

Vipassana Meditation Course: Series of Eight Talks

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Talks are an essential part of any meditation course, being both instructional and inspirational. The meditation teacher will ascertain that the theoretical information needed for the meditator's practice is given at the appropriate time and that encouragement and support is offered.

Meditation students who do not have the benefit of working personally with a meditation teacher, can use this series of talks from an actual retreat as part of a study of vipassana meditation techniques and as a guide and inspiration to its practice.

Talk I

Introduction

Today we start our Vipassana Meditation Retreat: mental training, or mental development. Why should we train our mind? Because we want to free it from all kinds of mental distortions such as greed, hatred, anger, stresses, strains, and despair. When our mind is free from all kinds of these mental distortions we can live blissfully and peacefully. That's why we have to train our mind, by means of Vipassana meditation or insight meditation.

* Samatha and Vipassana meditation.

There are two types of meditation in Buddhism. One is **Samatha** meditation; the other is **Vipassana** meditation. Samatha here means concentration. Vipassana here means insight

or experiential knowledge of bodily and mental phenomena. Of these two types of mental training Samatha meditation is practised to attain higher concentration of the mind, peaceful and blissful living and the cessation of suffering. Vipassana meditation is practised to attain not only deep concentration of the mind but also liberation from all kinds of mental and physical dukkha or suffering, through realisation of our body-mind processes and their true nature.

As I explained to you, Samatha meditation is practised to attain higher concentration of the mind. So when you practise Samatha meditation, the first type of mental training or mental culture, you have to concentrate your mind on a single object of meditation. You want to concentrate your mind on a single object very deeply. That object may be a concept or observed reality, but most Samatha meditative objects are concepts. There are also a few objects which are observed reality as the object of meditation in the first type of training and Samatha meditation. But whatever the object may be the aim of Samatha meditation is to obtain deep concentration of the mind, or the higher concentration of the mind.

So you have to take a single object and focus your mind on it. When you focus your mind on this object gradually the mind will be concentrated on it very deeply. But in the beginning of the practise your mind may go out or wander. Your mind doesn't stay with the object always. Sometimes it just goes out and thinks about something else. It wanders and goes astray. Then you have to bring the mind to the object and focus it on that object again and again. Whenever the mind goes out you bring it back and focus it on the object of meditation. In this way your mind gradually becomes concentrated well on the object of meditation.

As you have practised it for some days or months the concentration becomes better and better, deeper and deeper. Finally the mind is absolutely concentrated on the object of meditation as its absorbed into the object of meditation. Such a state of mind which is absorbed into the object of meditation is called **jhana**, or **apana** in Pali. Jhana means 'fixed as', or absorption. When the mind is totally fixed to the object of meditation it's called jhana, fixed mind. And also it is called absorption, apana.

Jhana has four stage, or five stages, in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha. So, the second stage of jhana concentration becomes better than the first. Then the third stage, the concentration better than the second. So with the fourth. As long as the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation its free from all mental impurities such as desire, greed, lust, hatred, anger, ignorance, and jealousy. Because there are no impurities in the mind which is absorbed into the object of meditation you feel happy and peaceful, and calm and tranquil. Tranquillity, serenity and calmness is the result of Samatha meditation.

But in ancient times there were some devotees who practised Samatha meditation with a view to obtaining supernormal powers such as clairvoyance and clairaudience. These supernormal powers can be attained based on all the four jhanas, of the four stages. When a meditator is skilled in entering any stage of jhana he can then proceed with his

meditation in order to attain psychical or supernormal powers. But though he may be able to attain them through the four stages of jhana, concentration, he is not able to rightly understand the intrinsic nature of mental and physical phenomena. He is not able to destroy any mental defilement because the purpose of Samatha meditation is to obtain deep higher concentration of the mind and psychical or supernormal powers. Because he is not able to uproot any of the mental defilements such as anger, hatred, desire, and craving, he cannot get free from all kinds of suffering, mental or physical, because these mental defilements are the causes of the suffering, dukkha. As long as one can uproot or exterminate these mental defilements, mental impurities, he is subject to suffering, dukkha.

The aim of Vipassana meditation is to free oneself from all kinds of dukkha, mental suffering and physical suffering, through realisation of the body-mind processes and their true nature. So if you are able to realise mental and physical phenomena as they really are you can do away with all kinds of mental impurities or mental defilements which arise dependent on misunderstanding or ignorance of mental and physical phenomena and their true nature. That's why we have to practise Satipatthana Vipassana meditation, insight meditation.

But you may practise Samatha meditation with a view to gaining some deep concentration on which your insight knowledge is built. Such a kind of Samatha meditation is more beneficial than that which I explained to you for the purpose of higher concentration and supernormal powers. So in ancient times, in the time of the Buddha some meditators developed Samatha meditation further, first of all so they could gain some degree of concentration such as access concentration, and if was possible jhana concentration or absorption concentration. When they had attained absorption concentration or jhana concentration they made this the basis for Vipassana meditation or Insight Meditation.

