number of monks approached the Lord; having approached, having greeted the Lord, they sat down at a respectful distance. As they were sitting down at a respectful distance, these monks spoke thus to the Lord: ‘That young man of family, Pukkusāti, revered sir, whom the Lord exhorted with an exhortation in brief, has died. What is his bourn, what his future state?’*

*‘Clever, monks, was Pukkusāti, the young man of family; he followed after Dhamma according to the various parts of Dhamma, and he did not annoy me with questionings on Dhamma. Monks, Pukkusāti, the young man of family, by the complete destruction of the five fetters binding to this lower (shore), is of spontaneous uprising, one who attains nibbāna there, not liable to return from that world<sup>1</sup>.’*

*When the Buddha had spoken this Discourse, the monks delighted in the words of the Exalted One.”*

We read further on in the Commentary to the “Analysis of the Elements”:

*“It has been asked: why did the almsbowl and robes which can be made to appear by supranatural powers not come to Pukkusāti?*

*Answer: Because the son of a prominent family did not offer the eight requisites<sup>2</sup> in the past.*

*However, the son of a prominent family Pukkusāti had made offerings and he had made aspirations, and thus, one should not say that the reason (for not obtaining the requisites) was his lack of generosity in the past...*

*Robes and bowl which can be made to appear by supranatural power can only come to disciples who are in their last life, thus, who have attained arahatship. For this son of a prominent family there would still be rebirth, because he had attained the state of non-returner, anāgāmī, not arahatship. Moreover, the lifespan of this son of a prominent family was about to expire.*

*With regard to Pukkusāti, (it can be said that it was as if) the Mahā-brahma (of the brahma plane), the anāgāmī of the ‘Pure Abodes’ (suddhāvāsa<sup>3</sup>) came to the potter’s workshop and sat down there.”*

*Afterwards he was reborn as a brahma in the heavenly plane of Avihā, thus, in (the first of) the “Pure Abodes”. Only those who have attained the stage of*

---

1 He had attained the third stage of enlightenment, the stage of the non-returner, anāgāmī.

2 The eight parikkhāra, requisites are: three robes, a bowl, a razor, a needle, a girdle and a water-strainer.

3 There are five Pure Abodes, Suddhāvāsa planes for non-returners, which are the results of the fourth jhāna (or the fifth of the fivefold system), and Pukkusāti was born in the first of them, the Aviha plane.

the non-returner and have developed the fifth stage of jhāna can be reborn in the “Pure Abodes”.

Pukkusāti, before his lifespan had come to an end, was close to becoming a rūpa-brahma in the “Pure Abodes”, and therefore, the Commentary stated: “the Mahā-brahma (of the brahma plane), the anāgāmi of the ‘Pure Abodes’ (suddhavāsa) came to the potter’s workshop and sat down there.”

Very soon his life as Pukkusāti would be changed into the life of a rūpa-brahma of the “Pure Abodes”.

The Paramatthadīpanī, the Commentary to the Khuddaka Nikāya, Commentary to the “Theragāthā”, Nidāna Kathā, states:

“The perfection of paññā which supports and fulfils all the perfections, the perfection of generosity and the others, of all Bodhisattas, brings gradually to maturity and complete fulfilment the awakening wisdom of the Buddha by which he attained Buddhahood. Also respectively, in the case of the Silent Buddhas and the disciples: it brings gradually to maturity and complete fulfillment the awakening wisdom of the Silent Buddhas and the disciples...

The highest patience in the development of kusala, dāna etc., for the awakening wisdom of the Silent Buddhas and of the disciples is considered as effort or energy (virīya).

The endurance when refraining from anger is considered as patience.

The performing of generosity (dāna), the undertaking of sīla etc., and the abstaining from speech which deviates from the truth is considered as truthfulness (sacca).

Decisiveness which is unshakable, firm, and which accomplishes what is beneficial in all respects is considered as determination (aditṭhāna).

Intentness on the benefit of other beings which is the foundation for performing dāna, sīla etc., is considered as loving-kindness (mettā).

Evenmindedness towards improper deeds done by other beings is considered as equanimity (upekkhā).

Therefore, when dāna, sīla and bhāvanā (mental development), or sīla, samādhi and paññā are present, the perfections, virīya etc., can be regarded as completed.”

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” (Miscellaneous Sayings) reminds us to consider our own patience :

“Again, only the man of wisdom can patiently tolerate the wrongs of others,



*not the dull-witted man. In the man lacking wisdom, the wrongs of others only provoke impatience; but for the wise, they call his patience into play and make it grow even stronger.”*

There is a difference between a person with paññā and without it. As to the person with paññā, no matter what wrong someone else has done to him, this makes his patience grow firmer and more accomplished. As to the person who lacks paññā, the wrongs of someone else provoke an increase in impatience, the opposite of patience.

Patience is needed with regard to our environment, in the different situations of daily life. Daily life can be a test for our patience and endurance.

We read in the “Gradual Sayings”, Book of the Fives, Ch IX, §5, “He cannot endure” that the Buddha said:

*“Monks, possessed of five qualities, among his fellows in the godly life (brahma cariya), an elder becomes neither dear nor pleasant nor respected nor praised.”*

*He cannot endure forms, sounds, smells, tastes and touches.*

*Monks, possessed of these five qualities, an elder becomes neither dear nor pleasant nor respected nor praised.*

*By the opposte qualities, a person who can endure forms (visible objects), sounds, smells, tastes and touches, will become, among his fellows in the godly life, dear, pleasant, respected and praised.”*

The Buddha did not teach Dhamma only to monks, but also to all his followers who developed paññā. He taught Dhamma so that one can see that the truth is the truth: someone who is dear, pleasant, respected and who should be praised is a person who can endure visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes and touches.

Some people do not consider and think of patience and endurance, they have not accumulated patience. We can see the danger of impatience when someone who is happy himself and without trouble, cannot stand another person’s happiness. We read in the Commentary to the Gradual Sayings, Book of the Fives §5, “Begrudging” (machari)<sup>1</sup> about the five kinds of avarice (macchariya) of a miser:

---

1 Machariya is avarice. There are five kinds explained in the Scriptures: avarice concerning dwelling (āvāsa), family (kula), that is the family which gives requisites to a monk, gain (lābha), the requisites he receives, praise (vaṇṇa) and Dhamma.

*“With regard to avarice as to dwelling (āvāsa), he cannot bear to see someone else in that dwelling,*

*with regard to avarice as to family (kula), he cannot bear to see someone else visiting that family,*

*with regard to avarice as to gain (lābha), he cannot bear someone else to obtain something,*

*with regard to avarice as to praise (vaṇṇa), he cannot bear that people praise the good qualities of others,*

*with regard to avarice as to Dhamma, he does not want to explain the theory of the Dhamma to someone else.”*

This shows the importance of patience. If sati arises which is non-forgetful of kusala, one is able to have endurance. We should know what the Scriptures say about the excellence of patience and the disadvantage of impatience.

We read in the “Gradual Sayings” (III), Book of the Fives, Ch XXII, § 5, Impatience, that the Buddha said:

*“Monks, there are these five disadvantages from being impatient. What five?*

*Not to many folk he is dear and pleasing; he is full of malevolence; there is much harm for him; he dies muddled in thought and rises in unhappy planes, such as hell planes.*

*Monks, these are the five disadvantages from being impatient.”*

It is true that someone who is impatient is not dear and pleasing to many people, he is full of malevolence and he may cause quarreling, injuring, fighting, harming and killing. When he is irritated and displeased because of an unpleasant experience, he should know that accumulated inclinations condition him to be bad-tempered and impatient and that he will receive the harmful effect of his own akusala. Someone else cannot harm him, only his own defilements will cause him harm, and moreover, he will die muddled in thought. If someone is often impatient and overcome by anger, he may also be so when he is near death. Everybody has to leave this world, and when the citta is impure just before dying, his akusala citta is the condition for rebirth in an unhappy plane such as hell. This is a danger much more fearsome than the dangers in this world.

Thus, we should train ourselves in patience, acceptance and endurance with regard to our living conditions, our environment, patience with

regard to all kinds of situations (adhivāsanā khanti).

Patience has many degrees. We need patience to listen to the Dhamma, to study and to consider it, in order to have right understanding of what is taught. We should not merely listen, we should also consider with wise attention what we have heard. The Dhamma is very subtle and deep and if we do not consider thoroughly what we have heard and studied, we can easily have confusion and wrong understanding, there may be conditions for wrong conduct and wrong practice.

When patience with regard to listening to the Dhamma increases we shall see the benefit of all kinds of kusala and further develop it. This means that we shall have more understanding of the right cause that brings its effect accordingly.

We read in the ‘Kindred Sayings’ (V, Mahā-vagga, Kindred Sayings on Streamwinning, Ch II, § 2, Brahmins) that the Buddha, while he was dwelling at Sāvattḥī, was reminding the monks about the right kind of patience and the wrong kind of patience. We read:

*“Monks, the brahmins proclaim this practice which leads to prosperity: they instruct their disciples thus:*

*‘Come, good fellow! Rise up betimes and go facing east. Don’t avoid a hole, a village pool or cesspit. You should go to meet your death wherever you may fall. Thus, good fellow, on the break up of body, after death you will be reborn in the Happy Lot, in the Heaven World.’ ”*

Those brahmins taught endurance and patience, but if patience is not accompanied by paññā it is not beneficial at all. This teaching of the brahmins was devoid of paññā, unreasonable and not beneficial.

We read further on that the Buddha said:

*“But, monks, this practice of the brahmins is the way of fools, it is the way of infatuation. It conduces not to revulsion, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to full comprehension, to the wisdom, it conduces not to Nibbāna.*

*Now, monks, I too proclaim, in the Ariyan discipline, a practice which leads to prosperity, but it is one which conduces to downright revulsion, dispassion, cessation, to calm, to full comprehension, to the wisdom, to Nibbāna.”*

Those brahmins used the same wording, “leading to prosperity”, but the meaning is different, and it refers to a different way of practice. We read that the Buddha said:

*“Herein, monks, the Ariyan disciple has unwavering loyalty to the Buddha...*

*the Dhamma...the Order. He is blessed with the virtues dear to the Ariyans, virtues unbroken, whole, unspotted, untarnished, virtues untainted, which lead to concentration of mind. This, monks, is the practice which leads to downright revulsion, dispassion, cessation, to calm, to full comprehension, to the wisdom, to Nibbāna."*

This is a short text, but it deals with the dhammas which are naturally appearing just as they are, at this moment. This is the way leading to dispassion, calm, full comprehension, enlightenment, nibbāna.

We read in the Commentary to the "Basket of Conduct" (Miscellaneous Sayings) about the defilements which can arise in the process of developing the perfections. When one is developing the perfection of patience the defilement can arise of "discriminating thoughts of oneself and others."

For some people patience is limited, they have patience only with regard to some people and only sometimes. They compare another person with themselves and this is a condition for impatience. We should know that the defilement of discriminating thoughts of oneself and others hinders the development of patience. We read in the same section of the Commentary that one can be misled by the defilement of craving and that this hinders the development of all the perfections.

In the Ovāda-pāṭimokkha the Buddha exhorted the monks to have patience. There are two kinds of Pāṭimokkha: the Ovāda-pāṭimokkha and the Āṇā-pāṭimokkha<sup>1</sup>. The Ovāda-pāṭimokkha, the exhortation to the Pāṭimokkha, is an important principle of teaching or instruction. The Āṇā-pāṭimokkha are the rules of the Vinaya which are an important foundation to be applied by the monks in their conduct. In the Ovāda-pāṭimokkha the Buddha taught the significance of the perfection of patience in three stanzas and in addition two more verses.

We read in the "Sublime Story" (Mahāpadāna Sutta, Dialogues of the Buddha II, no. XIV):

*"Stanza 1:*

*khantī paramaṃ tapo titikkhā<sup>2</sup>: forbearing patience is the highest ascetism.  
nibbānaṃ paramaṃ vadanti Buddhā: nibbāna is supreme, the Buddhas say.*

---

1 Pāṭimokkha means obligation. Ovāda means admonition or exhortation. Āṇā means command.

2 Titikkhā means endurance.

*na hi pabbajito parūpaghāti: he, verily, is not a recluse who harms another.*  
*samaṇo hoti paraṃ viheṭṭhayanto : nor is he an ascetic who oppresses others.*

Stanza 2:

*sabba-pāpassā akaranam: not performing evil*  
*kusalassa upasampadā: accomplishing what is wholesome, doing all kinds of*  
*kusala.*  
*sacitta-pariyodapanam: purification of one's citta.*  
*etaṃ Buddhānasāsanam: this is the teaching of the Buddhas.*

Stanza 3:

*anupavādo anupaghāto: not insulting, not harming.*  
*pāṭimokkhe saṃvaro: restraint according to the pāṭimokkha*  
*mattaññutā ca bhattasmiṃ: knowing moderation in food.*  
*pantañca sayan' āsanam : a secluded dwelling*

*adhicitte ca āyogo: endeavour as to higher consciousness (development of*  
*calm of citta)*

*etaṃ Buddhānasāsanam: this is the teaching of the Buddhas.”*

The Commentary to this Sutta, the “Sumaṅgalavilāsinī” explains as to the First Stanza, the first verse: “khantī paramaṃ tapo titikkhā, patience, restraint, is the highest asceticism”, that khanti is adhvāsana-khanti.

Khanti is a condition for the development of all kusala, whereas impatience conditions the arising of all kinds of evil through citta and then through the body and through speech. Adhvāsana-khanti is endurance with regard to all situations in daily life, to our environment, and this is the highest asceticism.

The Commentary explains:

*“The words ‘nibbānaṃ paramaṃ vadanti Buddhā, nibbāna is supreme, the Buddhas say’, mean that all Buddhas say that nibbāna is the supreme*

*dhamma in all respects.”*

There is no other dhamma which is superior to nibbāna, because the other dhammas arise because of conditions, they are present for just a very short moment and then they fall away completely. Nāma dhamma and rūpa dhamma arise because of the appropriate conditions just for a moment and then fall away. How then can conditioned dhammas be a refuge? The Buddha said that nibbāna is the supreme dhamma, it is the dhamma through which defilements are eradicated completely, so that they never arise again. We read:

*“As to the words, ‘na hi pabbajito parūpaghāti, he, verily, is not a recluse who harms another’, this means that a person who harms, afflicts and injures someone else because he lacks adhvāsana khanti, endurance, cannot be called a recluse.*

*As to the word ‘pārūpaghāti, he harms’, this means that he violates sīla, because sīla is called paramaṃ, meaning, supreme. It is explained that an ascetic who is vexing another being, who is someone who harms another, ruins his own sīla. This means that he cannot be called a recluse.”*

When a monk who has to observe sīla transgresses sīla, when he ruins his own sīla, he cannot be considered a monk.

As regards a lay person, if he applies the teachings, his defilements can be eradicated. He should consider precisely, in all details, his action and speech, he should know whether they affect or harm someone else. Even if he does not utter harsh speech he should know whether he hurts someone else’s feelings. He should have a refined knowledge of his cittas.

We read further on in the Commentary:

*“A person harms someone else because he has no endurance, adhvāsana khanti<sup>1</sup>. If he kills other beings, even gadflies and mosquitos, he cannot be considered a recluse. What is the reason? Because he cannot get rid of impurity. Someone is considered a recluse (pabbajita) because he has got rid of impurities in himself. This is the characteristic of a recluse.”*

We read in the Commentary:

*“The Second Stanza:*

*the words ‘sabba-pāpassa’ (of all evil) mean: of all kinds of akusala.”*

If we know that something is akusala, no matter how slight, we should

---

1 The Commentary explains khanti as adhvāsana-khanti: patience with regard to one’s environment.

abstain from it if we are able to do so.

We read:

*“The word ‘akaraṇaṃ’ means, not causing to arise.*

*The word ‘kusalassa’ (of kusala) means, of the kusala of the four planes <sup>1</sup>.*

*The word ‘upasampadā’ means attainment (paṭilābho), specific acquisition.*

*The words ‘sacitta-pariyodapanam’ mean, purification of one’s citta, and this is through arahatship.*

*Thus, when recluses have eliminated all evil by the restraint of sīla and brought kusala to fulfilment by samatha and vipassanā, the citta is purified by the fruition of arahatship (arahatta phala). This is the teaching, the exhortation, the admonition of the Buddhas.”*

All this begins with patience, khanti, which is the highest ascetism.

We read further on:

*“The Third Stanza:*

*The word ‘anupavādo’ (not insulting) means, not insulting anyone by speech.*

*The word ‘anupaghāto’ (not harming) means, not harming through the body.*

*The word ‘pāṭimokkhe’ (according to the pāṭimokkha) means, it liberates completely, that is, the highest sīla; it guards in a supreme way, namely, it guards happy states; it liberates from danger, the danger of an unhappy destination. Or it guards happy states and liberates from unhappy states. Therefore, this sīla is called pāṭimokkha <sup>2</sup>.”*

If someone observes the sīla of pāṭimokkha, he will be liberated from unhappy planes and he can go to happy planes.

We read:

*“The word ‘mattaññutā’, knowing moderation, means, knowing moderation in receiving and eating.*

*The words ‘pantañca sayan’ āsanaṃ’, a secluded bed and seat, mean, a bed and seat free from the crowds.*

- 
- 1 Kusala of the four planes of citta: kusala of the sensuous plane, kāmāvacara, kusala of the level of rūpa-jhana, of arūpa-jhana and kusala which is supra mundane, lokuttara.
  - 2 Pāti means to guard or protect, and mokkheti means to liberate.

*It is explained by means of these two requisites<sup>1</sup> that he is contented with the four requisites.”*

The four requisites are dwelling, clothing, food and medicine. We read:

*“The words ‘etaṃ Buddhānasānaṃ’, this is the teaching of the Buddhas, mean, not harming another, restraint according to the Pāṭimokkha, knowing moderation in receiving and eating, living in a secluded place, because he is a person who is skilful in the eight attainments<sup>2</sup>.”*

*This is the teaching, the exhortation, the admonition of the Buddhas.”*

People may believe that it is too difficult to have patience to listen and to read the Tipiṭaka, but one needs patience and endurance in all respects and in all situations. When we think of the past lives of the disciples, we see that before they developed patience to a high degree, they had attachment (lobha), aversion (dosa) and ignorance (moha). They had a great deal of akusala, just as people today. However, they had developed paññā and they understood the benefit of patience and of wholesome qualities. Therefore, they could with patience develop all kinds of kusala so that finally the perfections could reach fulfilment through the realization of the four noble Truths. Before we can reach fulfilment of the perfections, we should continue to develop them with patience and endurance, life after life, and this is “cira kāla bhāvana”, a development which takes a long time (cira kāla). It takes a long time to develop paññā to the degree that it can eradicate defilements. When we see the extent of the defilements we still have, it is evident that the development of paññā must take an endlessly long time. Defilements cannot be eradicated if we do not listen to the Dhamma and do not contemplate it. All the teachings we listen to deal with the development of paññā and the eradication of defilements.

If we have patience with the development of the perfections they will reach fulfilment, we do not develop them in vain: eventually they will reach maturity and that means that the four noble Truths can be realized. The perfections of the Exalted One, the Sammāsambuddha, reached maturity and fulfilment so that he could attain Buddhahood at the foot of the Bodhi-tree in Bodhgaya.