Here access concentration means that neighbouring concentration to jhana concentration. When you have attained access or neighbouring concentration you are sure to attain jhana concentration, absorption concentration, in a short time. If the purpose of a meditator is to practise Vipassana meditation based on excessive concentration he or she can attain this by means of Samatha meditation. Such kind of Vipassana meditation is known as Vipassana meditation or insight meditation preceded by Samatha meditation.

So Vipassana meditation is of two types. The first, Vipassana meditation, insight meditation is preceded by Samatha meditation. The second is the pure Vipassana meditation or insight meditation not preceded by Samatha meditation. The first type of Vipassana meditation or Insight Meditation is practised by those who have ample time to devote to their meditation. They have to spend maybe three or four months on Samatha meditation. And when they are satisfied with their attainment of jhana concentration they proceed with Vipassana meditation.

Pure Vipassana meditation is practised by those who haven't enough time to devote to their meditation like yourselves, because you do not have three or four months or six

months or a year for your meditation. So you can spend about ten days on your meditation. For such meditators pure Vipassana meditation is suitable. That's why we have to conduct a ten days Vipassana meditation retreat. Actually ten days meditation is not enough. The period is too short a time for a meditator to succeed in any noticeable experience in his meditation. But there are some who have some experience in Vipassana meditation who when their meditation experience becomes major can attain the higher stages of insight knowledge of the body-mind processes of their true nature. Although you can spend just ten days on your meditation, if you strive to attain the deep concentration with a strenuous effort without much interval or break in the course of your meditation for the whole day, then you are able to have some new experience of meditation. So the point is to practise intensively and strenuously as much as you can.

*** Preparatory Stages**

Before you practise insight meditation there are some preparatory stages you should go through. The first the Pali scriptures mention is when one has spoken contemptuously or in jest or malice to or about a noble one - a puggala in Pali - who has attained some state of sanctity or enlightenment in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha. Then he should apologise to the Buddha. He should apologise that noble one, a puggala. If he is not available here, if he is deceased, he should make apology through his meditation teacher. I think you need not do this because you may not have spoken ill of any noble one, a puggala, because you may not met such a person in Australia.

The second stage is that you should entrust yourself to the Lord Buddha who teaches the technique of Vipassana meditation, by interesting yourself in the Buddha you can go through your course happily and peacefully. Though you may have unwholesome or dreadful visions in your meditation you won't fear them because you have entrusted yourself to the Buddha. Also you have to place yourself under the guidance of your meditation teacher so he can frankly instruct you without any hesitancy. If you do not place yourself under the guidance of your teacher he may not be reluctant to instruct you even though you have some defects in your practise.

*** Four Protective Meditations**

When you have done this you should develop the four protective meditations for some minutes. These four are (1) recollection of the Buddha's attributes; (2) development of love and kindness or metta towards all living beings; (3) reflection upon the loathsome nature of our body; (4) reflection on the nature of death.

When you recollect the attributes of the Buddha you can select one of nine attributes. Out of these nine attributes of the Buddha you can choose the first or the second or any of the nine as the object of your meditation and reflect on it. Here Arahat is the first attribute. Arahat means the Buddha who is worthy of honour because he has completely destroyed all mental activities and attained to the cessation of all kinds of dukkha. You have to recollect this achievement of the Buddha, thinking about its meaning. That's the worthiness of honour through his attainment of the cessation of all kinds of suffering by

destroying all mental defilements so he lived in peace and bliss and happiness. When you recollect these attributes you feel happy and brave to face any kind of dukkha or suffering in the course of your meditation as well as in your daily life. This must be done about two minutes.

Then you have to develop your metta, loving-kindness, the feeling of loving-kindness towards all living beings, wishing all living beings peace and happiness, and free from all kinds of mental and physical suffering, dukkha. This feeling of detached love is developed in yourself. Then you feel happy and tranquil, your mind easily concentrated on any object of meditation. This must be done about five minutes.

After that you have to reflect upon the loathsome nature of the body, thinking about its repulsiveness such as blood, pus, phlegm, intestines, and so on. This body is full of these impurities and repulsiveness. The result is you are detached from this body to a certain extent because you find it loathsome or repulsive. This also must be done about two minutes.

Then after that you should reflect upon the nature of death. Life is uncertain, death is certain. Life is precarious and death is sure. Everyone who is born is subject to death. So all men are mortal. In this way you have to think about the surety of death for every living being. You can arouse strenuous effort in your practise by thinking, 'I'll have to practise this meditation strenuously before I die, or before I am dead.

This is what the Buddhist meditational texts mention as a preliminary stage for both the Samatha meditator and Vipassana meditator. They are not compulsory, not indispensable. But the texts mention they should be done. These four protective meditations, recollection of the Buddha's attributes and development of loving-kindness, metta, towards all living beings is the most important thing for a meditator to pacify his distracted mind and also to practise meditation happily and peacefully. So you should do that.

*** Beginning Vipassana Meditation**

When you have done these preliminary stages then you have to focus your mind on your bodily and mental processes, be aware of any mental and physical processes as they really are. That is the beginning of Vipassana meditation. The principle of Vipassana meditation is to be aware of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really occurs. In other words, any activity of the body and mind must be very attentively observed as it really is. This is the principle of Vipassana meditation. So any mental process or physical process is the object of Vipassana meditation. When you find any mental process or physical process on any part of your body and mind distinctively rising, then you must note it, you must observe it, you must be aware of it as it really is.

Any mental or physical phenomenon can be the object of insight meditation, Vipassana meditation. You have a variety of meditational objects in Vipassana meditation, not like Samatha meditation. In Samatha meditation you have to take only a single object to focus

your mind. But in Vipassana meditation there are many varieties of mental or physical processes as the object of meditation.

The mentality or physicality which is more pronounced than the other should be observed, you should be mindful of as it is. But the beginner may get confused what object to observe or to be mindful of. To avoid this confusion the most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw taught this technique of meditation to his disciples in accordance with the four foundations of mindfulness, instructing them to begin with the movement of the abdomen.

When you focus your mind on the abdomen you find a rising movement and falling movement. When you breathe in the abdomen rises; when you breathe out the abdomen falls. So rising movement and falling movement is the primary object of this insight meditation to begin with. But though the abdomen rises through the pressure of the air you breathe, this meditation is not a breathing meditation, not a respiratory meditation. Though the abdomen falls through the pressure of the breath which is going out, this is not a breathing meditation because there the Omniscient Buddha classified the wind or the air in six groups.

*** The Wind or Air Element**

One group of the air or wind is vayo-dhatu. That means the wind which exists in the abdomen. This also must be focussed, must be realised by a meditator and not identified with his self, his person or his being. The other aspect of wind or air is breathing, respiration. Though the respiration is connected with the rise and fall of the abdomen, the rising movement/falling movement is not breathing, not respiration. It's the wind or the air which expands and contracts in the abdomen. So contemplation of the abdomen's movement is not breathing meditation, not respiration meditation.

When you practise respiration meditation your mind has to focus at the nostrils or the top of the upper lips. You focus the mind there and note it and breathe in. When you breathe out you focus your mind on the nostrils or on the top of the upper lips, and note outward breathing and so on. So, when you focus your mind on the abdominal movement and concentrate on it then this contemplation is not contemplation breathing meditation.

Then what is it? This is the meditation of elements. Element here means the physical elements: wind or air. We have to focus our mind not only on the wind or air elements but also upon the other mental or physical elements too. Whatever is predominant, mental phenomena or physical phenomena must be observed as they are. So you have to focus your mind on the abdominal movement and notice or observe it: rising-falling, making mental note as rising- falling.

*** Sitting**

When you sit in the wrong position you can't feel the pressure of the rising movement or falling movement very well, so you have to sit comfortably in the right position. You

should not sit in the cross legged position because if you cross one leg against another in a short time you feel pressure, a painful sensation of aching or numbness. You need not sit in a cross legged position. Your legs must be evenly placed side by side, the right leg inside and the left leg outside. Then you don't feel any pressure because the two legs are evenly placed side by side.

Then your body must be kept in an erect position. Your body must be straight. The neck and head also must be in a straight line with the body. But you must not stretch out your body. You must keep it straight erect, then close your eyes. The right hand must be put on the left one with the palm upward. But you may put both hands on both knees with the palms upward. Now relax yourself. Do not feel tense both physically and mentally. Relieve all your tensions, mental or physical tensions, and sit as comfortably as you can.

*** Rising and Falling Movement of the Abdomen**

Then focus the mind on the abdominal movement and observe the outward movement and inward movement of the body, making a mental note: rising, falling. When the abdomen rises you note rising; when the abdomen falls you notice falling. You must not pay any attention to the form of the abdomen. What you should perceive is the pressure of the rising movement and the falling movement. Whenever the rising movement is distinct you should note it rising. When the falling is pronounced you note it falling. In the beginning of the practise you need to label such as rising, falling, sitting, touching and so on. You have to make a mental note. Because for the beginner labelling or mental note helps him to focus the mind on the object very precisely and closely. So in the beginning of the practise you need to label or make a mental note such as rising, falling, rising, falling.

During your contemplation of the rise and fall of the abdomen your mind may go out. Then when the mind goes out you must now bring it back to the primary object, that's the rise and fall of the abdomen. As soon as you are aware that your mind is wandering you follow it and note it. Observe it as it is. Say, 'wandering, wandering,' or 'thinking, thinking,' or 'imagining, imagining,' and so on until that wandering mind has disappeared. Only after the wandering mind has disappeared do you return to the primary object, the rise and fall of the abdomen. Then note as usual rising, falling, rising, falling.