The buddhist followers who are full of confidence in the Buddha wish to pay respect at the holy places where the most important events in the cycle of birth and death took place. However, when we pay respect at the holy places, we should also consider the Buddha’s teachings with wise

---

1 The requisites of food and dwelling place have been mentioned here.

2 The attainment of the stages of rūpajhāna and of arūpajhāna.



attention. Reflection on the patience of the Buddha's disciples in different lives can inspire us also to develop patience and endurance even with regard to ordinary events of daily life.

We read in the "Kassapamandiya Jātaka"(no. 312):

*"At that time while the Buddha was residing in the Jeta Grove he spoke about an aged monk, and he gave this explanation of the Dhamma, with the words beginning with 'should foolish youths...' (appikassapamandiya).*

*A young nobleman at Sāvatti, tradition says, saw the danger of sense pleasures and received ordination at the hands of the Buddha. Within a short time he attained arahatship. After that, when his mother had died, he persuaded his father and younger brother to become monks and to take residence in the Jeta Grove. Near the beginning of the rainy season they took their residence in a village where the requisites were easily obtained, so that they could observe the rainy season there. When the rainy season was over they returned to the Jeta Grove. The youthful monk ordered the novice, his younger brother, to let the elderly monk first take a rest, and then to take him along quietly. He himself would go ahead to prepare beforehand the lodgings in the Jeta Grove.*

*The elderly monk walked very slowly and the novice butted him as it were with his head in order to make him walk on. Then the elderly monk turned back and started anew from the same point, and this went on until sunset, and when they reached the Jeta Grove it was already dark. The young monk who was the elder brother waited for them until the evening, he took a torch and went to meet them. When he asked the reason why they came so slowly, the elderly monk who was the father told him what had happened. On that day the young monk could not pay his respects to the Buddha.*

*The next day when that monk went to pay his respects to the Buddha, the Buddha knew that that monk had arrived on the previous day but had not come to pay his respects. Therefore, he blamed the elderly monk and he said that also in a past life he had acted likewise."*

We may wonder why the elderly monk who was the father had to be blamed, and not the novice who was the younger son. Who should have patience?

We read about a story of the past:

*"Formerly, in a past life, the Buddha was the Bodhisatta. He became an ascetic in the Himālaya country. The elderly monk at that time was the father of the Bodhisatta. Their habitual conduct was almost the same as in the present life. Thus, in the rainy season they left the Himālaya country and*

went near the border of a city, and when the fruits had ripened in the Himālaya country they returned there.

At that time the Bodhisatta made the two hermits stow away their requisites<sup>1</sup>, he gave his father a bath, washed and anointed his feet and massaged his back. He set out a pan of charcoal and when his father had recovered from his fatigue he sat down near him. He said: 'Father, young boys are just like earthen vessels, they are broken in a moment. Once they are broken it is not possible to mend them. Young boys may be abusive or censure others, but old men should bear with them patiently.' "

In order to admonish his father Kassapa, he said these stanzas:

*"Should foolish youth scold, revile or blame,*

*The wise who have paññā should endure*

*All the wrongs done by young boys...*

*Even wise men may quarrel,*

*But quickly they can become closely united again.*

*But fools part asunder like untempered clay,*

*They cannot calm down their hate."*

If we want to realize the arising and falling away of nāma and rūpa, if we want to eradicate defilements and penetrate the four noble Truths, we should carefully consider the Dhamma contained in these stanzas. They deal with the eradication of defilements and exhort to forbearing patience.

We read:

*"Even wise men may quarrel, but quickly they can become closely united again."*

Even wise people may be moody and angry, but they can amend for this quickly and become closely united again. This is because of their wisdom.

When we have passed away, all the events of this life are gone, but so long as we are still alive we remember what happened in our life. We may remember the wrong someone else did, but if we are wise we can forgive him. Even though wise people may quarrel, they can forgive one

---

1 This happened, according to the Jātaka, after the father and his son had arrived at the hermitage, where the Bodhisatta had gone before.

another. They can become close friends with each other again and they can give support to each other from then on. This is because of their understanding of the Dhamma. With regard to foolish people, they break apart like earthen vessels which are untempered. They are unable to calm down their hatred.

We read that the Bodhisatta said:

*“If someone knows the wrong by which he offended someone else, and he expresses in words that he was wrong, both people can live in greater harmony, their friendship cannot be destroyed.”*

We should not only know the wrong by which we offended someone else but we should also say so. If we do not give expression to our regret, we are still brooding about what happened and may be irritated. If a person who offended someone else expresses in words that he was wrong, both people can live in greater harmony; they will understand each other more clearly and their close friendship cannot be destroyed.

We read:

*“If someone, when another person offends him, can cause both to be united in harmony, he is considered a person who takes upon himself a weighty and worthy task.”*

This means that if a person has forgiven someone else and the other person, in spite of this, still offends him, he can cause both himself and the other person to be reconciled and live in harmony. Therefore, he is someone who is superior, who fulfils a weighty task. A wise person knows how to behave in a way that is to the benefit of others. If he lacks paññā he will not follow the Buddha’s advice about beneficial conduct.

We read further on in the Commentary:

*“Someone may be offended by another person who is overcome by anger, who commits a wrong but does not even apologize. However, the person who is wronged may cause the other and himself to be reconciled and united in friendship by speaking the following words, ‘You should come, you should learn the recitation, listen to the explanations (of the Dhamma), and be diligent in mental development. What is the reason that you have become estranged?’ This is his view, it is his nature to be full of loving-kindness. He is superior, he can be considered as someone who fulfils a weighty task, because he undertakes the task of friendship.*

*The Bodhisatta exhorted in that way the recluse who was his father. From then on the recluse who was his father trained himself and devoted himself to ascetical practices.”*

However, that was in his past life, but in his present life he acted as he used to act. When his son pushed him with his head in his back he became angry and impatient. He turned back and started anew from the same point and walked from there on again so that they arrived in the Jeta Grove when it was already dark.

This shows us that nobody can control dhammas, no matter whether they are akusala or kusala. Sometimes there are conditions for the arising of kusala dhammas and sometimes there are conditions for the arising of akusala which has not yet been eradicated. During one lifespan someone may have tried to train himself to eliminate defilements, but if defilements have not been completely eradicated, he has latent tendencies which lie dormant in the citta and can condition the arising of akusala citta at any time. The strength of the accumulated defilements conditions one's actions.

If someone has listened to the Dhamma time and again, he will see that the Dhamma the Buddha taught is profound, that it is difficult to understand and penetrate the characteristics of realities which the ariyans have clearly realized. We need to apply patience in the development of understanding of realities, and then we can see that understanding grows very gradually, that it grows all the time. One day in the future we shall receive the result of patience which is the highest ascetism, that is, the realisation of the four noble Truths.

A person with paññā will see that it is essential to have the utmost patience in each situation of his life. One should have patience to refrain from aversion, displeasure, regret or feeling slighted by the action and speech of someone else, patience in all situations, also with regard to the issues of life and death. When someone understands the Dhamma he will see the significance of patience, patience to be diligent in the study of the Dhamma, to listen to the Dhamma and to investigate and consider it. We should study and practise the Dhamma with sincerity, sincerity which can lead to becoming the perfection of truthfulness, dealt with in the next chapter.

## Chapter 7

### *The Perfection of Truthfulness*

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of truthfulness as follows:

*“Truthfulness has the characteristic of non-deceptiveness in speech; its function is to verify in accordance with fact; its manifestation is excellence; honesty is its proximate cause.”*

The perfection of truthfulness, sacca pāramī, is sincerity and truthfulness with regard to realities. It means truthfulness through body, speech and mind. In order to realize the four noble Truths, one should be truthful, sincere, with regard to oneself, and this means, truthful with regard to the realities which appear just as they are. Kusala is kusala and akusala is akusala; they cannot be otherwise, no matter whether they arise in oneself or in someone else.

If we see the disadvantage of untruth and falsity, we shall further develop the perfection of truthfulness. In the Tipiṭaka deceitful speech is compared to bean-soup <sup>1</sup>, because when one cooks beansoup, some beans are cooked while others are not cooked. When eating, one comes sometimes across hard beans which are not cooked. It is the same with speech: when a person speaks a great deal, some deceptive words may permeate his speech. Or it may also happen that everything he says is true, from the first word until the last. We can only know with regard to ourselves when we are insincere and when truthful. It is paññā that knows akusala as akusala. We may begin to see that akusala is ugly, that it is wrong. Paññā that is of a higher degree can gradually eliminate akusala. However, if one does not see the disadvantage and the danger of akusala dhammas, akusala will only increase. The realization of the four noble Truths leads to the eradication of defilements, but in order to realize the four noble Truths we should be truthful in action, speech and mind.

Akusala dhammas arise because of their appropriate conditions. If sati arises, it can at such moments be aware of the characteristic of akusala dhamma and in this way akusala can be given up. We should not delay

---

1 See also Visuddhimagga I, 75, about bean-soupery.

being aware of the characteristic of the dhamma that naturally appears so that it can be known as it is. When akusala appears and there is awareness of it, we can immediately abandon it.

We have a great deal of defilements and without the support of the perfections it is impossible to penetrate the four noble Truths, to become a “streamwinner”, sotāpanna, who will not be reborn more than seven times before the attainment of arahatship.

Even Sāriputta, who had paññā of the degree of a chief disciple, developed the perfections during one incalculable period and a hundred thousand aeons so that he could become a sotāpanna. Since he had accumulated the perfections for such a long time, he could become an arahat fifteen days after he had attained the stage of sotāpanna. The perfection of truthfulness is truthfulness or sincerity in developing kusala, with the aim to eradicate defilements. If there is no truthfulness with regard to the development of kusala, defilements cannot be eradicated.

Truthfulness in the development of kusala with the aim to eradicate defilements begins with truthfulness with regard to the Triple Gem. We should be truthful and honest with ourselves while we consider in what way we show our reverence, respect and confidence towards the Triple Gem. Do we sincerely have respect and confidence in the Buddha, the Exalted One, when we see a Buddha statue?

We can test our truthfulness with regard to the Triple Gem, if we are aware of our thoughts when we see a Buddha statue. Do we take refuge in the Triple Gem with truthfulness? We may think of the excellent qualities of the Buddha with respect, reverence and esteem. Or, when we see a Buddha statue, do we ask for favours such as protection, possessions, praise or a position of honour?

We should know ourselves as we really are. We should be truthful, and we should not ask for gains and favours. We should be intent to apply the Dhamma while we show respect to our Teacher, the Exalted One. We can be truthful in the application of the Dhamma as taught by the Buddha. In this way we truly take our refuge in the Triple Gem.

After the Buddha, the Exalted One, finally passed away, the Dhamma became the teacher in his stead. Truthfulness to the Dhamma means studying it with sincerity, with the aim to have correct understanding of it. We should not study the Dhamma with the aim to gain something, to acquire honour or praise, but only to have correct understanding of it. We should develop right understanding of the realities which appear so that defilements can be eradicated and ignorance abandoned.

The temple is a dwelling place, a place where we can hear the Dhamma and study it. It does not belong to the monks but it belongs to the Triple Gem. Because of confidence in the excellent qualities of the Triple Gem, temples are built as dwelling places, places where the Dhamma can be studied. We should always consider which ways of paying honour and respect to the Triple Gem are truly beneficial.

We read in the “Illustrator of Ultimate Meaning” (Paramatthajotikā), Commentary to the Minor Collection (Khuddakapāṭha), of the Khuddakanikāya, in the Commentary to the “Good Omen Discourse” (Mangala Sutta) about the first Council. We read that the venerable Mahā-Kassapa, the venerable Upāli, the venerable Ānanda and the other arahats, fivehundred bhikkhus in all, met for the first rehearsal of the Dhamma Vinaya, near the door of the Sattapaṇṇi Cave, on the slopes of the Vebhāra Rock, in Rājagaha. We read that when certain deities saw the venerable Ānanda sitting in the seat for (announcing) the True Dhamma, surrounded by the group of those who had attained mastery (in it), they had the following thought:

*“ ‘This venerable one, the Videhan Seer, is the Blessed One’s natural heir as a shoot of the Sakyan clan, and he was five times signaled in the Foremost-in-this (Discourse) and possesses the Four Wonderful and Marvellous Ideas that make him dear and precious to the four kinds of assembly<sup>1</sup>; so surely, after inheriting the kingdom of the Blessed One’s True Dhamma, he has become an Enlightened One.’ Knowing with his mind the thoughts in those deities’ minds, he did not connive at such misattribution to him of non-existent special qualities. Consequently, in order to show his own discipleship, he said: ‘Evaṃ me suttaṃ. Ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā Sāvattthiyaṃ viharati Jetavane Anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme...’ which means: Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Wood, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park...”*

These words were spoken by the venerable Ānanda, more than twothousand and fivehundred years ago. If we today just hear the words, “Thus have I heard”, we are impressed by the thoughts of the venerable Ānanda who on the occasion of the first rehearsal made it clear that he was only a disciple. That is why he said, “Thus have I heard”. He did not speak his own words, because he was not the Exalted One. He was only a disciple and had heard these words from the Exalted One. When Buddhists hear the words, “Thus have I heard”, even after more than twothousand and fivehundred years have passed, enthusiasm and joy can

---

1 The four kinds of assembly are monks, nuns, men and women lay followers. They rejoice when seeing Ānanda, rejoice when hearing him preach, and they are ill at ease when he is silent (Dialogues of the Buddha, no. XVI, 145).

arise because they have an opportunity to hear these words again. Thus, they can consider the Buddha's teachings when he was dwelling in the Jeta Grove or at other places.

We read further on:

*“Meanwhile the five hundred Arahants and many thousand deities applauded the venerable Ānanda, saying ‘Good (sādhu), good’, while there was a great earth-tremor with a rain of various kinds of flowers falling from the sky and many other manifested marvels, and in many deities a sense of urgency arose (with the thought) ‘What we heard in the Blessed One’s presence is now reproduced in his absence too!’ ”*

The Buddha had finally passed away and the arahats who were present at the first Council for the rehearsal of the teachings had heard these words before. However, even though the words they heard were spoken in the past and they would not hear them any more in the presence of the Blessed One, there was yet an opportunity to hear the Dhamma again. This fact can be recollected with reverence to the Triple Gem by all listeners today. Although these events occurred a long time ago, each time we hear the Dhamma we can see its benefit and we can understand that the accumulation of kusala in the past is the condition for the kusala vipāka which is hearing the Dhamma again in this life.

Ānanda consoled people who were disappointed at not seeing the Blessed One, assuring them that this was not a teaching of a dead teacher, but that the very Dhamma Vinaya was their teacher.

By the words, *evaṃ me suttaṃ*, thus have I heard, the venerable Ānanda wanted to console the Buddhists in times to come, who may feel dismay that they cannot see the Buddha in person. However, we should remember that what we hear is not the teaching of a dead teacher, but that the Dhamma Vinaya is now our teacher.

We shall know whether the Buddha is our real teacher if we listen, consider and follow the right practice.

When the venerable Ānanda spoke the word, *evaṃ*, meaning: thus, he demonstrated the excellence of the teaching, because there should be a person who teaches and also a person who listens. There cannot be a listener without a teacher.

Just by the word *evaṃ*, thus, he demonstrated the excellence of the teaching. When he said, *me suttaṃ*, I have heard, he demonstrated the excellence of the discipleship. This disciple was the venerable Ānanda, not someone else. The venerable Ānanda, the disciple who was five times



signalized in the Foremost-in-this (Discourse), said, *evaṃ me suttaṃ*, thus have I heard.

When he said, *ekaṃ samayaṃ*, on one occasion, he demonstrated the excellence of the time, the time when he heard the teaching of the Dhamma.

We should remember that the excellence of the time to hear the Dhamma is now. It is not easy to find the opportunity to hear the Dhamma. When people have important tasks to fulfil they cannot listen to the Dhamma, but they hear other things. With the words, *ekaṃ samayaṃ*, on one occasion, the venerable Ānanda demonstrated the excellence of the occasion to hear the teaching of the Dhamma.

“When he said the word *bhagavā*, the Blessed One, he demonstrated the excellence of the teacher, who was not an ordinary person. ‘*Bhagavā*’, the Arahatta *Sammāsambuddha*, was the person who taught the Dhamma.

With the words, ‘at *Sāvattthī*, in the Jeta Grove, at *Anāthapiṇḍika*’s Park’, the venerable Elder demonstrated the support of the layfollowers of the Buddha in mentioning *Sāvattthī*, and he demonstrated the support of the monks in mentioning the Jeta Grove.”

We read in the “*Paramatthadīpanī*”, the Commentary to the “*Itivuttaka*”, “As it was said”, *Khuddaka Nikāya*, the Commentary to The Ones, Ch 1, §1, *Lobha Sutta*, an elaboration of the words “*arahat*” and “*bhagavā*”. We read about four *adiṭṭhāna* dhammas, dhammas which are firm foundations of all the perfections. We read that the *adiṭṭhāna* dhammas are: truthfulness, *sacca*, relinquishment, *cāga*, calm or peace, *upasama*, and *paññā* <sup>1</sup>.

*Sacca* is truthfulness with regard to the development of *paññā* with the aim to realize the four noble Truths.

We read in the Commentary to the *Lobha Sutta*:

- 1 We read in the Commentary to the “*Basket of Conduct*” that these are dhammas which are firm foundations. *Adiṭṭhāna* is also translated as resolve. We read in the “*Dialogues of the Buddha*”, no. 33, The Recital, IV, XXVII: “Four Resolves, to wit, to gain insight, to win truth, to surrender (all evil), to master self (calm).” The Commentary, the *Sumaṅgala Vilāsinī*, states that the resolve of *paññā*, *paññādiṭṭhāna*, begins as *vipassanā paññā* (which realizes the ownership of *kamma* by insight) and has as its supreme fruit the fruition of the *arahat*. Truthfulness, beginning with truthfulness in speech, ends with the ultimate truth of *nibbāna*. As to surrendering or giving up, this begins with detachment from sense objects and ends with the eradication of all defilements by the highest Path. As to calm, this begins with the subduing of defilements in (*jhāna*) attainment and ends with the cessation of all defilements by the highest Path.

*“The word arahaṃ means that there should be truthfulness, sacca, with regard to the development of kusala ...*

*The word bhagavā refers to the fulfilment of the aditṭhāna dhammas of sacca, truthfulness, and cāga, relinquishment.”*

Thus, if truthfulness and relinquishment are not firmly established, the four noble Truths cannot be realized. We read:

*“The word bhagavā refers to the fulfilment of the aditṭhāna dhammas of sacca, truthfulness, and cāga, relinquishment, by explaining the Blessed One’s truthfulness of his vow, paṭiññā, his truthfulness of speech and the truthfulness of his paññā; and by explaining the relinquishment of sense objects which are considered important in the world, such as gain, honour and praise, and the complete relinquishment of the ‘kamma formations’ (abhisankhāras<sup>1</sup>), which means that there are no more defilements remaining.”*

Relinquishment, cāga, does not only refer to the giving up of possessions, but it also means the giving up of clinging to sense objects, such as visible object and tangible object. Apart from this it also pertains to the giving up of what is considered important in the world: gain, honour and praise. Moreover, it refers to the relinquishment of all defilements. True relinquishment is the relinquishment of everything, even of all defilements. From the beginning one needs also sacca, truthfulness, as a firm foundation, so that defilements can be eradicated. We listen to the Dhamma, we understand it and we know that we still have a great deal of defilements. Therefore, we need further to develop and accumulate all the perfections in order to realize the noble Truths and to attain true relinquishment.