In the beginning of the practise your mind is still with the rise and fall of the abdomen, the primary object, about say five or ten seconds. And then it goes out. Whenever you know that the mind is going out you should be aware of it going out and make a mental note, 'we are going out,' or 'thinking, thinking,' 'imagining, imagining.' If you see any mental image then you note, seeing, seeing, seeing until that mental image has disappeared. Only after it has disappeared do you return to the primary object and note as usual, rising falling, rising falling.

In the beginning of the practise the rise and fall of the abdomen is not so pronounced, not so predominant to the beginner's mind. Then the meditator is not satisfied with the movement of the abdomen so he makes it vigorous, rapid or quick. You mustn't do that.

You mustn't breathe quickly or vigorously or deeply so that you can feel it very distinctly. Because if you do that you get fatigued. You feel fatigue in a short time, then you can't concentrate on it. So breathing must be normal. When you put some mental effort in your noting of the rise and fall of the abdomen you can feel it to a certain extent and note rising falling, rising falling.

As you have meditated say about four or five days then the rise and fall of the abdominal movement will become clearer and clearer, more and more distinct to your mind. So in the beginning of this practise, not satisfied with your noting of the abdominal movement, you must not breathe in deeply or vigorously or quickly. Breathing must be normal. Note as much as it is distinct to your mind.

* Distractions

During your contemplation of the rising movement and falling movement of the abdomen you may hear any sound, a voice, a noise. And you should observe it, make a mental note, hearing hearing hearing hearing, about four or five times. After that you come to the primary object, the rise and fall of the abdomen, and note as usual.

Sometimes you may smell any scent or odour while you are contemplating on the abdominal movement. Then you leave the abdominal movement alone and note: smelling smelling smelling. Only after that you come to return to the primary object and note as usual.

Sometimes you may feel hot or cold while you are engaged in the rising and fall of the abdomen. Then you leave the abdomen alone and focus your mind on the feeling of cold or the sensation of the hot, and observe it as it really is. Make a mental note: hot, hot or cold, cold. When the feeling of cold or hot subsides you return to the primary object, the rising and fall of the abdomen and note as usual rising falling, rising, falling.

When you have sat say about fifteen or twenty minutes you may feel pain or stiffening or itching on any part of your body. Then you must observe that painful or itching sensation as it really occurs. Make a mental note: pain pain pain pain pain. When you note the pain your noting should be energetic, precise. When the pain is noted superficially and lightly then you can't overcome it. Actually the pain doesn't become severe, but with the power of deep concentration the mind becomes so sensitive to the pain that it perceives it very well, so you think the pain becomes severe. So you have to continue to contemplate the pain as much as possible with utmost patience. That patience is the best quality of a meditator, to bear the pain and to overcome it. However severe the pain may be you must not give it up. You should concentrate on it as much as possible with the utmost patience.

So not only for the pain itself but also in other aspects of this meditation patience is the best quality of a yogi. You have to be patient with your mind; you have to be patient with your physical discomfort; you have to be patient with the disturbances coming from outside. When you are not patient with these things your concentration very often is broken, goes away. So you have to have the best quality of a meditator, that's patience.

There is a Burmese saying: *Ten yi khan neg ban yau* . The meaning is: **Patience leads to Nibbana**, or the cessation of all kinds of suffering. So patience is the best quality of a yogi who will be successful in this meditational practise.

Sometimes you can't bear the severity of the pain. Then you want to change your position so that you can relieve it. You must not change your position in a sitting, but there is an exception when a meditator can sit say an hour without changing position. After an hour's meditation if he wants to change his position he must not do that. He should get up and practise walking meditation because the changing of the position in a sitting makes your concentration break. So it's not good.

When you change your position very often this becomes habitual so that when your meditational experience is even at an advanced stage you want to change your position though you don't have any unbearable pain. Sometimes unconsciously you have changed your position. Only after you have changed position do you know, 'Ah, I have changed my position.' Then concentration breaks.

So those who can sit without changing position an hour should not change this position in a sitting even once. But for beginners if they are not able to sit when thirty minutes, half an hour, is up without changing position they can change once in a sitting, not twice.

Suppose the beginner meditates in sitting then after ten minutes' meditation feels a painful sensation and wants to change his position. Then he can change it because he cannot sit even an hour. So he should change his position, but this must be done mindfully. When you want to change you must note, wanting wanting. That's a mental process which must be observed: wanting wanting, or wishing wishing, intending intending. Then you change your position, you stretch out your legs, and stretching, stretching, stretching. Then again you shift your body, then shifting shifting, moving moving. When you settle it on again, then touching touching, sitting sitting. When you bend your legs, bending bending, and so on. All actions and movements involved in changing the position you must be mindful of as they really are.

After you have changed position then you return to the primary object, the rise and fall of the abdomen, and note as well rising falling, rising falling. But after five or ten minutes' meditation you may feel pain unbearable, then you may feel you want to change your position. You mustn't do that. Patiently observe the pain as much as possible as long as you can. When you feel it unbearable then get up and practise walking meditation. You may sit say about twenty minutes or thirty minutes, it doesn't matter. You may sit as long as you can with a change of position once - only once, not twice. After that you practise walking meditation.