We read further on:

*“The word arahattā refers to the fulfilment of the aditṭhāna dhammas (dhammas that are firm foundations) of upasama (calm or peace) and paññā, by showing the attainment of the calming of all saṅkhāra dhammas (conditioned realities) and by showing the attainment of the awakening wisdom.”*

We read about the importance of truthfulness as follows:

---

1 Kamma formations are a link in the Dependent origination. Abhisankhāra includes kusala (meritorious) kamma, akusala (demeritorious) kamma and imperturbable kamma (immaterial jhāna). So long as kamma is committed there will be result, vipāka, and the cycle of birth and death will continue. The arahat has eradicated all defilements and for him there are no more kamma-formations.

*“Therefore, the aditṭhāna dhamma of sacca is the perfection developed by the Buddha when he was still a Bodhisatta and made the aspiration (abhinihāra) for the fulfilment of the highest good which is supramundane.”*

An aspiration, abhinihāra, is a weighty cause of receiving a weighty result, and this is the attainment of Buddhahood.

We read:

*“For this reason he accumulated each perfection in accordance with his vow and this was inspired by his great compassion. He fulfilled the aditṭhāna dhamma of relinquishment as a perfection because he relinquished what was an enemy <sup>1</sup>.”*

Studying the Dhamma and applying it, and knowing the importance of the truth is the way leading to the realization of the noble Truths.

In the “Verses of Uplift” (Udāna), Ch 1, no. 9, Matted Hair (Jaṭila) it has been explained that if one does not accumulate sati-sampajañña, one will become deluded. We read:

*“Thus have I heard: On a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying near Gayā, on Gayā Head. Now on that occasion a great number of ascetics, on the cold winter nights between the eighths <sup>2</sup> in time of snowfall, were plunging up and down (in the water) and sprinkling and burning sacrifice, thinking: This way comes purity.*

*Now the Exalted One saw that great number of ascetics so doing, and at that time, seeing the meaning of it, gave utterance to this verse of uplift:*

*‘Not by water is one pure, tho’ many folk bathe here.*

*In whom is truth and dhamma, he is pure and he’s a brāhmin.’ ”*

We read in the “Paramatthadīpanī”, the Commentary to the “Verses of Uplift” (Udāna), Khuddaka Nikāya, the following explanation of this Sutta <sup>3</sup>:

*“... Or else there is no one who is clean, no being said to be purified from the stain of evil, through the aforementioned water. Why? Or abundant folk would bathe here. For were there that which is known as purity from evil through*

---

1 Defilements are like enemies. He has relinquished all defilements.

2 The eighth day before and after the full moon of Māgha, January, and Phagguṇa, February.

3 This is the Commentary of Achāriya Dhammapala, translated by P. Masefield. Dhammapala is the author of several Commentaries and Sub commentaries, including those to the Commentaries of Buddhaghosa.

submersion in the water and so on as aforementioned, abundant folk would bathe here in the water, just as there would be purity from evil for them all- for the one performing evil acts such as matricide and so on, as well as for any other (creature) upwards from and including fish and tortoises even, such as cows and buffaloes and so forth; but this is not the case. Why? On account of bathing not being an opponent of the root-causes of evil. For surely (something can only be said to be) an opponent of that which it destroys, as is light that of darkness, and knowledge that of ignorance-bathing being no such (opponent) of evil. Therefore the conclusion has to be reached that 'There is no being clean through water'. He then says 'In whom there be truth' and so on to indicate the means by which there is, rather, being clean. Herein, In whom (yamhi): in the person in whom. There be truth (saccam): there be both telling the truth and truth as abstinence (from lying speech). Or alternatively there be that which is true (saccam): there be both that which is true in the form of knowledge and that which is true in its highest sense <sup>1</sup>. Dhamma (dhammo): Dhamma in the form of the ariyan paths and Dhamma in the form of their fruitions; in the person in whom all of this is discovered- that is the one who is clean and that is the one who is the brahmin (so suci so ca brāhmaṇo): that ariyapuggala, especially the one in whom the āsavas have been destroyed, is the one who, by way of a purity that is perpetual, clean and the brahmin. But why, in this connection, is truth included separately from Dhamma? On account of the fact of truth being of great service. For instance, the virtues of truth are made manifest in countless sutta passages."

The Commentary then refers to different sutta passages:

"Truth is indeed the Deathless word. Truth is, for sure, the sweetest of flavours. In truth, and in the goal and in the Dhamma, are the good established. Brahmin recluses stationed in the truth and so on. That which is the converse of the truth is made manifest by way of 'For the person who has transgressed, who is of lying speech, who gets not (even) one thing right' and 'The one who speaks of what did not take place goes to hell' and so forth."

The perfection of truthfulness should be developed together with paññā so that the noble Truths can be realized. We need courage so that we are diligent and turn away immediately from akusala. If we are too slow in turning away from akusala, it will later on become more difficult or even too late to do so, as must have happened life after life.

We read in the Commentary to the "Itivuttaka", "As it was said", The Ones, Ch 1, §1, Lobha Sutta, which was quoted above:

---

1 Truth of paññā, nīṇa saccam, and paramattha saccam, ultimate truth.

*“Loyalty to the Buddha is loyalty with firm confidence. For a person with such confidence, be he monk, deity, māra or Brahma, it is impossible to steal. Someone who is steadfast in his loyalty would not give up his confidence in the Buddha or his teachings, even when in danger of life. Therefore, the Buddha said that a person with wisdom and gratefulness is a noble friend who is steadfast in loyalty.”*

Loyalty to people other than the Buddha may be of different degrees and it may be limited: it may last long or it may last for only a moment. However, the loyalty of Buddhists towards the Buddha is forever, until the end of life. From the time of childhood until one has become an adult, one can from morning until night hear the chanting of texts recollecting the excellent qualities of the Triple Gem. This makes us realize the excellence of the Buddha’s truthfulness in the development of the perfections so that he could penetrate the noble Truths and become a support beyond measure to living beings, to devas and mankind.

We read in the Commentary to the “Itivuttaka”:

*“The Buddha is called bhagavā because people are steadfast in their loyalty towards him since he is always intent on the benefit of all living beings in the world, and determines in his great compassion to teach the Dhamma. He teaches the Dhamma so that all beings could acquire steadfastness in sīla, in samādhi, the calm that is freedom from defilements, and in paññā. The Buddhist followers, both monks and layfollowers, should be sincere in their loyalty to the Buddha, and they can express this by offering all kinds of gifts, such as flowers, incense, unguents and other things by which they can honour him.”*

We can understand that the Buddha who is truthful and sincere and who is intent on the welfare of other beings in the world has eradicated all defilements. People can see his great compassion and his wisdom, and for this reason their loyalty to the Buddha, the Exalted One, surpasses their loyalty to anybody else.

We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”, “Miscellaneous Sayings”:

*“Only the man of wisdom is skilful in providing for the welfare of all beings....  
Not deceiving, undertaking to give support to others, and not uttering speech that deviates from the truth, this is called practice with truthfulness.”*

This is the practice of the Sammāsambuddha, the Exalted One. This is skilfulness in providing for the welfare of all beings, by teaching them the way to eradicate attachment. He shows the danger of akusala and

explains the way to develop kusala. He does not deceive, he tries to give support to others and does not utter speech that deviates from the truth. This is called practice with truthfulness.

If someone is not truthful in the practice that leads to the realization of the noble Truths, he will be attached to possessions, honour and fame; he will encourage others to follow a practice that does not lead to the eradication of defilements. Some people say that one should just practise and not study, that it is not necessary to have understanding of the Dhamma, whereas others say that one should first study and have understanding before one practises. Whom should we believe? We should consider ourselves what the right cause is that brings the appropriate effect. If we trust another person we should know for what reason. Is it because he is famous, or because he explains the right cause that brings the appropriate effect and is able to help people to have right understanding of the Dhamma?

Truthfulness is the dhamma that enhances the arising and development of all kusala, because truthfulness is sincerity with regard to the eradication of defilements. When kusala does not arise we may realize that we are not sincere in its development, and this, in turn, can be a condition for its arising. When akusala arises we should, again, be truthful and this can condition sati sampajañña to be aware of the characteristic of akusala. In this way akusala can be abandoned and kusala can be developed.

The Bodhisatta developed in his daily life all kinds of kusala to a high degree, including very subtle and refined kusala. People who have not yet realized the noble Truths should follow in the Bodhisatta's steps. This means that one should develop all degrees of paññā with the aim to eradicate defilements. We should reflect on the daily life of the Bodhisatta before he attained Buddhahood. He was truthful in developing kusala with the aim to abandon and eradicate defilements.

We read in the Commentary to the "Basket of Conduct", in the "Miscellaneous Sayings", about the way of practice of the Bodhisatta during the time he was developing the perfections. If someone wants to realize the noble Truths, be he monk or layman, he should consider what practice he should follow so that he will realize the noble Truths, and he should be truthful and sincere in his practice. We read:

*"He should work energetically for the welfare of beings, be capable of enduring everything whether desirable or undesirable, and should speak without deception."*

This is only a short phrase, but we can grasp the essence of it by considering it deeply and by applying it. In order to be able to apply these words, we should be patient with regard to what is desirable or undesirable. We read:

*“He should speak without deception. He should suffuse all beings with universal loving-kindness and compassion. Whatever causes suffering for beings, all that he should be ready to take upon himself; and he should rejoice in the merits of all beings.”*

We should consider what was said about applying energy for the welfare of beings. We should not have selfish motives, not act for our own sake when we are giving support to others. We need energy, otherwise we could not help others in an unselfish way. We should support others as far as we are able to, such as sharing in the performance of their tasks, alleviating their burden. At such moments we can realize immediately that we need energy when we want to help others. We can understand that, in order to eradicate defilements, we should follow the example of the Bodhisatta’s practice. We should apply energy for the welfare of beings in whatever way we can, depending on the situation of our daily life, even by way of speech, by giving guidance to others. It may be somewhat troublesome for us to help others, but our support can be a condition for others also to develop a great deal of kusala in their lives. We can give support to others if we apply energy for their benefit.

As we read in the Commentary: “He should be capable of enduring everything whether desirable or undesirable.” When we are infatuated with something, we may realize that this is not ordinary attachment, but a stronger degree of lobha. We may be absorbed in the object of attachment, but when sati-sampajañña arises we can realize that we should endure everything, whether desirable or undesirable. If we very gradually learn to be patient, we shall know what the characteristic of true patience is. We can accumulate patience in all situations, no matter whether we experience objects through the bodysense or hear someone else’s speech. We can learn to be patient and not complain about cold, heat or difficult situations in life. Then we shall understand what patience is.

As we read in the Commentary, “he should speak without deception.” A righteous person speaks in accordance with the truth, whereas an evil person utters deceptive speech. When we do not speak according to the truth, we should scrutinize ourselves in order to find out whether we are righteous or evil.

As we read in the Commentary, “He should suffuse all beings with universal loving-kindness and compassion.” One’s loving-kindness should be universal, without partiality. Generally, people have loving-kindness for someone who is righteous, not for an evil person. This shows that loving-kindness and compassion are not extended to all beings, that they are not yet universal. If someone has developed loving-kindness, he can extend it to all beings, be they righteous or evil. Then sati-sampajañña is aware and understands what is proper and what is improper.

When we are angry and displeased, when we look down upon someone who is evil or commits bad deeds, we have akusala citta; our citta is similar to the citta of an evil person, because we have contempt for him. Even a short phrase of the Dhamma can help us to develop sati-sampajañña and to have a growing understanding of the realities arising within ourselves, so that we can further develop kusala.

We read in the Commentary: “He should rejoice in the merits of all beings.”

When we notice someone else’s kusala and we rejoice in it, we are truthful, we are sincere in our appreciation of his kusala. We may not be able to perform a good deed ourselves, but we can appreciate someone else’s kusala. If we do not appreciate this, the citta is akusala.

The perfection of truthfulness is essential. We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” in the Miscellaneous Sayings that the perfection of truthfulness should be reviewed thus:

*"Without truthfulness, virtue, etc., is impossible, and there can be no practice in accordance with one's vows. All evil states converge upon the transgression of truth. One who is not devoted to truth is unreliable and his word cannot be accepted in the future. On the other hand, one devoted to truth secures the foundation of all noble qualities. With truthfulness as the foundation, he is capable of purifying and fulfilling all the requisites of enlightenment. Not deceived about the true nature of phenomena, he performs the functions of all the requisites of enlightenment and completes the practice of the bodhisattva path."*

As we read, “without truthfulness, virtue, etc., is impossible.” This means that without truthfulness, one does not speak the truth, acts with deception, and all one’s deeds are crooked. Without truthfulness, one cannot observe sīla and there is no practice in accordance with one’s vows. Vow, paṭiññā, means being steadfast in truthfulness <sup>1</sup>. If someone does not speak the truth he cannot act in accordance with his vow.

---

1 The Bodhisatta made a vow to attain Buddhahood.



As we read in the Commentary, “All evil states converge upon the transgression of truth. One who is not devoted to truth is unreliable and his word cannot be accepted in the future.”

Thus, we see the significance of the perfection of truthfulness. This is truthfulness and sincerity with regard to the right practice leading to the eradication of defilements; it includes the development of all kinds of kusala so that the noble Truths can be realized. We need the perfection of sacca, truthfulness, with regard to the right practice: our sole purpose should be the penetration of the true nature of realities.

We may not know thoroughly and in all details what the right practice is. We should reflect on the Bodhisatta’s practice before he attained Buddhahood and then we shall know that he gave an example of the right practice of kusala, kusala that was very subtle and refined. We can follow his example in our daily life.

The perfection of paññā should be developed together with the other perfections. We cannot forego any of the perfections, because each perfection is a necessary support for the others. Truthfulness, sacca, for example, is necessary for the performing of generosity, dāna. Without truthfulness generosity cannot reach fulfilment. Without truthfulness the observance of sila cannot reach accomplishment. Thus, truthfulness is essential for the fulfilment of the other perfections.

We read about the meaning of truthfulness in the “Paramattha Jotikā”, the Commentary to the “Sutta Nipāta”, The Group of Discourses, I, The Snake Chapter 10, Ālavaka:

*“The term sacca has several meanings:*

*it can mean truthfulness in speech (vācā sacca), or it can mean truthfulness in abstaining (virati sacca). It is steadfastness in the truth, in the abstention from akusala kamma.*

*It can mean truthfulness of view (ditṭhi sacca), truthfulness as to right view. Sacca can also refer to brahmana sacca (brahmin truths <sup>1</sup>), paramattha sacca (ultimate truth) and ariya sacca (noble Truths).*

*The term ‘saccena’ (by truthfulness), means, someone acquires a good reputation, because he speaks the truth, because of sincerity. The Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas and the ariya disciples have a high reputation because of*

---

1 Truthfulness with regard to the holy life, the life of someone who develops the eightfold Path leading to the eradication of defilements.

*ultimate truth, paramattha sacca* <sup>1</sup>.”

Only paññā can understand the true nature of each dhamma. However, the development of paññā is conditioned by listening to the Dhamma, and by considering it in all details. One should develop paññā gradually, stage by stage.

We still have defilements, but we listen to the Dhamma and we have taken refuge in the Dhamma during this life. This shows that we are following the way to develop paññā, so that the characteristics of realities that are appearing now can be penetrated. We should follow in the footsteps of the Bodhisattas and accumulate the perfections.

People say that they want to practise the Dhamma. The practice of the Dhamma is the abandoning of akusala: of lobha, dosa and moha. Lobha should be abandoned when it arises, that is the practice of the Dhamma.

If someone wants to apply the Dhamma he should not delay this. When anger arises, one should abandon it so that there is non-hate, that is the practice of the Dhamma. When jealousy, stinginess or other kinds of akusala arise one should abandon them, that is the practice of the Dhamma. However, defilements cannot be eradicated according to our wishes or expectations. Even the Bodhisatta who had accumulated the perfections during innumerable lives was still susceptible to the power of akusala, because he had not yet eradicated defilements.

We should reflect on the Bodhisatta who accumulated the perfections in order to realize the noble Truths. He wanted to understand the truth of the four paramattha dhammas, of citta, cetasika, rūpa and nibbāna. We should develop paññā in order to realize the truth of Dhamma, we should see the benefit of sacca, of the truth. The paramattha dhammas which are the true dhammas have inalterable characteristics. We should find out what the true characteristic is of citta, cetasika, and rūpa, which are not self, not a being or person. We should find out what the true nature of nibbāna is, the dhamma that is different from citta, cetasika and rūpa. If someone seeks the truth, he wants to penetrate it and hence he can see the benefit of the truth. He should develop all degrees of truthfulness, beginning with truthfulness in speech.

We read in the Commentary to the “Hārita Jātaka” (no. 431) that King Brahmadata was at that time reigning in Varānasī. King Brahmadata in the past was the Venerable Ānanda of the present time. The text states:

---

1 They have realized the true nature of the paramattha dhammas of citta, cetasika, rūpa and nibbāna.

“At that time, the Bodhisatta was born in a brahmin family who possessed wealth worth eighty crores, and because of his golden complexion his parents called him Young Goldskin, Hārīta Kumāra. When he was grown up and he had been educated at Takkasilā, he thought: ‘The treasure that my parents assembled is still there, but my parents who were seeking that treasure have died, they do not exist anymore.’

When he was considering this, he understood that he himself would also have to die, and hence he gave away his wealth and became a recluse in the Himālaya, where he cultivated Jhāna, until he could realize the five supernatural powers and the eight attainments.

When he wished to obtain salty or sour food, he left the forest, went to the city of Varānasī and reached the Royal Park. When the king saw him he had confidence in him and offered to have a dwelling place built for him in the Royal Park. He assigned an attendant to wait on him. The recluse obtained food from the palace and he lived there for twelve years. Later on the king went away to pacify a conflict at the frontier and committed the care of the recluse to the queen who from then on ministered to him with her own hands.

One day she had prepared his food, and as he delayed his coming, she bathed in scented water, put on a soft tunic of fine cloth, and opening the lattice, she lay down on a couch and let the wind play upon her body. When the recluse came flying through the air to the window, the queen heard the rustling sound of his bark garments. When she stood up quickly, her robe of fine cloth fell off. As soon as the recluse saw this, his defilements which had been dormant for thousands of aeons, rose up like a poisonous snake lying in a box, and hence his skill in jhāna disappeared. The recluse who was unable to apply mindfulness, went inside, seized the queen by her hand and then they gave themselves over to misconduct.

His misconduct was rumoured throughout the whole city and the king’s ministers reported this in a letter to the king. The king could not believe what was told him and he thought: ‘They say this, because they are eager to damage him.’ When he had pacified the border country, he returned to Varanasī and asked the queen: ‘Is the rumour true that the recluse Hārīta and you misconducted yourselves?’ The queen answered that it was true.