As I told you this Vipassana meditation, insight meditation, is to put an end to all kinds of suffering through realisation of our body-mind processes and their true relation. That's why we have to observe whatever mental states, emotional states or physical activities become prominent to our mind. That's why we have to be mindful of our painful

sensation. Make a mental note, pain pain. The same with the stiffening, itching or any physical discomfort or mental or emotional states which are arising very prominently.

Sometimes you may have two or more objects of meditation, that's two or more objects of physical mental processes which are arising at the same moment. Then you may get puzzled which object should be noted. You should not get puzzled about it. It is the most prominent object of physical or mental processes that you must be aware of.

Suppose when you observe the rise and fall of the abdomen you feel numbness on your leg. And also you feel an itching sensation in the back. And your mind is also thinking about something, about your walk or your travel. Then you have four objects of meditation. One is the rise and fall of the abdomen, the other is numbness, the third is the itching sensation in the back, and the fourth is a thought about your family. What should you do with these four objects that you should be mindful of?

You should note the most prominent object. When numbness on the leg is more distinct than the other three you should note, numb. You should observe it, make a mental note, numb numb, or numbness numbness and so on until it has subsided. After it has subsided you return to the primary object, the rise and fall of the abdomen.

But it may be the itching sensation which is more distinct than the abdominal movement. Then you should go to the itching sensation and note as usual, itching itching itching. Focus in your mind on the itching sensation attentively and precisely.

Of the four objects of meditation, if the thought about your family is more distinct than the other three then you should observe the thought, observe this mental state which must be realised by the meditator. Observing the thought, make a mental note, thinking thinking thinking thinking. When you note the thought that noting must be energetic, precise and somewhat quick, so that the mindfulness or the noting becomes more and more powerful than the process of thinking. When the noting mind becomes more powerful than the process of thinking, then it overwhelms the process of thinking and that process of thinking stops. After the thought has stopped or disappeared you return to the primary object, the rise and fall of the abdomen, and note it as usual.

In this way when you have two or more objects of a mental or physical process you must be aware of the most distinct or prominent object of meditation, making mental note as it is.

To summarise, be mindful of mental states, emotional states, and physical processes in sitting meditation. You have to begin with the rise and fall of the abdomen as soon as you have settled yourself on the seat. But if there are any other mental states, emotional states or physical processes which are more distinct than the abdominal movement then you observe the one which is the more pronounced. Note it as usual. After that object has disappeared you return to the primary object, that's the rise and fall of the abdomen, and note it as usual.

* The Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

First of the four foundations of mindfulness, the meditator must be aware of whatever arises within the body and mind as it really occurs. So while you are walking also you must be aware of the movement of the foot. When you walk, first of all you must stand still at the starting point of the walk. Stand still and first make a mental note, standing standing, about ten times, perceiving the inner posture of standing. Not the form of the body but the erect posture for standing. After that you walk, left step, right step. Then you note, left right, left right, being aware of the movement of the foot very precisely and attentively. Or you can note, stepping stepping stepping.

But your mind doesn't stay with the movement of the foot very long. It may stay with the movement of the foot say about one or two minutes, then the mind goes out, wanders about. But in the beginning of the practise you are not aware of the wandering mind. You think you are focussing your mind on the movement of the foot but actually the mind is going out still asleep. As soon as you know that the mind is wandering or thinking about something else then unconsciously you bring it back to the foot. Then you have a chance to note the wandering mind because the mind has already stayed with the movement of the foot. Then you have to note left right, left right. Labelling or seeing is not the important thing. What is important is to note the movement of the foot, to perceive the movement of the foot, to be aware of the movement of the foot, but without labelling or mental note.

Your mind may not at first be able to focus on the movement of the foot very precisely. That's why we use labelling as an instrument to help focus our mind on the movement of the foot. But when you have practised walking meditation for say about half an hour, you may be able to note that the mind is wandering when it goes out. As soon as you know the mind is wandering you must stop walking and make a mental note, wandering wandering, or thinking thinking, imagining imagining, as the case may be. After that you return to the movement of the foot and note, left right, left right.

When you are able to concentrate to a certain extent by being aware of the movement of the foot, make a mental note left and right, you should note two parts of the step: lifting parts and dropping parts. When you lift the foot note it, lifting. When you put it down note it, putting. In this way: lifting, putting, lifting, putting. Or lifting dropping, lifting dropping. When you note two parts of a step you need not label left and right. Left and right must be dropped when you make a mental note, lifting dropping, lifting dropping. Slowly not quickly. Gradually you must make your step slower and slower so that you can easily note the movement of the foot very well.

When you are well able to note lifting dropping then you can increase to one more object. Three parts of a step must be noted: lifting part, pushing part, dropping part. When you lift the foot note lifting. When you push it forward note pushing. When you drop it down you note dropping. In this way lifting, pushing, dropping; lifting pushing dropping.

If you find it difficult to perceive the movement of the foot because of labelling or making a mental note, then you should try without labelling or making a mental note. Just be aware of the movement of the foot: lifting movement, pushing forward movement, and dropping movement.