The king did not believe this, although the queen said that it was true. The king went to the park, saluted the recluse, and sitting respectfully on one side, he spoke the first Stanza in the form of a question:

‘Great brahmin, I heard it said,

*the recluse Hārita leads a sinful life.*

*I take it that this is not the truth*

*and you are pure of conduct?’*

*The recluse thought: ‘If I say that I did not indulge in sin, the king would believe me, but in this world there is no surer foundation than truthful speech. Someone who forsakes the truth cannot attain Buddhahood, even if he sits in the sacred enclosure of the Bodhi Tree. Hence I should only speak the truth. In certain cases a Bodhisatta may destroy life, take what is not given to him, commit adultery, drink strong liquor, but he may not tell a lie, speech that violates the truth.’*

*Therefore, speaking only the truth he uttered the second Stanza:*

*‘The rumours, great King, you have heard are true.*

*Infatuated by the objects of delusion, I have done wrong.’*

*Hearing this the king spoke the third Stanza:*

*‘Keen paññā is intent on what is beneficial.*

*It can abandon lust that has arisen within you.*

*For what benefit do you have paññā,*

*if you cannot dispel sinful thoughts.’ ”*

Sick people generally depend on medicine. Evenso, keen paññā is like a medicine, it is intent on what is beneficial and it can cure us from lust that has arisen. We read:

*“Then the recluse Hārita pointed out the power of defilements to the king and spoke the fourth Stanza:*

*‘Four defilements in the world, great King,*

*are coarse and have great strength,*

*They are: lust, hate, ignorance and intoxication.*

*When they overmaster beings, paññā cannot develop,*

*It is as if they fall into a great river.’*

The king on hearing this spoke the fifth Stanza:

*'You deserve praise Hārita,  
you are a saint,  
Perfect in sīla, of pure conduct,  
You are wise, with true paññā.'*

Then Hārita spoke the sixth Stanza:

*'Evil thoughts, great king, cause clinging to an image,  
Taking it for beautiful, and they are accompanied by excitement.  
They are bound to harm even a person with paññā,  
who is inclined to the excellence of recluseship.' "*

These words can remind us of the danger of defilements. Someone may believe that he is out of danger because he has developed a certain degree of paññā, but he should not be neglectful. Akusala can even harm a person with paññā, who has a keen interest in the Dhamma and enjoys its benefit.

We read:

*"The king, encouraging the recluse Hārita to make an effort to abandon his defilements, spoke the seventh Stanza:*

*'Lust arises in your body, and destroys your beauty'<sup>1</sup>  
Abandon lustful excitement,  
And you will prosper,  
You will be praised by many for your wisdom.' "*

When the Bodhisatta heard this, he could regain his awareness and consider the danger in sense pleasures. Thereupon he spoke the eighth Stanza:

---

1 Vaṇṇa, appearance or quality.

*“Sense pleasures are blinding,  
they cause much suffering.  
They injure gravely.  
I shall look for the root of sensuousness,  
I shall cut down lust with its bonds.”*

The root of sensuous desire is unwise attention, *ayoniso manasikāra*. Further on we read that the recluse developed *samatha* and could again attain *jhāna*. He saw the danger of dwelling in an unsuitable place, that was the royal park. Therefore, he returned to the forest to be free from all taint of womankind. When he had come to the end of his life, he entered the Brahma plane.

The Buddha told this story in the Jeta Grove because of a discontented monk. When this monk saw a beautifully attired woman, defilements arose in him and he wanted to leave monkhood. When he was brought against his will to the Buddha by his teacher and preceptor, and the Buddha asked him whether it was true that he was a backslider, this monk said that it was true. Thereupon the Buddha said: “Monk, defilements do not lead to happiness, they destroy good qualities, they cause rebirth in hell. Why should your defilements not cause your destruction? Why should a strong wind that strikes Mount Sineru not carry off a withered leaf? I myself, during the life I was the recluse *Hārīta*, had acquired the five supernatural powers and the eight attainments, and I strived after awakening wisdom. However, in spite of this, I was, because of this kind of defilement, unable to have awareness and I fell away from *jhāna*.”

The Buddha taught this story so that we could see the disadvantage of *akusala* and the power of accumulated defilements.

We should reflect on what we read: “Why should a strong wind that strikes Mount Sineru not carry off a withered leaf?”

We all have defilements that are not yet eradicated and we are therefore not as steady as Mount Sineru, we are only like withered leaves, which are light and can be blown away by the wind, the wind of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*.

We read:

*“When the Buddha had told the Hārita Jātaka, he explained the Truths and after he had finished, that monk attained the fruition of arahatship.”*

Truthfulness is sincerity in the development of kusala to the degree of a perfection. If there is no truthfulness, no sincerity in one’s actions, they cannot reach accomplishment. Sacca, truthfulness, is necessary for all kinds of kusala, be it dāna, sīla or mental development. One should not neglect the development of even the slightest degree of kusala.

If one develops the perfections in order to abandon defilements, one should notice also subtle defilements such as deceptive speech even with regard to small matters. If deceptive speech becomes someone’s habit, it will be easy to speak a lie and he will believe that it is not wrong to do so. If someone abstains from deceptive speech, if he is truthful, and acts in accordance with his promise, truthfulness will become natural to him. Then he is able to see the danger of akusala at the moment he tells a lie. Even deceptive speech concerning unimportant matters is akusala, but if someone accumulates deceptive speech all the time, he does not see its danger. Thus, we see that it is not easy to discern the characteristic of akusala.

We can have understanding of realities stemming from listening to the Dhamma but this does not mean that we know their characteristics when they are appearing. We should further develop understanding in conformity with what we learnt by listening and we should be aware of realities. We may be deceptive in speech, be it even a little, or we may not act in accordance with our promise, but when sati-sampajañña arises it can realize that this is akusala. Many akusala cittas arise in a day, but we do not know this because of our forgetfulness; there is no awareness of the characteristics of realities, no understanding of them as they are. Understanding has to be very detailed and refined so that the characteristics of realities can be known as they are. The development of satipaṭṭhāna will lead to a more precise discrimination between different realities and thus, paññā is able to know the characteristic of akusala. When akusala arises paññā can know what type of akusala arises, and it can know its characteristic as different from kusala. In this way kusala dhamma can gradually be further developed.

The perfection of truthfulness accompanies the perfection of paññā. We should make an effort to know what sacca, truthfulness, is: sincerity in the development of kusala, no deviation from kusala. If we happen to deviate from kusala we should know that kusala has not yet reached accomplishment. Our defilements are still very strong and without paññā we easily deviate from kusala. When sati-sampajañña arises it can realize

when we go wrong and this is a condition for restraint in the future.

Truthfulness that is superior, ariya sacca, is the truth penetrated by the ariyan. The penetration of the noble Truths is the condition for becoming an ariyan, an enlightened person. At this moment we try to listen and to understand the true Dhamma. Nothing else can be as beneficial in our life as the understanding of the truth of realities <sup>1</sup>. We should make an effort to understand the realities that are appearing and to develop also all other kinds of kusala. The characteristics of realities can be penetrated in conformity with the understanding acquired through listening to the Dhamma and the study of it. At this moment realities are arising and falling away, they are not a being, not a person, not self. However, we are not able to see the arising and falling away of realities because of our many defilements and because of ignorance that hides the truth. We need the perfection of truthfulness, so that we are sincere in the development of all degrees of kusala through body, speech and mind, be it dāna, sīla or bhāvana. Otherwise we shall be overwhelmed by the power of akusala. Seeing the benefit of truthfulness is a condition for accumulating it. We may contemplate truthfulness within ourselves, but we should also reflect on the truthfulness of the Buddha when he was still the Bodhisatta and developed the perfection of truthfulness.

We read in the “Basket of Conduct” III, 11, Conduct of Kaṇhadīpāyana <sup>2</sup> about Kaṇhadīpāyana who was dissatisfied for more than fifty years with his life as a recluse, and who only for the last seven days could lead this life with confidence:

*“And again, when I was Kaṇhadīpāyana <sup>3</sup>, a seer, I fared dissatisfied for more than fifty years.*

*No one knew of this dissatisfied mind of mine for I told no one; the dissatisfaction went on in my mind.*

*A fellow Brahma-farer, Maṇḍavya, a friend of mine, a great seer, in connexion with a former deed, acquired impalement on a stake.*

*I, after attending to him, restored him to health. Having asked permission I went back to what was my own hermitage.*

*A brahman friend of mine, bringing his wife and little son- the three people,*

---

1 By developing understanding of the truth of realities, paramattha sacca, one will penetrate the four noble Truths and this is the ultimate benefit of truthfulness.

2 See also Kaṇhadīpāyana Jātaka, no. 444.

3 Kaṇha means black. His body became stained when he sat under his friend Maṇḍavya’s body who was impaled on a stake and dripping with blood.



coming together, approached as guests.

While I was exchanging greetings with them, seated in my own hermitage, the youth threw a ball along (and) angered a poisonous snake.

Then that little boy, looking for the way by which the ball had gone, touched the head of the poisoned snake with his hand.

At his touch, the snake, angered, relying on its strong venom, angry with utmost anger, instantly bit the youth.

As he was bitten by the poisonous snake the youth fell to the ground, whereby afflicted was I; that sorrow (of the parents) worked on mine.

Comforting them that were afflicted, shaken by grief, first of all I made the highest, supremely glorious asseveration of truth:

‘For just seven days, I, with a mind of faith, desiring merit, fared the Brahma-faring. Until that time, my faring for more than fifty years I fared unwillingly.

By this truth may there be well-being, the poison destroyed, may Yaññadatta live.’

With this (asseveration of) truth made by me, the brahman youth who had trembled with the strength of poison, rousing himself, stood up and was well. There was no one equal to me in truth- this was my perfection of Truth.”

We read in the Commentary to this passage:

“The Bodhisatta who was in that life named Dipāyana, went to see his friend Maṇḍavya. He (Maṇḍavya) was impaled on a stake and because Dipāyana excelled in sīla he did not neglect this recluse. He stood there leaning on a spear throughout the three watches of the night. He acquired the name Kanhadipāyana (kanha meaning black), because his body became black by the drops of blood that streamed from the recluse Maṇḍavya’s body and that had dried up.

Question: What is the cause that the Great Man who during many thousands of existences had the inclination to renunciation and who found happiness in the brahma-faring, was in this life dissatisfied with it?

Answer: This was because of the instability that is characteristic of non-enlightened people.

Question: Why did he not enter again the married state?

Answer: At first he saw the disadvantage in the sense pleasures, and because of his inclination to renunciation he became a monk. However, because of the

*lack of wise consideration he became dissatisfied with the brahma-faring. Although he could not abandon that dissatisfaction, he disliked to be blamed by people who might say, 'Kanhadipāyana raves on and on, he is unreliable. He left his wealth and went forth from the household life; he left his possessions and then he wants to return again to these.' Because he feared that his sense of shame and fear of blame would be destroyed, the Great Man, full of suffering and unhappy feeling, even cried and shed tears that streamed over his face. In this way he continued the brahma-faring and he did not leave it."*

As we read in the "Basket of Conduct", the Bodhisatta highly valued truthfulness. He spoke the truth, saying that he was only for seven days a recluse wholeheartedly, with full confidence in kusala. He expressed his confidence in kusala and in truthfulness by a solemn utterance, an "Assertion of Truth". This was the condition for the brahman youth to recover. An "Assertion of Truth" is a forceful affirmation of faith in the truth which can create a direct effect on someone else's condition <sup>1</sup>.

Some people may have doubts about the "Assertion of Truth" referred to in the above quoted passage. Or, they may have heard that an Assertion of Truth can bring its result according to one's wish. However, when a person has to experience suffering and distress, he cannot, in order to overcome his suffering, utter an Assertion of Truth without knowing what truthfulness is and without understanding its high value. It is essential that one, before making an Assertion of Truth, sees the superiority and the benefit of truthfulness. Moreover, it is necessary to develop the perfection of truthfulness.

If someone develops kusala and his goal is the realization of the four noble Truths, he should know that the way leading to this goal is the development of all the perfections. If someone accumulates the perfection of truthfulness together with the other perfections so that they gain strength, and if he sees the benefit of truthfulness, he may express an Assertion of Truth. However, not everyone can do so, it also depends on the power of his kusala and the degree of his understanding of truthfulness.

Everybody should know for himself what degree of kusala he wants to develop and to what extent. If someone does not listen to the Dhamma and does not accumulate all kinds of good qualities, he may not even be intent on the development of kusala. He may only be infatuated with pleasures and perform very few good deeds. Whereas if someone has listened also in past lives to the Dhamma of former Buddhas, if he has

---

1 I have added this whole paragraph with an explanation of "Assertion of Truth".

contemplated the Dhamma and acquired more understanding, he will be inclined to develop kusala. Some people may, throughout life, have no inclination to develop kusala as much as they are able to. They may not have the accumulated conditions to even think of kusala, and therefore, they cannot perform it. Someone may not be intent on helping others, or he has wrong understanding about kusala; he may wonder why he should tire himself or take the trouble to help others.

This shows us the diverse nature of the cittas we accumulate day after day. Some people, even if they have listened to the Dhamma, may not be able to forgive others, because they cannot apply the Dhamma. We have to accumulate kusala from now on so that it can be further developed. We can begin to be intent on forgiving others, not disapproving of them.

All of us who traverse the cycle of birth and death have many defilements and hence we should develop all the different ways of kusala so that defilements can be eradicated. If we merely think about developing kusala, kusala will not be strong enough to be a condition for sincerity and truthfulness, for the practice in conformity with our resolutions. The accumulation of wholesome qualities is the condition for truthfulness in action and speech. We have to continue to accumulate kusala so that we shall not be neglectful in applying kusala, in practising it.

It is difficult to know the truth, also in worldly matters. For example, when we hear news through different media about an event that occurred near to us or far away, it is difficult to find out whether it is true. What we hear is sometimes not true, but we take it for the truth. Our confusion, our defilements make it most difficult to know what is true.

To know realities as they are is even more difficult than knowing the truth of worldly matters. We should see the value of truthfulness, including sincerity with regard to ourselves. We should develop truthfulness in action, speech and thoughts, even in seemingly unimportant matters. This means, truthfulness in speech, also when it regards appointments or promises. One may believe that these matters are unimportant. We should know what type of citta arises when we feel that with regard to unimportant matters we do not need to be truthful to act in accordance with our speech and thoughts. The citta of each person is most intricate, and if there is no paññā accompanying sati, it is impossible to understand that even a slight degree of akusala that arises is conditioned by our accumulations. Defilements have been accumulated not only during this life but also in past lives. Our life today is

conditioned by past lives and the accumulation of defilements will continue from life to life. Someone who earnestly develops paññā should not only be intent on knowing the truth, but he should also strive after the eradication of his defilements, so that he is truthful in action and speech. He should be steady and firm in the development of kusala, including the following perfection: the perfection of determination, aditṭhāna pāramī.

## Chapter 8

### *The Perfection of Determination*

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of determination, aditṭhāna, as follows:

*“Determination has the characteristic of determining upon the requisites of enlightenment <sup>1</sup>; its function is to overcome their opposites; its manifestation is unshakeableness in that task; the requisites of enlightenment are its proximate cause.”*

The perfection of determination, aditṭhāna pāramī, is the firm determination to realize the four noble Truths, even though one has to go a long way and it will take an endlessly long time to reach the goal. However, if one develops the Path with firm determination one will eventually reach the goal. Determination in this life means determination to develop each kind of kusala with the aim to realize the four noble Truths. We should not deviate from this goal by aiming for the pleasant objects of gain, honour, praise and wellbeing, or visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object. In that case, we would accumulate clinging instead of giving up and abandoning.

The perfection of determination will lead to detachment from desire for sense objects. If we are infatuated with the sense objects, if we are deluded by them and cling to them, we shall wish to have them again and again and we shall never be satisfied. Then we shall not be inclined to develop the perfections in order to eradicate defilements.

Many different types of citta arise and fall away: kusala cittas arise and shortly afterwards akusala cittas arise. Sometimes we have determination for kusala citta but when akusala citta arises and induces us to give in to akusala, we easily give up kusala and we pursue akusala. This shows that we need firm determination for the eradication of defilements.

If we want to realize the four noble Truths we should see the benefit of being unshakeable in the development of kusala dhammas and the abandonment of defilements. If we lack the perfection of determination, kusala dhammas cannot develop.

---

1 These are the ten perfections. Determining upon the requisites of enlightenment means, having the firm determination to develop the ten perfections.

Now I wish to speak about the life of the Bodhisatta during which he developed the highest degree of the perfection of determination, the paramatthapāramī (ultimate perfection) of adīṭṭhāna <sup>1</sup>.

We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” (III. 6, Conduct of Wise Temiya) <sup>2</sup> that the Buddha related one of his past lives:

*“When I was the son of the king of Kāsi, I was named Mūga-Pakkha (meaning deaf and cripple), but people called me Temiya <sup>3</sup>. My father and mother and other people called me Mūga-Pakkha because they considered me dumb and cripple. As the Bodhisatta (born) in that life, I caused great rapture and joy to the king and the ministers and therefore I received the name Temiya.”*

Thus, he had two names, Temiya and Mūga-Pakkha, because of different reasons. We read:

*“During that life king Kāsirājā ruled in Vārānasī. He had sixteen thousand wives, but not one of them conceived either son or daughter. The citizens were worried, saying, ‘Our king has no son to keep up his lineage’, and they begged the king to pray for a son. All those wives worshipped the moon, but they obtained no children. Now his chief queen Candādevī, the daughter of the king of the Maddas, was leading a virtuous life and the king asked her also to pray for a son. On the day of the full moon she observed the Uposatha vows and while she reflected on her virtuous life she made an act of truth, saying, ‘If I have never transgressed sīla, may by this assertion of truth a son be borne to me.’*

*At that time the Bodhisatta was conceived in the womb of queen Candādevī. When the Bodhisatta was born, also five hundred young nobles were born in the ministers’ houses. The king ordered that these young nobles would be the retinue of the royal prince. He sent five hundred wetnurses and five hundred princely dresses to the five hundred young nobles. Moreover, he arranged for sixty-four wetnurses to take care of the Bodhisatta.*

*When the young prince was one month old the wetnurses brought him to the king and the king placed him on his hip. Now at that time four robbers were brought before him to be sentenced. One of them was sentenced by the king to receive a thousand strokes from whips barbed with thorns, another to be imprisoned in chains, the third to be smitten with a spear and the fourth to be impaled. When the Bodhisatta heard the verdict spoken by his father, he became disenchanted, because he was afraid of committing grievous acts*

---

1 The ten perfections can also be classified as thirty pāramīs: ten basic pāramīs, ten intermediate pāramīs and ten ultimate pāramīs (paramatthapāramī).

2 Jātaka no. 538, Mūgapakkha Jātaka.

3 Temiya means wet. On the day of his birth a great shower of rain made him wet.

which would result in rebirth in hell.

The next day the wetnurses laid him on a bed under a white umbrella, and after a short sleep he opened his eyes and saw the white umbrella. He pondered, 'From whence have I come into this palace?' By his recollection of former lives he remembered that he had once come from a heavenly plane and then, while he recollected the life previous to that one, he remembered that he had suffered in the 'Ussada Hell'. When he recollected his life before that one, he remembered that he had been the king in this very city. The following thoughts occurred to him: 'I do not need the kingdom. How can I escape from this house of robbers?'

Then a goddess who dwelt in the umbrella and who had in a previous life been his mother, was seeking his benefit and she advised him to pretend to be dumb, cripple and deaf, so that he could escape from becoming the king.

From then on the Bodhisatta pretended to be dumb, cripple and deaf. His parents and the wetnurses, when taking into account the formation of the jaws of the dumb, the structure of the ears of the deaf, the hands and the feet of the crippled, noticed that all those characteristics were not to be found in him. They thought that there should be a reason for his behaviour. Therefore, they started to test the prince by giving him no milk for a whole day. Although he was hungry, he uttered no sound to make known that he wanted milk. His mother thought, 'The boy is famished, the wetnurses should give him milk' and she made the wetnurses gave him milk. They gave him milk at intervals for a whole year, but they could not discover his weak point.

The wetnurses thought that children usually like cakes, dainties, fruits, toys and different kinds of special food. They gave him all those things so that they could test whether he was really handicapped, but during the five years they tested him they could not discover any weak point. Then the wetnurses thought that children usually are afraid of fire, of a wild elephant, of serpents, of a man brandishing a sword, and therefore they tested the prince with those things, but he did not see any danger in them.

The Bodhisatta was unshakable in his resolution because he thought of the danger of hell. He thought, 'the danger of hell is more fearful, it is a hundredfold, a thousandfold, even a hundredthousandfold more fearful.' The wetnurses who tested him in these ways did not see any weak point in the Bodhisatta. They thought that children usually like to watch mimes and therefore they arranged for an assembly of mimes, they arranged for players of conches and drums to cause deafening noises, but they could not make the Bodhisatta change his mind.

They lighted lamps in the darkness or a blaze of fire to light up the darkness.

They smeared his whole body with molasses and let him lie down in a place infested with flies. They did not let him bathe and made him lie down in his excrements and urine. People were sarcastic towards him, they ridiculed and scolded him, they disapproved of him, because he was laying in his own urine and excrement. They lighted pans of blazing hot fire and put these in the bed under him, they used many tricks to test him, but inspite of all this they could not make the prince change his mind.

The wetnurses tested him until he was sixteen years old. They considered, 'When children are sixteen years old, no matter whether they are cripple, deaf and dumb, they all delight in what is enjoyable, or they want to see things that are worth seeing. Therefore we shall arrange for women performing dramas to seduce the prince.' They bathed him in perfumed water and adorned him like a son of the gods, they invited him to a royal suite full of pleasing things. They filled his inner chamber with flowers, with unguents and garlands, just as a dwelling of the gods. They made the women who looked as graceful as Apassara goddesses wait on the prince in order to seduce him and to cause him to take delight in them. However, the Bodhisatta, in his perfect wisdom, stopped his inhalations and exhalations, hoping that the women would not touch his body.

When those women could not touch the prince's body, they thought, 'This boy has a rigid body, and thus, he is not a human, but he must be a yakka.' Then they all returned.

His parents could not cause him to change his mind, though they tried him for sixteen years with great tests and many smaller ones. They implored him to change his mind many times, saying, 'Prince Temiya, dear child, your parents know that you are not dumb, because your mouth, ears and legs are not like those of someone who is dumb, deaf and crippled. You are the son your parents were wishing for. Do not destroy us now, but deliver us from the blame of all the kings of Rose Apple Land'. Though they entreated him in this way, the boy pretended not to hear them.

Then the king summoned the fortune-tellers who said that the prince's feet etc, were not like those of someone who is crippled. They said, 'This boy is not crippled, dumb and deaf. But he is a person of ill-luck. If such a person would stay in your palace, three dangers are threatening: to your life, to your power and to the queen. But when he was born, we did not want to cause grief to you and therefore we said that the prince had all auspicious characteristics.'

The king who was afraid of these dangers gave a command to put the boy in an impropitious chariot, take him out by the back gate and bury him in the charnel ground. When the Bodhisatta heard this he greatly rejoiced, and he thought, 'The wish I had for a long time will reach fulfilment.'



When queen Candādevī knew that the king had given a command to bury the prince, she visited the king and asked him as a boon to give the kingdom to the prince.

The king said, 'Your son is ill-luck, I cannot give him the kingdom.'

Thereupon, the queen said, 'If you will not give it to him for his whole life, give it to him for seven years.'

The king said, 'I cannot give it.'

The queen said, 'Then give it to him for six years, for five, four, three, two, for one year. Give it to him for seven months, for six, five, four, three, two months, one month, for half a month, or even for seven days only.'

The king then consented. Thereupon queen Candādevī had her son adorned and a proclamation was made in the city to the beat of the drum, with the announcement, 'This is the reign of prince Temiya'. He was seated upon an elephant with a white umbrella held over his head, and he was triumphantly led around the city. When he had returned he was laid on his royal bed.

Queen Candādevī implored him all night, 'O Temiya, I did not sleep for sixteen years, I have wept because of you, my child, so that my eyes have become swollen and my heart is pierced with sorrow. I know that you are not cripple, deaf and dumb, do not make me utterly destitute.'

The queen implored the prince day after day for five days. Then on the sixth day the king summoned the charioteer Sunanda and said to him: 'Early tomorrow morning you have to take the boy in an unlucky chariot, and bury him in the charnel ground; then fill the whole well up with earth and return.'

When the queen heard this, she said to her son: 'My child, the king of Kāsi has given orders that you are to be buried in the charnel ground tomorrow. Tomorrow you will die.' When the Bodhisatta heard this, he greatly rejoiced that his sixteen years of endeavour had almost come to an end. But his mother's heart was as it were cleft.

At the end of that night, in the early morning, the charioteer yoked the chariot and let it remain at the gate. He came to queen Candādevī and said, 'O queen, be not angry with me. I just follow the king's command.' Then he carried the prince and came down from the palace. The queen lamented with a loud cry and collapsed. Then the Bodhisatta looked at his mother and thought, 'When I do not speak she will die because of her sorrow, and thus, I would like to speak.' But he refrained from speaking with the thought, 'If I speak, my efforts of sixteen years will have become fruitless. But if I do not speak, it will be to the benefit of myself and my parents.' Then the charioteer

*lifted him into the chariot, and it went a distance of three leagues and there the end of a forest appeared to the charioteer as if it were a charnel ground. He thought that it was a suitable place and turning the chariot he stopped it by the roadside. He took off all the Bodhisatta's ornaments and laid them down. Thereupon he took a spade and began to dig a hole not far from there.*

*When the charioteer Sunanda was digging the hole, the Bodhisatta thought, 'This is my time for effort.' He rose up, rubbed his hands and feet and he thought that he still had strength. He thought that he could come down from the chariot, and so he did. He walked backwards and forwards several times and thought that he had the strength to go even a hundred leagues. He seized the back of the chariot and lifted it up as if it were a toy-cart for children. He reflected, 'If the charioteer would want to harm me, I have enough strength to defend myself.'....."*

We then read that the Bodhisatta taught the Dhamma to the charioteer, saying.

*"You are dependent on me, the son of the king. If you bury me in the forest, you will commit evil. It is as if a person who sits or lies in the shade of a tree will not break the branches. Because someone who harms his friend is an evil person. The king is like the tree, I am like the branch, and you, charioteer, are like the traveller who sits in its shade. If you bury me in the forest, you commit an evil deed."*

We read further on that when the charioteer heard this, he implored the Bodhisatta to return, because he knew that he was not dumb. The Bodhisatta explained the reason why he did not want to return, and he spoke about his inclination to become a recluse. He explained about his past lives and his fear of the danger of hell. When the charioteer had listened to the Bodhisatta's teaching of Dhamma, he wanted to apply it and also become a recluse. Thereupon the Bodhisatta said,

*"O, charioteer, take the chariot back and return after you have paid your debts, because a recluse should not have debts, as is the exhortation of all hermits."*

Then he sent the charioteer back to the king. The charioteer took the chariot and the ornaments, went to visit the king and informed him of what had happened. The king departed from the city together with his fourfold army, the wetnurses, the citizens and the villagers, in order to visit the Bodhisatta.

The Bodhisatta wanted to become a recluse and sat down on a cloth made of branches. He attained the eight attainments and the five

supernatural knowledges (abhiññās). He sat down in a hut with great delight in his recluseship.

The king of Kāsi went to see the Bodhisatta and exhorted him to rule over the kingdom. Prince Temiya refused this. He taught Dhamma to the king in many different ways, and this was a condition for the king to have a sense of urgency and to see the impermanence and the disadvantages of sense pleasures. He saw the benefit of detachment from them and wanted to become a recluse, together with queen Candādevī and many of the courtiers. They all at the end of life were reborn in the Brahma world.

The Buddha said at the end of this story that the goddess who was dwelling in the white umbrella at that time was Uppalavaṇṇā, that the charioteer was the Elder Sāriputta, the parents the royal family, the court the Buddhist followers and the wise Temiya the Buddha himself, the protector of the world.

The perfection of determination of the Bodhisatta which was of the highest degree (paramattha or ultimate) in that life is the “*adiṭṭhāna paramattha pāramī*”.

The perfection of determination is the firm resolve for kusala with the aim to develop paññā and to eliminate defilements. However, one may not have accumulated this perfection sufficiently. We may see that kusala is beneficial, that it should be developed and accumulated, and that our determination for kusala should become stronger. But it is difficult to remain steadfast in our resolution, because we have accumulated so much akusala. Akusala is the condition for being unstable, not steadfast in the determination to develop kusala.

Someone who studied the Dhamma was reflecting on the cycle of birth and death and on the extent of his defilements; he longed for the end of rebirth. However, desiring the end of rebirth is not the same as being steadfast in one's determination to develop paññā. This person did not take an interest in the development of satipaṭṭhāna, even though he had listened to the Dhamma and saw the benefit of satipaṭṭhāna. He was not steadfast in his determination to listen to the Dhamma and develop paññā; he had no conditions for the perfection of determination.

We should not be neglectful in our determination for kusala. Day after day we are infatuated with the objects appearing through eyes, ears, nose, tongue and bodysense, and we are absorbed in thinking of the objects we experience. If we often listen to the Dhamma, we accumulate the inclination to contemplate the Dhamma instead of thinking of

insignificant things. Even if we do not always have the opportunity to listen, we may still reflect on the Dhamma and this shows us the strength of accumulated inclinations. It reminds us not to be neglectful with regard to the perfection of determination.

The Dhamma as taught by the Buddha is of immense benefit to all of us. We should contemplate the Dhamma in all details. If we wish to develop paññā and all the different ways of kusala, we should not neglect knowing and understanding our own akusala. Otherwise we cannot accumulate the perfections of determination and of truthfulness.

If we see the danger and disadvantage of akusala, it can condition the firm resolution to develop kusala with the aim to eradicate defilements, and this is the perfection of determination. If a person does not know himself as he really is and if he believes himself to be superior to other people, he is attached to the good qualities he erroneously pretends to have. We are full of all kinds of akusala, no matter whether we are eating, enjoying ourselves or performing our tasks in daily life. If we do not know ourselves as we really are and if we take ourselves for a righteous person who does not need to develop kusala, we do not notice that we are guided by akusala.

As we develop the perfection of determination, we shall be steadfast in our resolution to develop paññā through the study and practice of the Dhamma with the aim of eradicating all defilements. We also need the perfection of truthfulness and this means that we should be sincere and straightforward in our determination. If we do not develop the perfection of truthfulness we shall vacillate and be defeated by akusala. We can see that we need a refined and detailed understanding of our different cittas for the development of kusala. We should not be neglectful with regard to this.

We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” about four dhammas which are firm foundations, aditṭhāna dhammas, dhammas that are basic to all the perfections. These are: truthfulness, sacca, relinquishment, cāga, calm or peace, upasama, and paññā.

The foundation dhamma of truthfulness, sacca, is steadfastness in truthfulness. We can verify for ourselves to what extent we are stable in truthfulness and sincerity. One may realize that one is not steadfast in truthfulness. We should have a refined knowledge of ourselves and see the disadvantage of action and speech that is not truthful. Even with regard to insignificant matters we should know when we deviate from the truth. At such moments we are overcome by the strength of the

defilements we have accumulated.

If we consider and notice our akusala, we can see the disadvantage of the akusala we have accumulated and which conditions unwholesome conduct. We can see the disadvantage of our lack of truthfulness and hence we can become more steadfast in truthfulness. A person who is without defilements will not tell a lie and his actions will be in accordance with his thoughts and speech. He is firmly established in truthfulness. Someone who is not steadfast in truthfulness does not act in accordance with his speech, because of the strength of his defilements.

Some people think that it is not important to keep one's appointments. Here we see that the accumulation of akusala leads us to not being truthful in fulfilling what we promised. When people do not see the importance of truthfulness in speech, it is a condition for not seeking the truth which also includes the truth of the noble ones, the ariyans. As regards the observance of truthfulness in speech, even small children can notice whether someone acts in accordance with his words. When they are grown up they abhor all the more eloquence that is deceptive, speech that is not truthful, that is not the speech of the noble ones.

When someone maintains truthfulness in speech, speech that does not deviate from the truth, he will continue to be steadfast in every respect, even when he is in danger of life. This is steadfastness in truthfulness, *saccadiṭṭhāna*. We should be firmly established in truthfulness so that we shall reach the further shore, *nibbāna*.

The second foundation dhamma is steadfastness in relinquishment, *cāga*, the relinquishment of defilements. Relinquishment is not only the giving away of material things for the benefit and happiness of others, such as acts of generosity, *dāna*. But it is also relinquishment of defilements, and this is to the benefit of oneself. When we give away material things to others, we should also be intent on the relinquishment of our defilements. We should consider whether our action and speech are motivated by kusala citta, we should not give with the expectation to receive something in return. Clinging, *lobha*, is the opposite, the enemy, of all the perfections. When we have *lobha*, when we desire to gain something, or when we expect something in return for our good deed, this is opposed to the development of the perfections. Therefore, we should give in such a way that our steadfastness in relinquishing defilements can grow. When we give, we should not expect anything in return, and moreover, we should not think of giving as being tedious, we should not give without cheerfulness and generosity, we should give whole-heartedly. We need to have a subtle and detailed knowledge of

our cittas, otherwise defilements cannot be eliminated. When we see someone else's generosity, we can rejoice in his good deed, we can feel enthusiasm about it. We should remember that also forgiving is a kind of dāna, because we wish someone else to be free from any adversity or danger. Thus, generosity is not merely the giving of material gifts. There can be purity of citta when, by our acts of generosity, we are intent on giving support to someone else and make him free from harm. We may be able to rejoice in giving and also abandon our own defilements at such moments.

We read in the Commentary to the "Basket of Conduct" that the Bodhisatta needed to have a strong wish, a strong yearning, to become the Sammāsambuddha. We read in the "Miscellaneous Sayings":

*"Strong desire (chandatā): wholesome desire, the wish for accomplishment. One possessed of the aforesaid qualities must have strong desire, yearning, and longing to practise the qualities issuing in Buddhahood. Only then does his aspiration succeed, not otherwise.*

The following similes illustrate the magnitude of the desire required. If he were to hear: 'He alone can attain Buddhahood who can cross a whole world-system filled with water and reach the further shore by the bare strength of his arms' --he would not deem that difficult to do, but would be filled with desire for the task and would not shrink away. If he were to hear: 'He alone can attain Buddhahood who can tread across a whole world-system filled with flameless, smokeless redhot coals, cross out, and reach the other side,' he would not deem that difficult to do..."

He does not become disheartened, he does not show the slightest dislike when he hears, "He alone can attain Buddhahood who can cross a whole world-system filled with water and reach the further shore by the bare strength of his arms". He is filled with joy and has endeavour to attain Buddhahood. We read:

*"If he were to hear: 'He alone can attain Buddhahood who can cut through a whole world-system that has become a jungle of thorny creepers covered by a solid thicket of bamboo, cross out, and reach the other side,' etc ... If he were to hear: 'Buddhahood can only be attained after being tortured in hell for four incalculables and a 100,000 aeons' --he would not deem that difficult to do, but would be filled with desire for the task and would not shrink away. Such is the magnitude of the desire required."*

The Bodhisatta thought that he could achieve this, but his determination was not yet firm enough; he had to continue accumulating keen and refined paññā so that his noble qualities could reach accomplishment.

When he had visited the Sammāsambuddha and his noble qualities were accomplished to the degree of being able to make the determination to attain Buddhahood, he could begin to resolve upon the accumulation of the perfections.

We can see that it is extremely difficult to accumulate the perfections which lead to the attainment of the supreme wisdom of the Buddha. When he had penetrated the truth of the realities that are arising and falling away at the present moment, he was able to eradicate all defilements completely and attain Buddhahood.

The person who has the supreme aspiration to become a Sammāsambuddha, should have eight qualifications: the human state, the male sex, the cause (which are the necessary supporting conditions), the sight of the Teacher, the going forth, the achievement of noble qualities, extreme dedication and strong desire.

As regards the first qualification, the human state, this is necessary for the fulfilment of his aspiration.

As to the second qualification, the male sex, a woman cannot become a Buddha.

The third qualification is the cause (hetu), and this means that in the life when he aspires to be the Sammāsambuddha, he must be endowed with the necessary supporting conditions.

As to the fourth qualification, the sight of the master, he must be in the presence of a Sammāsambuddha. His aspiration will only succeed when it is made in the presence of a living Buddha, not after he has finally passed away. His aspiration will not succeed when it is made at the foot of the Bodhi-tree, before a shrine, in front of an image, in the presence of Paccakabuddhas (silent Buddhas) or the Buddha's disciples. The aspiration only succeeds when made in the presence of a Buddha. When he has not met a Buddha in person, the power that is necessary to confirm his dedication is lacking.

As to the fifth qualification, the going forth, he must have gone forth into the homeless state, either as an ascetic or as a bhikkhu who believes in the doctrine of kamma and its appropriate result. His aspiration does not succeed when he lives as a layman. At the time he makes his resolution to become a Sammāsambuddha, he should have gone forth, because a monk is stronger in his determination than a layman.

As to the sixth qualification, the achievement of noble qualities, we read in the

Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”:

*“ 6) The achievement of noble qualities (gunasampatti): the achievement of such noble qualities as the direct knowledges (abhiññā), etc. For the aspiration only succeeds when made by one who has gone forth and gained the eight meditative attainments (samāpatti) and the five mundane types of direct knowledge; it does not succeed for one devoid of these qualities. Why? Because one devoid of them is incapable of investigating the pāramīs. It is because he possesses the necessary supporting conditions and the direct knowledges that the Great Man, after he has made the aspiration, is able to investigate the pāramīs by himself.”*

As to the seventh qualification, extreme dedication, we read:

*“(7) Extreme dedication (adhikāra): extreme devotion. The aspiration only succeeds for one endowed with the aforesaid qualities who at the time has such strong devotion for the Buddhas that he is prepared to relinquish his very life for them.”*

During the Bodhisatta’s life as Sumedha, people were clearing the way for the Buddha Dīpaṅkara, but since they were not yet ready, Sumedha threw himself on the road so that the Buddha would tread on him instead of walking on the mud.

As to the eighth qualification, we read:

*“(8) Strong desire (chandatā): wholesome desire, the wish for accomplishment. One possessed of the aforesaid qualities must have strong desire, yearning, and longing to practise the qualities issuing in Buddhahood. Only then does his aspiration succeed, not otherwise.”*

This shows us the Buddha’s great compassion. Due to his great compassion we still have the opportunity to listen to the Dhamma today. We read further on about the aspiration of the Bodhisatta who is endowed with these eight factors:

*“Its characteristic is rightly resolving to attain the supreme enlightenment. Its function is to yearn, ‘Oh, may I awaken to the supreme perfect enlightenment, and bring well-being and happiness to all beings!’ It is manifest as the root-cause for the requisites of enlightenment. Its proximate cause is great compassion, or the achievement of the necessary supporting conditions. Since it has as its object the inconceivable plane of the Buddhas and the welfare of the whole immeasurable world of beings, it should be seen as the loftiest, most sublime and exalted distinction of merit, endowed with immeasurable potency, the root-cause of all the qualities issuing in Buddhahood. Simultaneous with its arising, the Great Man enters upon the*



*practice of the vehicle to great enlightenment, mahābodhiyānapaṭipatti. He becomes fixed in his destiny, irreversible, and therefore properly gains the designation 'bodhisattva'. His mind becomes fully devoted to the supreme enlightenment in its completeness, and his capacity to fulfil the training in the requisites of enlightenment becomes established."*

Here we see the Buddha's great compassion for all of us. We do not need to fulfill immensely difficult tasks, compared in the texts to crossing the worldsystems that are extremely hot, or going through a jungle of thorny creepers; we do not need to accumulate the perfections for as long as an incalculable period and a hundred thousand aeons. The Buddha, whose excellent qualities are incomparable, extended his great compassion to us. He became a Sammāsambuddha so that we could gain the benefit of the Dhamma he taught to all people. He taught the Dhamma to us who can investigate and consider it, and this is the condition for paññā to arise that leads to the eradication of our defilements and the realization of the four noble Truths.