When you reach the other end of the walk you have to stand still and note your posture of standing, the posture of your body, standing standing about ten times. When you want to turn your body then note wanting wanting, then intending intending, then turning turning, very slowly. The movement of turning must be noted very slowly. Then again when you face the direction you came, then you stand still and note the standing posture ten times. Then walk again, lifting pushing dropping, and lifting pushing dropping. And so on.

If you are able to walk an hour it's better, because in walking meditation the movement of the foot, the object of meditation is very distinct, very clear to your mind so you can easily observe it. You can easily be aware of it. But as the principle of Vipassana meditation goes on, any mental states, emotional states or physical activities must be observed as they are so, except sitting and walking.

There are many actions and movements you have to do in your daily life. Those daily activities also must be noted such as stretching of the arms and bending of the arms, raising the hand, putting down the hand, and sitting down and rising from the seat. All the actions and movements you are doing must be observed as they really occur: while you are eating, while you are washing, while you are showering, while you are preparing your beds. There are many many activities involved in these actions. These activities must be noted, you must be aware of them. To be able to note these activities you have to deliberately slow down your actions and movements.

In the next talk I'll continue to explain to you the practical exercise on this meditation. May all of you rightly understand the technique of this meditation and practise intensively during this retreat and achieve your goal.

Talk 2

Instructions in Walking Meditation

Today I'll deal with the continuation of my talk on the practical exercise of Vipassana meditation or insight meditation. Yesterday I explained walking meditation very briefly. So today I think I should elaborate on the practise of walking meditation.

As to walking meditation the Buddha laid emphasis on awareness of the movement of the foot while you are walking. The commentary to the discourse explains how walking meditation should be practised. Yesterday I told you to be aware of the movement of the

foot and the step, first of all noting left and right then lifting dropping, and then lifting, pushing forward and dropping. Though you make a mental note left and right your mind must follow the whole process of the movement of the foot very attentively and closely. And to do that you have slow down your stepping. You must walk slowly so that you can be aware of the movement of the foot very closely and precisely.

For beginners, and also in the beginning of the practise for experienced meditators too, in every walking the first ten minutes should be spent noting left and right. But about after two days or two or three days meditation the experienced meditator should spend about five minutes noting left and right. You have to slow down your stepping. And for the beginner he should note left right, left right about ten minutes. After that he should note either two parts or three parts.

Here two parts means a step is noted in two parts. The **lifting part** and the **dropping part** of the step must be noted. So you have to note lifting dropping, lifting dropping. But if you think you are able to note three steps you can skip the noting of two steps and go straight to the noting of three parts. That means after you have noted the left and right for ten minutes you pick up three parts of a step: lifting pushing dropping, lifting pushing dropping. Awareness of two parts of a step is not very good because if you actually lift the foot and drop it down then you have to lift it from the same place and you have to put it down to the same place - because after you have lifted the foot actually you have to push it forward to a certain extent a certain distance, and then you put it down. Without noting the pushing movement after the lifting movement you have skipped one process of the pushing movement and then you note dropping. The middle part of the step is lost. So if you think you are able to note three parts you should note them as: lifting pushing dropping, lifting pushing dropping.

Your stepping must be short. The step should be about the length of a foot so that you can put your foot down very well and note it very precisely and closely. If your step is long, before you put your foot well on the ground or on the floor then unconsciously you have already lifted the heel of the other foot. Then you lose awareness of the lifting of the heel when you note lifting. That is because your step is long. So your step must not be long. It should be about the length of the foot so that you can concentrate your mind well on its movement very precisely, and also to have a clear experience of its movement. Then after you have put down your foot very well, established it in its place, you begin to lift the heel of the other foot. Then you can note it very well and you can be aware of the very beginning of the lifting of the heel of the other foot. So your stepping should be about the length of a foot, not longer than that, So you should be careful. Then when you drops your foot down then your foot touches the ground on the floor, the carpet, and you can note it touching. In this way you can note lifting, pushing, dropping, touching. Then when your foot touches the ground or the floor or the carpet you are to lift the other foot from the very beginning of the lifting of the heel. When you are about to lift the heel of the other foot you have to press the front floor a little bit. You must be aware of that pressing. After you have noted the pressure of the foot your mind goes to the other foot and note it as lifting, slowly. Then again lifting then pushing then putting down or dropping, touching, pressing. Lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing. But the

commentary said a step may be noted in six parts. When you lift the heel note, lifting; when you raise the toes note, raising. In this way, lifting, raising. Then pushing, dropping, touching, pressing. You'll have to slow down your step very well. If you do not slow the stepping you are not able to note these three parts of the step.

Here again I want to tell you that this Vipassana meditation is practised to realise body-mind processes and their true nature. So whatever you are aware of, bodily processes or mental processes, the aim of awareness is to realise them in their true nature. You should keep this in your mind when you practise this meditation. This meditation is not just for concentration but for realisation of mental physical processes too. That realisation enables the meditator to be free from all kinds of mental and physical sufferings and to live happily and blissfully. That realisation is called vipassana nana, insight knowledge. Insight knowledge leads a person to the enlightenment which destroys all kinds of suffering.