When we see the immense benefit of the Dhamma the Buddha taught because of his great compassion, we become humble and respectful. We become people who are "easily instructed", that is, openminded to the Dhamma, and in this way our defilements can gradually be eliminated.

The foundation dhamma of relinquishment, cāga, pertains to the abandoning of defilements, it pertains to sila, our conduct through body and speech in daily life. We should investigate whether we already eliminated some of our wrong conduct through body and speech, or not yet, inspite of having listened to the Dhamma.

The abandonment of defilements in our conduct is a condition for heedfulness in action and speech. We can notice this in someone who has pleasing manners, who is gentle and does not show anger; he does not cause uneasiness in others by a cross and fierce facial expression and harsh manners.

Heedfulness in conduct is to be applied in daily life. When kusala citta arises our behaviour changes. Heedfulness in speech means that we have to give up wrong speech. Some people are straightforward, but this does not mean that they should speak disagreeable words and be heedless in speech. When they develop the kusala kamma which is the "straightening of one's views" (diṭṭhujukamma), they have right view which knows when there is kusala that is to be developed and when there is akusala that is to be abandoned. The "straightening of one's views" can be accumulated and can become one's nature.

If we want to relinquish defilements, if we have steadfastness in relinquishment (*cāgādiṭṭhāna*) with regard to *śīla*, our conduct in action and speech, we have to guard the faculties of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind-door in daily life. When *akusala citta* arises, the faculties of the senses and the mind-door are unguarded, whereas when *kusala citta* arises, they are well guarded. When the eye-door is not well guarded, this will result in seeing wrongly and understanding wrongly, and hence there will be more trouble and disturbance in our life. We can also see in daily life the consequences of not being heedful as to the faculty of the ear. We cannot avoid hearing senseless words very often, but when we are heedful as to the faculty of the ear we do not pay attention to such words. We should know for ourselves when *sati-sampajañña* arises which is heedful or when we are not heedful.

There can also be heedfulness with regard to the faculty of the nose. Then we are not infatuated with enticing odours, we do not cling to them, or strive to experience them, and we are not disturbed by them. Some people cling to the fragrance of flowers and if they always try to experience more of such odours, it leads to distress. When one has developed heedfulness of the sense faculties, all anxiety will gradually decrease.

When we are heedful with regard to the body, we shall not be meddlesome, jesting, ridiculing others and be reckless in conduct, we shall not molest or harm others.

When we are heedful with regard to the mind, we are not worried and preoccupied, we do not think about things that make us unhappy. Some people seem to be happy in appearance, but in reality they are worried all the time. If they would know that at such moments there are *akusala cittas*, they would not give in to their worries and make themselves unhappy. They would not think of matters that would cause them to be angry with others, that would cause them to be jealous or to have conceit. If they could consider themselves a *dustrag*<sup>1</sup> they would be able to guard the faculties of the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, and the body, and they would be able to abandon defilements. This is steadfastness in relinquishment.

---

1 We read in the “Gradual Sayings” (IV), Book of the Nines, Ch 2, §1, that a monk falsely accused *Sāriputta*, but that *Sāriputta* felt no ill-will. He compared himself with a duster that wipes up everything, clean and foul, but that is not filled with disgust. He said to the Buddha: “Even so lord, like a duster, I abide with heart, large, abundant, measureless, feeling no hatred, nor ill-will...”

If we give things away for the benefit and happiness of someone else but we are forgetful of our defilements, the determination to eradicate them is not yet firm enough. Without the four foundation dhammas, *adiṭṭhāna* dhammas, of truthfulness, relinquishment, calm, and *paññā*, we cannot reach the further shore.

If a person sees the benefit of steadfastness in relinquishment, *cāgadiṭṭhāna*, the elimination of defilements, he also has steadfastness in calm, *upasamadiṭṭhāna*; calm is freedom of defilements. We are absorbed in and disturbed by visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object. True calm is freedom from infatuation with the sense objects. We also need to develop the perfection of renunciation, *nekkhamma pāramī*, in order to reach this freedom. Even someone who is a layfollower may gradually abandon clinging to the sense objects and to the married state. He may be a layfollower who is not married because he sees the disadvantage of the strong bond of family life which is a burden. Thus, seeing the benefit of renunciation conditions steadfastness in calm.

When someone is firmly established in the foundation dhamma of calm, it is conditioned by the foundation dhamma of *paññā*. *Paññādiṭṭhāna* is the fourth foundation dhamma. *Paññā* can be accumulated by listening to the Dhamma, by considering it and testing its meaning by asking questions. In this way we can verify what is kusala, what is akusala, what is wrong, what is right, and we can understand what kamma is and what its result. When we listen to the Dhamma we can investigate the true nature of realities that are cause and that are result.

We should use every opportunity to listen to the Dhamma during this lifespan. Someone may be negligent in listening to the Dhamma, and he may think that by listening once or only a few times, he can be freed from the cycle of birth and death. Then his determination is not yet firm enough. He should further develop the foundation dhamma of *paññā*, and in this way the perfection of determination will become accomplished. The perfection of determination is an essential condition for the perfection of *paññā* that leads to reaching the further shore, that is, the realization of *nibbāna*.



## Chapter 9

### *The Perfection of Loving-kindness*

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of loving-kindness, mettā, as follows:

*“Loving-kindness has the characteristic of promoting the welfare (of living beings); its function is to provide for their welfare, or its function is to remove resentment; its manifestation is kindness; seeing the agreeable side of beings is its proximate cause.”*

Among the ten perfections, the perfection of mettā, loving-kindness, follows upon the perfection of determination. In the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” the reason for this is explained:

*“(a) because loving-kindness perfects the determination to undertake activity for the welfare of others; (b) in order to list the work of actually providing for the welfare of others right after stating the determination to do so, for “one determined upon the requisites of enlightenment abides in loving-kindness”; and (c) because the undertaking (of activity for the welfare of others) proceeds imperturbably only when determination is unshakable.”*

For someone who is firmly established in the development of kusala with the aim to eradicate defilements and who has accumulated the perfection of determination, it is natural to practise loving-kindness. We can verify for ourselves whether we are firmly established in the development of kusala and whether we develop loving-kindness time and again. When someone is not inclined to anger and when he often practises mettā, it shows that he sees the benefit of non-anger and of the development of the perfections leading to the eradication of the defilements.

Someone may believe that life belongs to him, but in reality there are only different dhammas that arise and fall away very rapidly. He should develop more understanding of his life, of his kusala cittas and akusala cittas. When we reflect on the perfections that were mentioned before, such as generosity and morality, we may believe that we have developed them already sufficiently. As to renunciation, nekkhamma, we believe that we are already contented with little, that we have fewness of wishes. As to energy, we think that we are not easily disheartened, that we have diligence and endeavour in our undertakings. We may find that we have

sufficient patience and endurance. We believe that we are truthful: we speak the truth and act according to our words. We believe that we have determination, that we are firmly established in our resolutions. However, we should ask ourselves whether we have already sufficiently developed the perfection of mettā. We may be forgetful of assisting others with loving-kindness, of developing mettā in this way, time and again. We should support others with mettā, also when they are strangers, people we do not know. If one has not yet accumulated all the perfections, none excepted, there are not sufficient conditions for the elimination of defilements.

We should realize which of the perfections are still inadequately developed in our daily life. When we assist others, we should find out to what extent we have developed loving-kindness. When we compare the development of loving-kindness to the development of the other perfections, is mettā developed more, less or equal to the other perfections? If we have developed the other perfections but our inclination to assist others with kindness is deficient, we should find out the reason for this. Is it because we are already pleased with our own kusala or is it because of defilements, such as conceit, clinging to the importance of self? We may think that it is not necessary to help someone else. Or, when we have given assistance to someone else we may wonder what the other person will be thinking about us. We should find out whether such thoughts are kusala or akusala. We should instead give assistance to someone without paying attention to what he thinks about us, no matter whether he rejoices in our deed or whether he blames us, because in reality he cannot harm us. What he thinks about us concerns only himself, not us.

We should realize that no matter how much kusala we have performed already, it is not yet enough. We may believe that it is sufficient, but even when we have developed kusala and realized the four noble Truths to the degree of the streamwinner, sotāpanna, it is not yet enough. All defilements should be eradicated and this is realized at the stage of arahatship. Therefore, if someone is an ordinary person, not yet an ariyan who has reached the stage of the sotāpanna, he should not be neglectful and believe that he has already sufficiently developed kusala. No matter how many good deeds we have done, it never is enough.

When sati arises we can know what type of akusala is the reason for being disinclined to assist someone else. It may be because of selfishness, or because of conceit, or because we believe that we waste our time, that it is not useful to help others. Some people think that they have done many good deeds already and therefore, they do not want to associate

with others. One should ask oneself whether such a thought is kusala or akusala. If we associate with others in order to assist them, the citta is kusala. Thus, we should associate with others so that we can support them to a greater extent. When we are able to have friendliness to all people we shall not be neglectful of the perfection of mettā, loving-kindness. There should be no limits to mettā; and if we restrict it there may not be mettā but lobha, attachment, which is akusala, not kusala.

If we only consider the outward appearance of our deeds, attachment and loving-kindness seem to be similar. When we perform a good deed for the sake of someone who is close to us, whom we respect and love, it seems that this is motivated by kusala, by mettā. However, why can we not be kind in the same way to someone else, no matter who he is? If there is true mettā it should be exactly the same whether we perform an act of kindness to someone who is close to us, with whom we are familiar, or to a person we are not familiar with. If there is true mettā, if we want to develop the perfection of mettā, we should not restrict mettā to particular persons. When we limit mettā, we should investigate the characteristic of the citta at that moment, we should know whether it is kusala citta or akusala citta.

We read in the Tipiṭaka <sup>1</sup> that performing deeds with mettā is like the conduct of a mother towards her child. If we look at the outward appearance of deeds we may wonder whether a mother has true mettā or whether she has just selfish affection for her child. She has to sacrifice everything for her child when she takes care of him. Sometimes the child is dirty and disagreeable to touch, but she still takes care of him. We should consider whether a mother has true mettā for her child, or whether she has only selfish affection. A mother should know her own cittas, she should be truthful with regard to reality: kusala is kusala and akusala is akusala.

It is right that the Tipiṭaka explains about mettā as being the same as a mother's conduct towards her child. However, we should remember that a mother's attachment to her child is not mettā. If one can have the same conduct towards other people as a mother's selfless loving care for her child, then we practise mettā.

When we see someone else who is kind to a stranger, to someone who is not close to him, we should not wonder why he acts thus, because true mettā is not restricted to particular people. All people are equal, no matter whether they are close to us or not, no matter whether we know them or not.

---

1 For example, in the "Minor Readings", IX, "The Loving Kindness Discourse".

Did we in our daily life assist others with generosity? If we wish for their wellbeing and happiness, we have loving-kindness towards them. When someone experiences sorrow, when he suffers, we may have compassion and wish that he will be free from suffering. When we wish to help a person who is sick and who suffers pains, when we want to take care of him, we have compassion: we wish that person to be free from suffering.

By the development of satipaṭṭhāna we shall know the difference between the characteristics of mettā and of aversion. When we recognize the characteristic of aversion as akusala, paññā which sees the disadvantage and the ugliness of aversion and all akusala dhammas is the condition for kusala dhammas further to develop. By the development of satipaṭṭhāna we shall see that instead of dosa, mettā can arise and be developed. We should also develop time and again the perfection of patience, endurance in all kinds of circumstances. It may happen that someone used to feel annoyed when the food was not tasty, but when he can be aware of the characteristic of the citta at such moments and realize that it is akusala citta, he will be satisfied with the food that is right in front of him, and he will not take the trouble to look for something else.

The development of satipaṭṭhāna is beneficial in all respects. It is beneficial for the development of generosity. It happened that someone was greatly attached to beautiful things and was collecting a great number of them. However, when he had learnt about satipaṭṭhāna and he developed it, he began to see the disadvantage of attachment, especially when he understood the characteristic of renunciation, nekkhamma. Renunciation is not only renunciation to a high degree, the degree of monkhood, but there can also be renunciation in the layman's life, that is to say, contentment, the feeling that what one possesses is sufficient. That person felt that he had already enough of the things which are experienced through eyes, ears, nose, tongue, bodysense and mind. He understood that he had too many possessions and that he had not wanted to give them away. However, when he realized the disadvantage of clinging to visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object, he began to understand that what he possessed was sufficient, that he should have moderation. He wanted to get rid of what he did not need and he knew that in giving things away for the benefit and happiness of others he would accumulate kusala. If one is not in the habit of developing satipaṭṭhāna, one does not know the characteristics of realities, which are appearing one at a time, as only nāma dhammas and rūpa dhammas. In that case, other kinds of kusala do not arise easily and there are conditions for akusala to arise more rapidly. However, if



someone knows the characteristics of realities that are appearing just as they are and he knows the characteristic of *nāma dhamma* as just *nāma*, not a being or a person, and the characteristic of *rūpa dhamma* as just *rūpa*, not a being or a person, his endurance and patience will increase and also other kinds of *kusala* will further develop.

A monk who used to live in Indonesia spoke about an Indonesian woman who had lost her husband because of a young man's reckless driving. However, she did not like to take legal action because she did not want to cause unhappiness to someone else. Moreover, she also expressed the intention to give a scholarship for the education of that young man. This was very difficult for her, but she was able to do so. Such great acts of charity can be performed by someone who has accumulated loving-kindness and compassion. One may wonder whether the action of the Indonesian woman was a perfection developed in daily life. People have accumulated different degrees of *kusala*. Whether *kusala* is a perfection or not depends on its strength. When it is a perfection it is a supporting condition leading to the eradication of wrong view. When *akusala dhamma* is strong, it will not be possible to abandon the wrong view which takes realities for beings, people or self.

True *mettā* is extended to beings and people whoever they are and wherever they may be. If someone has accumulated *mettā*, he will be ready to assist other people time and again. *Mettā* is a "divine abiding", *brahmavihāra*, that is, a *dhamma* which is a sublime way of abiding.

We read in the "Basket of Conduct" that the *citta* of the Great Being, the *Bodhisatta*, could without difficulty become established in calm, because he could quickly extend loving-kindness even towards his enemies. Someone may at times be irritated about others, he may believe that particular persons obstruct his own welfare in various ways. However, if he accumulates *kusala* and has the determination to eradicate defilements, his *citta* will without difficulty become established in calm. He will quickly be able to extend *mettā* even to his enemies.

If we become angry with someone, we should know that anger arises only for a short moment and then falls away, and that *mettā* can arise instead. When we have accumulated the perfections we can become like the *Bodhisatta* who could without difficulty be established in *mettā* and extend it quickly towards his enemies. We should verify for ourselves whether we are angry with someone else for a long time or not. If we can have *mettā* instead, it shows that we have accumulated the inclination to eradicate defilements.

Loving-kindness, mettā, is one of the divine abidings, brahmavihāras. There are four of them: loving-kindness, mettā, compassion, karuṇā, sympathetic joy, muditā and equanimity, upekkhā. Mettā is adosa cetasika, the reality of non-hate or non-aversion. Compassion is karuṇā cetasika, which arises when one supports someone else, wanting to alleviate his suffering and trouble. Sympathetic joy is muditā cetasika, which arises when one rejoices in someone else's happiness. Equanimity, upekkhā, is tatramajjhataṭṭā cetasika, evenmindedness which is the absence of attachment and aversion. It arises when one understands the true nature of anattā, non-self.

When mettā, adosa cetasika, arises we are at that moment free from hate or aversion. When karuṇā cetasika arises, we are concerned about someone who suffers and want to assist him. When someone else is happy because of gain, honour or praise, and we also rejoice in his happiness, there is muditā cetasika. When we have no lobha or dosa and we are evenminded and impartial towards all beings, there is tatramajjhataṭṭā cetasika, which is the brahmavihāra of upekkhā, equanimity.

If someone wants to extend mettā towards a person who conducts himself in an unpleasant and irritating way, he should, to begin with, develop adosa cetasika, the reality that is freedom from anger.

The brahmavihāras, divine abidings, of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity are dhammas which are faultless and superior. A person with mettā is faultless and when he extends mettā to someone else he is superior. The practice of the four brahmavihāras is the right practice towards all beings. We read in the "Atthasālinī" (I, Part V, XIII, The Divine States, 195):

*"And as Brahmā divinities live with faultless thoughts, so aspirants associated with these four states live like the Brahmās. Thus, because of the meaning of 'divine' and of their faultless nature, they are called 'Divine States'."*

These four divine abidings lead to calm, to non-disturbance and they are faultless. They are the way leading to purity. There is a particular order in the cultivation of the four brahmavihāras, mettā being the first, since each of them is a supporting condition for the following brahmavihāra <sup>1</sup>.

---

1 We read in the "Atthasālinī" (I, Part V, XIII, The Divine States, 196) that the person cultivating the brahmavihāras, after he has worked for the good of other beings, cultivates compassion when they are overcome by suffering. Then, after he has seen the prosperity of those who had prayed for welfare and the removal of suffering, he should practice sympathetic joy by rejoicing in their prosperity. Lastly he should practise equanimity, because there is no further work to be

We read in the “Atthasālinī” (same section, 196) why they are without limits:

*“And all of them arise in an immeasurable field, therefore are they called the ‘Immeasurables’. For beings without limit constitute their field (object).”*

We should not think that we have developed mettā already sufficiently when we have slightly less anger or when we have mettā for just a few people. This is not enough. When we meet other people, we should remember that we should extend to them, as the occasion demands, mettā, compassion, sympathetic joy or equanimity, and that there should be no limits to their extension. We should not restrict the extension of the brahmavihāras to only particular persons. We can verify for ourselves whether we are ready further to develop the brahmavihāras and to extend them to others all the time. This is the way to live like the Brahmās.

The “Atthasālinī” (Book I, Part V, Ch XIII, Divine States, 196) uses a simile for the four Brahmavihāras. Mettā is like a small child, compassion is like a child who is sick, sympathetic joy is like a child who is becoming an adolescent and equanimity is like a child who manages his own affairs.

As regards loving-kindness which is like a baby, everybody wishes for his wellbeing and prosperity in growing up, but we should have loving-kindness not only for small children. Everybody is like a baby one should assist, and in this way we can feel true loving-kindness for all people. However, this is only a simile helping us to understand the characteristic of loving-kindness. Mettā is like the attitude of a mother towards her child who is still a baby and needs her loving care to grow up. Likewise, we should as a loving mother support other people.

Compassion is like a sick child. A mother who has a sick child should try to take care of it so that it will be cured, so that it is free from suffering and illness. When we see other people, not only children, we wish that they are free from suffering and that is compassion. We should not limit compassion to particular people, it should be unlimited.

Sympathetic joy is rejoicing in someone else’s welfare. This is compared to the joy of parents who have a child that is becoming an adolescent and wish for the child to keep on enjoying the good things of adolescence for a long time. Equanimity is like a child who can manage his own affairs so that he is no longer a burden to his parents, and his parents do not have

---

done (after practising the first three divine abidings) and he should proceed by way of evenmindedness and impartiality.

to exert themselves with regard to each of his actions.

If the brahmavihāras are practised in the aforesaid ways, defilements can be abandoned and paññā can be developed which knows what is beneficial and what is disadvantageous. The brahmavihāras are most valuable, but we should verify for ourselves whether we truly have loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. We should remember that the development of paññā and the eradication of defilements take an endlessly long time.

As we have seen, compassion is intent on removing the suffering of beings. However, since paññā is not of the degree of accomplishment of the Sammasambuddha, we do not fathom the true characteristic of suffering, dukkha. We do not fully grasp the suffering of birth, old age, sickness, death, the suffering due to impermanence all beings are subject to. The arising and falling away of realities is the noble Truth of dukkha, this is the real suffering. True compassion on account of this kind of suffering is of another dimension and can only be fulfilled by the Buddha<sup>1</sup>. In our daily life we usually do not realize the extent of the suffering of being in the cycle of birth and death. It is difficult for us to have true compassion on account of this, and therefore, there are more opportunities for the arising of mettā. When we see other beings and people, we can extend mettā towards them and assist them with mettā. However, it may happen that other people are beyond help. If we have developed paññā we can have equanimity and evenmindedness. We can have impartiality and equanimity with regard to righteous people as well as people with wrong conduct. This is the perfection of equanimity.

We read in the “Atthasālinī “ about the four brahmavihāras ((Book I, Part V, Ch. XIII, Divine States, 193) :

*“...love (mettā) has the characteristic of being a procedure of modes of beneficence; the function or property of bringing good; the manifestation or effect of taking hatred away; the proximate cause of seeing the loveliness of beings. Its consummation (success) is the quieting of ill-will; its failure is the production of lust.”*

---

1 The Bodhisatta wanted to attain Buddhahood so that he could help beings to be free from the cycle of birth and death. It is said in the Commentary to the ‘Basket of Conduct’ that the perfections he developed were accompanied by compassion and skilful means. We read: “What are their characteristics, functions, manifestations and proximate causes? Firstly, all the paramis, without exception, have as their characteristic the benefiting of others; as their function, the rendering of help to others, or not vacillating; as their manifestation, the wish for the welfare of others, or Buddhahood; and as their proximate cause, great compassion, or compassion and skilful means.”

We should remember that kusala and akusala can be similar in appearance. Therefore, we should often realize the characteristics of realities so that we shall know whether we develop kusala or whether akusala arises.

We read about compassion:

*“Pity (compassion) has the characteristic of evolving the mode of removing pain; the property of not being able to bear [seeing] others suffer; the manifestation of kindness; the proximate cause of seeing the need of those overcome by pain. Its consummation is the quieting of cruelty; its failure is the production of sorrow.”*

We read about sympathetic joy:

*“Sympathy has the characteristic of gladness; its property is the absence of envying; its manifestation is the destruction of disaffection (discontentment); its proximate cause is seeing the prosperous state of other beings. Its consummation is the quieting of dislike; its failure is the production of derision (fun).”*

It is difficult to distinguish between sympathetic joy and attachment. When we are thrilled and greatly rejoice in someone else's gain, honour and praise, there may be lobha and not sympathetic joy.

We read about equanimity:

*“Equanimity has the characteristic of evolving the mode of neutrality as regards beings; its function is seeing equality in beings; its manifestation is quieting both aversion and attachment; its proximate cause is seeing the heritage of the occurring kamma as ‘beings are the property of their kamma’. By its influence they will attain to pleasure, or be free from pain, or not fall from the prosperity already acquired. Its consummation is the quieting of aversion and of attachment; its failure is the production of an unintelligent indifference which is based on the home life.”*

Unintelligent indifference means indifference based on ignorance, moha. When we have ignorance, we do not know realities as they are, and then we cannot understand kamma, which produces its appropriate result.

With regard to the expression about equanimity “based on the home life”, this means, based on visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object, thus, the sense objects. When we see what appears through the eyes and we are indifferent, we do not seem to have attachment or aversion, but we should not believe that that is necessarily kusala. It is indifference “based on the home life” because at such moments we do

not know the truth. We cannot abandon defilements if we do not listen to the Dhamma and if we do not understand it; if there is no paññā which knows the characteristics of realities as they really are. There is indifference which is the near enemy<sup>1</sup> of the brahmavihāra of equanimity when we do not consider what is right and what is wrong, and we do not investigate the true nature of the realities that are appearing.

Our thinking of other people and their actions can be motivated by the four brahmavihāras of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. When people see someone who commits akusala kamma that is harmful for society, they are upset and they hope that he will receive the result of his action accordingly.

However, a person should consider what kind of citta motivates his thinking, whether he thinks with mettā, compassion, sympathetic joy or equanimity. When someone receives the result of a bad deed, when he is in trouble and distress, or he has to suffer, people will feel sorry for him. But actually, they should have mettā and compassion for him at the moment he commits akusala kamma which is the cause of a future result. If one sympathizes with him when he receives an undesirable result, one sympathizes too late.

If we are a real friend we can help a person to be free from deeds and thoughts which are akusala, to have wholesome conduct instead of unwholesome conduct.

In the ultimate sense there are no beings or persons, there are only realities arising and falling away, each with their own characteristic. We think of different situations and people with kusala citta or with akusala citta. We should know the difference between kusala and akusala. If we live according to the Dhamma, we shall further develop paññā and every kind of kusala. We shall know immediately at which moment we have no loving-kindness but akusala. Then we shall be able to have loving-kindness immediately, also for a person who behaves like an enemy.

---

1 Visuddhimagga IX, 98-101 mentions the near enemies and the far enemies of the divine abidings. The far enemies of the brahmavihāras are their opposites and the near enemies are qualities which seem to be the brahma vihāras but which are in reality akusala. They seem to be similar to the brahmavihāras and one could erroneously take them for the brahmavihāras. In the case of equanimity, the near enemy is ignorance based on the home life, "since both share in ignoring faults and virtues". The Visuddhimagga explains that when seeing visible object, "equanimity arises in the foolish infatuated, ordinary man..." This is not the divine abiding of equanimity which is even mindedness.

## Chapter 10

### *The Perfection of Equanimity*

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” defines the perfection of equanimity, upekkhā, as follows:

*“Equanimity has the characteristic of promoting the aspect of neutrality; its function is to see things impartially; its manifestation is the subsiding of attraction and repulsion; reflection upon the fact that all beings inherit the results of their own kamma is its proximate cause.”*

The perfection of equanimity is evenmindedness, it is non-disturbance by controversial conduct of people or by trying events.

If we do not develop satipaṭṭhāna, we are easily affected by attachment and aversion and the citta is not calm. We encounter external objects which cause sadness and distress. Our unhappy mood is conditioned by unpleasant objects which appear through eyes, ears, nose, tongue and bodysense. People who are free from sorrow are unaffected by attachment and aversion with regard to people and events and this means that they have developed the perfection of equanimity.

When people see someone who kills a snake, they believe that they have loving-kindness and compassion for the snake that is being killed, but in reality they are disturbed by aversion towards the person who kills the snake. One should be aware and investigate the citta at that moment: what type of citta arises when one thinks of the person who kills a snake? We may not have loving-kindness, but then, we can have equanimity when we realize that everyone receives the results of his deeds. When kusala cittas arise we may have loving-kindness and also compassion; we feel sorry for the person who commits akusala kamma, because he will receive the result of akusala kamma. When equanimity arises, we are not disturbed and we do not utter unsuitable speech to someone who commits akusala kamma. Loving-kindness and equanimity arise with kusala citta. We should not take akusala for kusala. We should not believe that akusala dhamma is good and that we should utter strong language to the person who commits akusala kamma. The citta which is disturbed is akusala citta. If we develop paññā we can know the characteristic of the citta that is stable, unaffected by attachment and aversion. Then we can further develop the perfection of equanimity.

Wise attention, *yoniso manasikāra*, is most important. When we listen to the Dhamma, we may be inclined to think that we should act in a particular way so as to have wise attention and abandon defilements. However, if we understand realities as non-self we do not think in that way. If we reflect on the practice of the Bodhisatta in each of his lives and if we evaluate our own practice in this life and compare it with his practice, we can understand that it will take an endlessly long time to abandon defilements.

We need *sati-sampajañña* and we have to develop each kind of kusala with patience and endurance in order to realize the four noble Truths. We should not have expectations as to the moment when we shall realize the four noble Truths. So long as we have many defilements which arise time and again and have desire for the realization of the four noble Truths, we are very far away from the goal. Therefore, we should begin to develop all kinds of kusala so that they become supporting conditions leading to enlightenment.

We read in the Commentary to the “*Theragāthā*”, the “*Paramatthadīpanī*”, in the “*Nidānakāthā*”, that all perfections support and enhance each other:

*“The utmost patience in the accumulation of good qualities such as dāna in order to attain the awakening wisdom of the ‘Solitary Buddha’ or the awakening wisdom of a disciple, is called energy, viriya.*

*Endurance with regard to anger is called patience, khanti.*

*Generous deeds, the undertaking of moral conduct, sīla, and so on, and the abstention from speech that deviates from the truth is called truthfulness, sacca.*

*Determination which is unshakable and firm so that one can accomplish what is beneficial in all circumstances, is called determination, aditṭhāna.*

*Aiming for the benefit of all beings which is the foundation of the practice of dāna, sīla and so on, is called loving-kindness, mettā.*

*Evenmindedness with regard to trying circumstances and behaviour of other beings is called equanimity, upekkhā.*

*Therefore, when there are dāna, sīla and bhāvana, mental development, or there are sīla, samādhi and paññā, it can be said that the perfections of energy and so on have reached accomplishment in those ways.”*

We need the greatest patience for the accumulation of generosity. We need energy, we need to be unshakable and firm in order to accomplish



what is beneficial in all circumstances. The perfections are referred to in different ways, in slightly different wordings, although the meaning is the same. Seeing different aspects of the perfections will remind us to apply them. For example, we read in the Commentary to the “Theragāthā”:

*“Aiming for the benefit of all beings which is the foundation of the practice of dāna, sīla and so on, is called loving-kindness, mettā.”*

Thus, this is another aspect of mettā. People who perform generous deeds may not investigate their cittas at such moments, they may not realize that they give because of mettā. It is their nature to give and therefore, they perform generous deeds, they give things away for the benefit and happiness of others. If they consider their kusala citta they will know that mettā is the foundation of their generosity. When they abstain from ill deeds through body and speech the foundation of their kusala is also mettā. They do not want to cause suffering and distress to others by their actions or speech.

The Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”, in the “Miscellaneous Sayings” explains with regard to each of the perfections to which kind of akusala it is opposed.

We read about generosity:

*“Further, giving is opposed to greed, hatred, and delusion, since it applies the qualities of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion to gifts, recipients, and the fruits of giving, respectively.”*

As we read, the perfection of generosity is opposed to akusala, to lobha, dosa and moha, because when one is generous and accumulates the perfection of generosity, one practises the quality of non-attachment to one’s gift. If someone still clings to the object he intends to give, he cannot give, he regrets the loss of his gift. He may think of giving, but he cannot give, he desires to wait for an opportunity to give. If someone is not firmly established in his determination to give, he may think of giving, but he does not give. At such a moment there is no generosity. Whereas, when there is true generosity, it is accompanied by non-attachment; one does not cling to the object one is giving. At the moment of kusala citta there is also non-aversion towards the person who receives the gift. If one is displeased and dislikes the receiver, one will not give. This may happen when someone sees a beggar and notices that he has physical strength; he may be irritated and hence does not give. Or when someone sees a handicapped child the beggar takes along, he may be irritated about the beggar causing affliction to his child, and then he does not give. When generosity arises it has to be accompanied by the good

qualities of non-attachment to the gift, non-aversion towards the receiver and it may be accompanied by non-delusion or paññā as well. When paññā knows the result of generosity, when it realizes that generosity is wholesome, there is true liberality and defilements are abandoned.

We read further on in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” about sīla and about renunciation:

*“Virtue, sīla, is opposed to greed, hatred, and delusion, since it removes crookedness and corruption in bodily conduct, etc.*

*Renunciation, nekkhamma, is opposed to these three corruptions since it avoids indulgence in sense pleasures, the affliction of others and self-mortification.”*

If we do not cling to sense pleasures it is natural that there will also be less aversion. If someone has a great deal of attachment to visible object, sound, odour, flavour and tangible object, but does not obtain these objects, he will be displeased.

We read in the Commentary about paññā :

*“Wisdom opposes them in so far as greed, etc., create blindness, while knowledge restores sight.”*

Wisdom is opposed to akusala as it dispels the darkness of attachment and restores sight. As soon as we have seen something, attachment is bound to arise. When paññā is lacking, there is no opposition to lobha which is very skilful in clinging to all the sense objects. However, when paññā arises, attachment cannot arise at the same time; paññā is opposed to attachment. Only paññā can dispel the darkness of attachment.

When paññā arises, it is able to understand the true nature of the reality that appears. Paññā understands kusala as kusala and akusala as akusala. As paññā develops, it will know the characteristics of realities as they are, so that the darkness of ignorance can be overcome.

We read about energy and patience:

*“Energy opposes lobha by arousing the true way free from both listlessness and restlessness.*

*Patience opposes lobha by accepting the desirable, the undesirable, and emptiness.”*

Each of the perfections is of great benefit provided we duly reflect on them and gradually accumulate them. If, in circumstances which are a test to our endurance, we reflect on patience, we can accumulate it. There can be patience with regard to disagreeable objects and to desirable objects of which we can realize the emptiness.

We read about truthfulness:

*“Truthfulness is the opposite of lobha because it proceeds in accordance with fact, no matter whether others render help or inflict harm.”*

Because of truthfulness we can know what is right and what is wrong, no matter in what circumstances we are.

We read about determination:

*“Determination is the opposite of these three defilements since, after vanquishing the vicissitudes of the world, it remains unshakeable in fulfilling the requisites of enlightenment in the way they have been undertaken.”*

Determination is the opposite of the defilements of attachment, aversion and ignorance. We should know of ourselves whether we have already firm determination as to the development of kusala or not yet. This is necessary so that we become unshakable in accomplishing it. Our determination can easily vacillate, it may not be firm, and our confidence may not be steady.

We read about mettā:

*“Loving-kindness is the opposite of greed, hatred, and delusion, through its seclusion from the hindrances.”*

The hindrances (nīvaraṇa) are: sensuous desire (kāmacchanda), ill-will (vyāpāda), sloth and torpor (thīna-middha), restlessness and worry (uddhacca-kukkucca) and doubt (vicikicchā). It is said that loving-kindness is the opposite of lobha because it is free from the hindrances. Only paññā can know whether there are hindrances or not. If there is no paññā one may erroneously believe that there is mettā. In reality there may be lobha, which is the hindrance of sensuous desire. Paññā is essential, and it is also the factor which causes all kusala further to develop.

We read about equanimity:

*“And equanimity is their opposite by dispelling attraction and repulsion towards desirable and undesirable objects, respectively, and by proceeding evenly under varying circumstances.”*

Equanimity is the opposite of attachment, aversion and ignorance. We should investigate the characteristics of all ten perfections and see their benefit : they are opposed to akusala dhammas.

Realities are non-self, they are beyond control. Cittas arise and fall away all the time in succession, and this causes people's lives to be different: they have accumulated different kammās which produce their results accordingly and they also have different inclinations which condition their varied ways of thinking.

We read in the Commentary to the "Kindred Sayings" (II, Ch XII, 6, Tree Suttas, § 60, The base, Nidāna Sutta) that the Dhamma taught by the Buddha for the benefit of all beings can be compared to a thousand goods which are laid down on the door-step of each house for the benefit of the family. Some people may open the door and receive all those goods that are piled up on their door-step whereas others do not even open their door.

Ignorance is the condition for not seeing the benefit of the Dhamma, whereas paññā is the condition for realizing its benefit. Each moment of listening to the Dhamma is beneficial. There may not always be an opportunity to apply the Dhamma, but when we have listened to it, there are conditions for kusala dhammas to develop and akusala dhammas gradually to decrease. We should have appreciation for someone who explains the Dhamma as taught by the Buddha. As we have seen, the Buddha's teaching can be compared to the laying down of a thousand goods before each house-door.

We read in another section of the same Commentary that people are confused and disturbed because of not understanding cause and result which take their course at each moment. This is compared to a cotton thread that is entangled, that has become a knot or a ball which one cannot disentangle by oneself. The Commentary states that the knot can be disentangled only by two people, namely, the Sammāsambuddha and the Solitary Buddha, Pacceka Buddha <sup>1</sup>, who have accumulated the perfections so as to realize the four noble Truths by themselves.

The perfection of equanimity is evenmindedness, it is non-disturbance by controversial conduct of people, by trying events or by the vicissitudes of

---

1 A Pacceka Buddha, a Solitary Buddha, has realized the Truth without having heard it from someone else, but he cannot proclaim the Dhamma to the world. The Sammāsambuddha has realized the Truth without having heard it from someone else, and he can proclaim the Dhamma to the world.

life, no matter whether they are desirable or undesirable, such as gain and loss, praise and blame. At present we suffer because of being easily disturbed and unstable, but someone who has firm understanding of kamma can become unaffected by the vicissitudes of life.

If one develops the perfection of equanimity, one does not pay attention to the wrongs of others, as the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct” explains. One can be impartial and evenminded, undisturbed by the wrongs of others; one understands that people will receive the result of their own kamma. Some people may think, when others receive unpleasant results, that it serves them right, but if someone has developed the perfection of equanimity, he will not think in that way. He is able to understand paramattha dhammas, ultimate realities, dhammas which are anattā and beyond control.

We read in the “Basket of Conduct” (The Perfection of Equanimity, III, 15, the Great Astounding Conduct) that the Bodhisatta developed the perfection of equanimity to the highest degree (as an ultimate perfection, paramattha pāramī), during the life he was the wise Lomahaṃsa. The Commentary states:

*“The Great Being was born at that time into a wealthy family, and he completed his education, mastering all branches of knowledge under the tutorship of the teacher Disāpāmukha. When his parents had died he became disenchanted with worldly conditions and he acquired a sense of urgency, although the members of his family implored him while weeping to take care of the family possessions. He had become disenchanted because he contemplated impermanence with wise attention, he reflected on the foulness of his body, and he did not want to give in to the defilements that would cause him to be involved with married life.*

*He thought of abandoning his possessions and becoming a monk, but then he considered that, as a monk, his good qualities in themselves would not be apparent so as to become praiseworthy. That was why the Great Being who was averse from gain and honour did not enter the state of monkhood. He reflected: ‘I should just have sufficient belongings and lead a life of moderation with regard to gain, loss and the other worldly conditions.’ ”*

Someone who becomes a monk receives praise because of the excellence of monkhood. However, the Great Being rejected the gain and honour which one would receive as a monk. He thought that even though he would not be a monk, he would conduct himself in a praiseworthy way<sup>1</sup>. He would practise fewness of wishes and not have anything in excess.

---

1 Because of the highest degree of equanimity he had developed.

This is a way of thinking which is firmly established in kusala. The state of monkhood is different from the state of the layman. The monk is bound to receive more favours and honour than a layman, because of the excellence of monkhood. The Bodhisatta rejected gain and honour and he did not cling to them. He thought that he would lead a life as a layman without a great deal of gain and honour.