So every action is preceded by a mental process a wishing, wanting or intention. When you wish to lift the foot you do it. So lifting of the foot is preceded by wishing, or wanting or intention which are mental processes, mental phenomena. Not only lifting of the foot but also all other actions and movements are preceded by wishing, wanting or intention, mental processes. So if you are able to note this mental process - wishing, wanting or intention -- you come to realise the relationship between the movement of the foot and the mental process that's intention or wishing or wanting. To realise how these two processes - physical and mental processes of intention - are related to each other you have to attain deep concentration by being aware of the movement of the foot. And when you have realised how these two processes are related to each other you don't have any idea of a person who is walking, a being who is lifting the foot, a self who is pushing forward the foot. What you realise is that there's an intention of wishing, a mental process, which causes the movement of the foot to arise. Without intention or wishing or wanting lifting of the foot, the movement cannot be done. In this way you come to realise the law of cause and effect in your walking meditation.

So you have to note intending, but you can note wishing or wanting. Usually we instruct our yogis to note intending, lifting; intending, raising - raising of the toes; intending, pushing; intending, dropping; touching, intending, pressing. When you note touching it's not preceded by the intention, because as soon as you drop your foot to the ground it touches the ground whether it has intention or not. Actually the foot, a physical process, hasn't any intention to touch the ground. Even though it hasn't any intention, when you drop it down it touches the ground. So before touching you need not note intention because there's no intention before the touching sensation. So intending, dropping; touching; then intending, dropping; then touching; then intending, pressing. Again your mind goes to the other foot and notes intending, lifting; intending, raising; intending, pushing forward; intending, dropping; touching; intending, pressing, and so on.

As to the awareness of the movement of the foot, the commentary to the Pali text mentions how a meditator experiences or realises the movement of the foot through his personal or direct experience when he is practising walking meditation. But I need not

explain to you how the commentary mentions it because later on you will know yourself through your experience.

You should be careful not to look round here and there while you are walking. Once you look round the mind goes with your eye. Then your concentration is broken. If the mind doesn't stay with the movement of the foot, concentration is broken. So you have to control your mind. And also before you practise walking you should determine that, 'I won't look round here and there while I'm practising walking meditation. Though I may have a tendency or desire to look round I will note that desire or tendency until it has disappeared. After the desire or tendency has disappeared you won't look round. Then your concentration won't be broken since the mind will stay with the foot. So you should be careful to control your eyes. You must not look at the foot. If you do you feel tense on your neck or on your back because your head has to bend too much. So you have to keep your eyes looking at a place about four or five feet ahead of you. During walking meditation if your mind goes out you should note: going out going out, or wandering wandering. If you think about anything else then you note, thinking thinking, and so on. Whatever thought arises must be noted during your walking meditation. After the thought has disappeared you return to the primary object of noting: intending, lifting; intending, raising, intending, pushing; intending, dropping; touching; intending, pressing, and so on.

What I have now explain to you is how you can be aware of all the movements of the foot so that you can realise them in their true nature. But for the beginner you need not note all these six points or twelve objects of meditation. For beginners that's enough to note four or five objects. Say: intending, lifting, moving, dropping, touching. But your noting gradually increases.

First of all note left and right about ten minutes, then leave the two objects of lifting and dropping and go to noting of the three objects. Say, lifting moving dropping; lifting pushing dropping; about ten minutes. Then note intending, lifting, pushing, dropping; intending, lifting, pushing, dropping until the end of all your walking meditation. Then what is the result of the awareness of the movement of the foot? If you strive your best you will note it through your direct experience of the movement of the foot. Here because you do not get yet accustomed to concentrate the movement of the foot, sometimes you may feel headache or dizzy. Then you should stand still and note dizziness: dizzy dizzy dizzy, or headache headache, and so on. And if that feeling of dizziness has disappeared resume your walking and note as usual intending lifting pushing dropping and touching and so on. But wherever you go you must be aware of your step when you go to your room, when you go to the dining room, when you come from your room, when you come from the dining room. You must be aware of your step. At least left right, left right. If it is possible, lifting, pushing, dropping. You must not go anywhere unmindfully because this meditation needs continuity of mindfulness for the whole day so that your concentration becomes deeper and deeper, through which the insight knowledge or realisation of mental and physical processes arises. So you mustn't walk fast while you are in retreat. Wherever you go you must walk slowly and be mindful of your step very attentively.

Talk 3

Walking Meditation and the Six Primary Elements

Today I'll continue my discourse on the practical exercise of mindfulness meditation. Yesterday I dealt with how to practice walking meditation systematically and methodically. Even though you are treading on the right path leading to the cessation of all kinds of suffering, if your practice is not systematic and methodical your success will be delayed. So systematic practice is vitally needed for a meditator to achieve his goal.