We read further on in the Commentary:

*“He thought, ‘I shall accumulate the practice of supreme patience, enduring derisive speech from others. I shall develop the perfection of equanimity to the highest degree.’ He left his home, dressed only in the clothing he was wearing; he practised the elimination of defilements to the utmost. When he was without strength, he behaved as if he had strength. Though not dumb, he behaved as if he was dumb, while he was ridiculed by others because of his appearance that seemed to be of a fool. He wandered in villages, cities and the capital, and he stayed in each place for only one night. Wherever he was much ridiculed, he stayed for a longer time. When his clothing became worn out and unsightly, he did not accept another piece of clothing from someone else; he wandered about with clothing that served only to cover the private parts. While he wandered about in that way he came to a house in the village.”*

This is the perfection of equanimity to the highest degree, which is most difficult to develop. He had many possessions, but he did not cling to them. He wanted to accumulate the perfection of equanimity: he endured derisive speech from others, and he went outside covered only by a piece of cloth. When he was without strength, he behaved as if he had strength, he was not downhearted and he had patience. Though not dumb, he behaved as someone who is dumb, he was not disturbed by anything. No matter what someone else said, no matter whether others ridiculed him because of his outward appearance which seemed to be that of a fool, he was unaffected.

We all have different accumulated inclinations. We are attached to our appearance, to our clothing, to words of approval and praise from others. We like to be dressed beautifully, but the Bodhisatta had in that life great endurance, he was unaffected when others jeered at the way he was dressed. Where he was much derided he stayed longer. Wandering about in that way he came to a house in a village. We read:

*“There the children of that family were of a mischievous character, they were prone to violence and liked to beat other people. Some children were relatives or slaves of the royal household. They had a cruel, fierce character, they uttered sarcastic, coarse, insulting speech and they went about mocking all*

the time. When these children would see old, destitute people, they would take fine dust and scatter it all over their backs. They behaved in an improper, reproachable way, and they jeered at the people who were watching the scene.

When the great Being saw those mischievous children going about in the village, he thought, 'Now I shall use a trick as a means of accumulating the perfection of equanimity, and therefore I shall stay in that place.' When those mischievous children saw the Great Being, they began to behave in an improper way. The Great Being stood up and pretended that he could not stand this any longer and that he was afraid of those children. When the children followed the Bodhisatta, he went to a cemetery, thinking, 'Here nobody will interfere with the conduct of those children.'

He took a skeleton as a pillow to support him and he lay down <sup>1</sup>. Thereupon the children behaved in an improper way such as spitting upon him and then returned. Every day they behaved in this way. When wise people saw the children's behaviour, they forbid them to act in that way, saying, 'This person has great powers, he is an ascetic, a great yoga practitioner.' Those wise people greatly praised and honoured the Bodhisatta."

All Bodhisattas are evenminded and impartial, in every respect. We read that the Buddha said:

*"I slept in a cemetery, taking as a pillow the skeleton of a corpse. I had evenmindedness with regard to what is clean and what is dirty."*

We read that the village children conducted themselves in many rude, improper ways, by spitting, jeering, defecating and urinating. They poked blades of grass into the Bodhisatta's ears and they were teasing and mocking as much as they liked. We read that the Bodhisatta thereupon reflected:

*"The village children caused me to suffer pain, whereas those wise people gave me enjoyable things, such as flowers, unguents and food. I am impartial and evenminded towards all people; I have equanimity. I have moderation in all things, in all circumstances. I have no specific affection towards those who support me, nor do I speak angry words or have feelings of vengeance towards those who do not support me. Thus, I have equanimity towards all people."*

The Bodhisatta was unshakeable and impartial, having no attachment to people who gave him pleasant things, such as flowers, unguents and food, and having no anger towards those who disturbed him and made him suffer.

---

1 This story is referred to in M I, 79 (Sutta 12).

We read:

*“At that time the Buddha taught moderation, he taught not to cling to the vicissitudes of life. He was equipped with the requisite of enlightenment that is wisdom and hence he was impartial towards all beings, to those who supported him as well as those who did not. He finally said: ‘I am evenminded towards happiness and misery, towards honour and dishonour; I am impartial towards everything, and this is my perfection of equanimity.’*

*The perfection of equanimity is evenmindedness, being without happiness and anguish, like a scale that is well-balanced. The Buddha showed that he was impartial to all beings and to all vicissitudes of life, and this degree of equanimity is not common to other people.”*

We read in the Commentary to the “Basket of Conduct”:

*“The Bodhisatta developed all ten perfections. Beginning with generosity, he gave away all his possessions and his own body, without concern over whatever others wanted to do with it. That is the perfection of generosity. He abstained from whatever was improper and wrong, and that is the perfection of morality. He developed the perception of the foulness of his body, he abandoned attachment to sense pleasures, he left his home for the homeless life, and that is the perfection of renunciation. He was skilled in the discerning of the dhammas which are a support for the requisites of enlightenment and skilled in the abandoning of the dhammas opposed to those requisites. He was skilled in considering the specific nature of beneficial dhammas, discriminating them from dhammas that are not beneficial, and this is the perfection of paññā.*

*The disenchantment with sense pleasures and the endeavour to endure suffering is the perfection of energy. Endurance and forbearance are the perfection of patience. Truthfulness in speech and in the practice of abstention from what is wrong is the perfection of truthfulness. The firm, unshakable practice of what is right is the perfection of determination. Loving-kindness and affection for all beings without being selective is the perfection of loving-kindness.”*

As regards the perfection of equanimity of the Bodhisatta, this has just been explained above.

In the “Conduct of Equanimity” of the “Basket of Conduct”, the perfection of equanimity to the highest degree has been dealt with in order to proclaim the benefit and the power of the excellent qualities of the Bodhisatta. We read:

*“He gave up his wealth, his circle of relatives, and he left his home, in the*



*same way as someone who enters the state of monkhood, although he did not become a monk. He lived in the same way as a monk. The Bodhisatta did not cling to the state of monkhood, he was averse to favours and praise that accrue to the monk. The monk must accept the reverence that people show him, and he strives for the excellence of the status of monkhood. The Bodhisatta was just a monk at heart, he had the mentality of a monk, and in this way he lived in utmost happiness.”*

Since the Bodhisatta was averse to favours and praise that come with monkhood, he did not go forth. However, he was a monk at heart and developed kusala; in this way others would in truth respect him, even though he had not gone forth.

We read further on:

*“He had the highest degree of contentment with little, he delighted in tranquillity, he had no concern for his body and his life, because his aim was equanimity. He practised the abandonment of defilements to the highest degree, he endured the depraved deeds from others. He had the firm determination to diminish the defilements which were opposed to the requisites of enlightenment by evenmindedness in all respects. This caused him to be moderate in everything, to be impartial towards others who supported him and to those who did not. His life was like that of an arahat and hence he did not cling to the vicissitudes of life. He reached the peak of the perfection of equanimity, and as such it is pre-eminently a perfection leading to the awakening of a Buddha (Buddha pāramī).”*

The perfection of equanimity includes impartiality towards all beings and this is most difficult to practise.

The ten perfections are:

generosity, dāna,

morality, sīla,

renunciation, nekkhamma,

wisdom, paññā,

energy, viriya

patience, khanti

truthfulness, sacca,

determination, aditṭhāna,

loving-kindness, mettā,  
equanimity, upekkhā.

We should not neglect anyone of these ten perfections, we need all of them. We need sincerity in the abandonment of defilements and that is the perfection of truthfulness. We should remember to think of other people's wrongs with loving-kindness. We also need the perfection of determination, the firm, unshakable determination to practise all kinds of kusala in order to reach the goal. We may have sincerity in our wish to abandon defilements, but at times we lack determination, we are not firm enough in our determination to abandon defilements. We need the perfection of determination for being sincere in our practice to eradicate defilements.

We need the perfection of patience, that is, endurance. We need to develop all the perfections and this is the only way to have wise attention to whatever we experience, to develop paññā.

# Epilogue

## *The Defilements of the Perfections*

When attachment arises, when we have enjoyment and clinging, the ten perfections are defiled. The defilements of each of the ten perfections are explained as follows:

*“Taken separately, discriminating thoughts (vikappa) over gifts and recipients are the defilement of the perfection of giving.”*

Sometimes when we perform deeds of generosity we are selective with regard to the receiver or we have discriminating thoughts about the gifts, by attachment, aversion, fear or delusion. Then the perfection of generosity is defiled, it is not pure. The perfection of generosity should be developed towards all beings, without discrimination. If we have discriminating thoughts over gifts and recipients, we should investigate the characteristic of the perfection of generosity. At such moments it is defiled, it is not pure. We should have a refined knowledge of the perfections in daily life. They have to be developed life after life in the cycle of birth and death so that they reach fulfilment.

We read with regard to the perfection of morality:

*“Discriminating thoughts over beings and times are the defilement of the perfection of virtue.”*

Sometimes we can observe morality towards particular persons, to people we respect such as our parents. We may observe morality by showing respect to them in our gestures and speech, but we cannot do the same to other people. Or we may have discriminating thoughts as to the time of observing morality, we observe it only on Uposatha day<sup>1</sup> or a particular day we select to observe the precepts, and then we may believe that we are perfect in morality, although at other days we do not observe morality. That is the defilement of the perfection of virtue or morality. We read further on in the Commentary to the “Basket of conduct” about the defilement of the other perfections as follows:

---

1 Uposatha day is a day of vigilance, which is the full-moon day, the new-moon day, and the days of the first and the last moon-quarter. Buddhist lay followers usually visit on these days the monasteries and observe five or eight precepts.

*“Discriminating thoughts of delight in sense pleasures and existence, and of discontent with their pacification, are the defilement of the perfection of renunciation. Discriminating thoughts of "I" and "mine" are the defilement of the perfection of wisdom...”*

Even when we think in that way of paññā, it is already defiled, we have attachment to the thought of “my paññā”. We read further on about the defilement of the perfections:

*“Discriminating thoughts leaning to listlessness and restlessness, (are defilements) of the perfection of energy; discriminating thoughts of oneself and others, (are defilements) of the perfection of patience; discriminating thoughts of avowing to have seen what was not seen, etc., (are defilements) of the perfection of truthfulness; discriminating thoughts perceiving flaws in the requisites of enlightenment and virtues in their opposites, (are defilements) of the perfection of determination; discriminating thoughts confusing what is harmful with what is beneficial, (are defilements) of the perfection of loving-kindness; and discriminating thoughts over the desirable and undesirable, (are defilements) of the perfection of equanimity. Thus the defilements should be understood.”*

At times we can have equanimity with regard to the undesirable but not with regard to the desirable.

The more we understand the Dhamma in detail, the more will we be inclined to practise the Dhamma. Formerly we may have thought that we could not practise the perfections, that they were beyond our reach. However, if we see the benefit of each of the perfections, and if we gradually develop them, they will eventually become accomplished. We can verify for ourselves that listening to the Dhamma and studying it is of the utmost benefit. It will enable us to apply the Dhamma in our daily lives, to develop satipaṭṭhāna together with all the perfections.

## Glossary

**abhaya** dāna the giving of freedom from fear

**abhidhamma** the higher teachings of Buddhism, teachings on ultimate realities

**abhijjā** covetousness

**abhiññā** supernormal powers

**abhāya** freedom from fear or danger.

**abhisāṅkhāra** kammic activity giving preponderance in the conditioning of rebirth

**aditṭhāna** determination

**ahetuka citta** not accompanied by “beautiful roots” or unwholesome roots

**akusala kamma** a bad deed

**akusala citta** unwholesome consciousness

**akusala** unwholesome, unskilful

**āmisa dāna** the giving of material things

**anāgāmi** non returner, person who has reached the third stage of enlightenment, he has no aversion (dosa)

**Ānanda** the chief attendant of the Buddha

**anattā** not self

**anudhamma** in conformity with the Dhamma

**anumodanā:** thanksgiving, appreciation of someone else’s kusala

**arahat** noble person who has attained the fourth and last stage of enlightenment

**ariyan** noble person who has attained enlightenment

**arūpa-bhūmi** plane of arūpa citta: arūpa-jhānacitta

**arūpa-brahma plane** plane of existence attained as a result of arūpa-jhāna. There are no sense impressions, no rūpa experienced in this realm.

**arūpa-jhāna** immaterial absorption

**Atthasālinī** The Expositor, a commentary to the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka

**balas** powers, strengths

**bhāvanā** mental development, comprising the development of calm and the development of insight

**bhikkhu** monk

**bhikkhuṇī** nun

**bhūmi** plane of existence or plane of citta

**bodhisatta** a being destined to become a Buddha

**Buddha** a fully enlightened person who has discovered the truth all by himself, without the aid of a teacher

**Buddhaghosa** the greatest of Commentators on the Tipiṭaka, author of the Visuddhimagga in the fifth century A.D.

**cetanā** volition

**cetasika** mental factor arising with consciousness

**chanda** “wish to do”

**citta** consciousness, the reality which knows or cognizes an object

**cuti** dying

**cuti-citta** dying-consciousness

**dāna** generosity, giving

**deva** heavenly being

**dhamma** reality, truth, the teachings

**dhamma-vicaya** investigation of Dhamma

**Dhammanudhamma paṭipatti** the practice of the Dhamma in conformity with the Dhamma (anudhamma)

- Dhammasaṅgaṇi** the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka
- dharmavicaya** investigation of the Dhamma
- ditṭhi** wrong view, distorted view of realities
- domanassa** unpleasant feeling
- dosa** aversion or ill will
- dukkha** suffering, unsatisfactoriness of conditioned realities
- hiriyati** scruples
- iddhipādas** four “Roads to Success”
- indriya** faculty which is ‘leader’ in its own field
- issā** envy
- jāti** birth, nature, class (of cittas)
- javana** impulsion, running through the object
- javana-cittas** cittas which ‘run through the object’, kusala citta or akusala citta in the case of non-arahats
- jhāna** absorption which can be attained through the development of calm
- kāmāvacara cittas** cittas of the sense sphere
- kamma** intention or volition; deed motivated by volition
- Kammassakatā ñāṇa** understanding of the specific nature of kamma as ‘one’s own’
- kamma patha** course of action performed through body, speech or mind which can be wholesome or unwholesome
- kāmogha** the flood of sensuous desire
- kāmupādāna** sensuous clinging
- karuṇā** compassion
- kāya** body. It can also stand for the ‘mental body’, the cetasikas
- kāya-duccarita** wrong action through the body
- kāya-ujukatā** uprightness of cetasika

**kāya-viññāṇa** body-consciousness

**khandhas** aggregates of conditioned realities classified as five groups: physical phenomena, feelings, perception or remembrance, activities or formations (cetasikas other than feeling or perception), consciousness.

**khanti** patience

**kilesa** defilements

**kiriya citta** inoperative citta, neither cause nor result

**kukkucca** regret or worry

**kusala kamma** a good deed

**kusala** wholesome, skilful

**kusala citta** wholesome consciousness

**lobha** attachment, greed

**lokuttara citta** supramundane citta which experiences nibbāna

**mettā** loving kindness

**micchā-ditṭhi** wrong view

**micchā-samādhi** wrong concentration

**middha** torpor or languor

**moha** ignorance

**nāma** mental phenomena, including those which are conditioned and also the unconditioned nāma which is nibbāna.

**ñāṇa vippayutta** unaccompanied by paññā

**ñāṇa sampayutta** accompanied by paññā; ñāṇa means paññā.

**nekkhamma** renunciation

**nibbāna** unconditioned reality, the reality which does not arise and fall away. The destruction of lust, hatred and delusion. The deathless. The end of suffering

**ottappa** fear of blame

**Pāli** the language of the Buddhist teachings



**paramattha dhamma** truth in the absolute sense: mental and physical phenomena, each with their own characteristic

**passaddhi** calm

**pāramīs** the ten perfections, generosity, dāna, morality, sīla, renunciation, nekkhamma, wisdom, paññā, energy, viriya, patience, khanti, truthfulness, sacca, determination, aditṭhāna, loving-kindness, mettā, equanimity, upekkhā

**pīti** joy, rapture

**rūpa** physical phenomena, realities which do not experience anything

**rūpa-brahma plane or rūpa-bhūmi** fine material realm of existence attained as a result of rūpa-jhāna

**rūpa-jhāna** fine material absorption, developed with a meditation subject which is still dependant on materiality.

**rūpa-khandha** aggregate or group of all physical phenomena (rūpas)

**sadda dāna** the gift of sounds (should be understood by way of the sounds of drums, etc.)

**samādhi** concentration or one-pointedness, ekaggatā cetasika

**samatha** the development of calm

**sampajañña** discrimination, comprehension

**sampayutta** associated with

**Sangha** community of monks and nuns. As one of the triple Gems it means the community of those people who have attained enlightenment.

**saññā** memory, remembrance or “perception”

**saññā-kkhandha** memory classified as one of the five khandhas

**santiraṇa-citta** investigating-consciousness

**saṅkāra dhamma** conditioned dhamma

**saṅkhāra-kkhandha** all cetasikas (mental factors) except feeling and memory

**saṅkhāradhamma** conditioned realities

**saṁvega** a sense of spiritual urgency

**saṃsāra** the cycle of birth and death

**sappurisa** good man, denoting an ariyan

**Sāriputta** The First chief disciple of the Buddha

**sati** awareness, non-forgetfulness, awareness of reality by direct experience

**satipaṭṭhāna sutta** Middle Length Sayings 1, number 10, also Dīgha Nikāya, dialogues 2, no. 22;

**satipaṭṭhāna** applications of mindfulness. It can mean the cetasika sati which is aware of realities or the objects of mindfulness which are classified as four applications of mindfulness: Body, Feeling, Citta, Dhamma. Or it can mean the development of direct understanding of realities through awareness.

**sīla** morality in action or speech, virtue

**soṭāpanna** person who has attained the first stage of enlightenment, and who has eradicated wrong view of realities

**sukha** happy, pleasant

**sutta** part of the scriptures containing dialogues at different places on different occasions.

**suttanta** a sutta text

**Tathāgata** literally “thus gone”, epithet of the Buddha

**Tipiṭaka** the teachings of the Buddha

**upekkhā** indifferent feeling. It can stand for evenmindedness or equanimity and then it is not feeling but tatramajjhataṭṭā cetasika

**Uposatha** Uposatha days are days of fasting or vigil; uposatha is observed on the days of full-moon and new-moon, and sometimes also on the days of the first and last moon-quarter. In Buddhist countries there is a tradition for lay-followers to visit temples and to observe eight precepts on these days

**vāsanā** disagreeable habits accumulated in the past that can only be eradicated by a Buddha. Even arahats who have eradicated all defilements may still have a way of speech or action that is not agreeable to others

**vedanā** feeling

**vedanā-kkhandha** group of all feelings

**vinaya** Book of Discipline for the monks

**viññāṇa** consciousness, citta

**viññāṇa-kkhandha** all cittas (consciousness)

**vipassanā** wisdom which sees realities as they are

**virīya** energy

**Visuddhimagga** an encyclopaedia of the Buddha's teaching, written by Buddhaghosa in the fifth century A.D

**vitakka** applied thinking

**vyāpāda** ill-will

**vyāpāda-vitakka** thought of malevolence

**yoghas** The *yokes*, a group of defilements

**yoniso manasikāra** wise attention to the object









200 - *The Perfections*