In the same way sitting also should be systematic and methodical. If you can sit systematically then you can concentrate your mind very well in a short time. The Buddha prescribed a mode of sitting for meditation: sitting in a cross legged position, keeping the body erect, and also the neck and head in an upright position. In that way the body is supported. The eyes should be closed. The mind should be focussed on the area or the point of the body you should be aware of.

But for Westerners it's difficult to sit cross legged position systematically because they are not accustomed to sitting on the floor. They usually sit on chairs so they find it difficult to sit in a cross legged position on the floor comfortably. That's why they have to use a cushion or something like that. So for Westerners the mode of sitting mentioned by the Omniscient Buddha in the discourse is not good for their comfortable and diligent mindfulness and deep concentration. But if they try to sit in that cross legged position, gradually they can become accustomed to it and they can do it very well. Some of the meditators sit on their cushion and they bend their legs in a somewhat cross legged position. It's good for them to focus their mind on the abdominal movement because if they sit on the cushion they can keep their body in an upright position. The body rarely bends when they sit say for some ten or twenty minutes, because of their cushion.

But when they get painful sensations then unconsciously or consciously they change their position. When they change their position some of them sit with their knees upright. It's very awkward for them and also not suitable for practice of the Dhamma. They should not sit in a position with their knees keeping upright because it doesn't help them to concentrate their mind well on the object of meditation. It's not systematic sitting.

Another aspect of the practice is that when you feel a painful sensation to be unbearable you have a tendency to change position. You should be patient with the pain and note it as much as possible attentively and methodically, not to change instantly but you should proceed with mindfulness of the pain. Eventually if the painful sensation becomes unbearable you can change only once in a sitting. But for some who can sit an hour

without changing position it is not good to change the position in a sitting. Such yogis should not change their position. If the pain becomes unbearable then you should get up and practice walking meditation. That's better because when you have a change in the position then your concentration has been broken. Even though you continue to sit after changing your position you can't get deep concentration. So it's not very beneficial for you to change your position if you can sit an hour without changing it.

And in walking too, you should not walk only at ten minutes or fifteen minutes, for a short time. You should walk at least an hour if you can walk without any disturbance to your bodily processes. Only after that you should sit again for meditation. The most important point in walking is not to look round here and there. Naturally you have a tendency or desire to look round when you hear the sound of someone's voice, when you feel something is happening nearby or someone is coming towards you, and so on. But whenever you have a desire or tendency to look round, you should make a mental note of that desire or tendency as: desire, desire, desire, tendency, tendency, and so on. When that desire has disappeared you won't look round and you can resume your walking. Your concentration is still stable to a certain extent. It's not broken.

Yesterday I explained to you how a meditator can observe twelve parts of a step, including intention before every action as mentioned in the Commentary to the Pali text. But it depends on you how many of the actions you should note. You should watch some objects as comfortably as you feel. If you have to exert or endeavour your utmost to be aware of any number of objects uncomfortably, you should not do that. If you do that you feel tense on your neck or your back, and sometimes you feel a headache. Sometimes you feel dizzy because you have to strain too much to be aware of each part of the step. So it depends on you; you yourself know. Normally for a meditator it should be adequate to note four or five objects of a step comfortably without strains with your relaxation: intending, lifting, moving, dropping, or touching. If you are able to observe these four or five objects precisely and very attentively then you can attain a deep concentration on the movement of the foot.

To be aware of these four or five objects very precisely and attentively you have to slow down your stepping. Unless your step is slow you cannot catch each individual part of the step very well. It's indispensable for you to slow down your step so that you can note all these four or five objects very precisely and attentively. Now when you are able to note all these four objects very well, your concentration gradually becomes better and better. You can note intention very concentratedly. Then the lifting movement you can note with diligent mindfulness. Then the pushing movement and putting movement and touching sensation you can know very well without looking here and there. In this way when you practice walking meditation for about three or four days you can attain a deep concentration.

And as to walking meditation the Buddha said there are five benefits of walking:

(1) The first benefit is that you can walk on foot a very long journey, because you have practised walking.

(2) Then the second benefit is you will be perseverant with the strenuous effort in your practice. Because you see, it's the nature of a human being to stay still and sit idly, enjoying something. He doesn't want to walk or stand. He likes sitting better than straining and walking. In other words he is naturally lazy to walk so he would like to sit always. So if a person trained himself in walking for a very long time then because of his exertion he likes to walk. He is not reluctant to walk. That means he has the energy or effort to do something actively with alertness. Walking makes him active and alert. So whatever he does he puts the utmost effort in the doing of that thing. That's why the Buddha said, if you practise walking you become industrious, perseverant, with utmost effort.

(3) You yourself know when you are afraid of cholesterol in your body you do jogging every morning or every evening. Jogging is a sort of walking practise. When the time comes up you are not lazy to do jogging. That's because you have practised that jogging. That's what the Buddha said. One of the benefits of walking is the perseverant and diligent effort one can have.

(4) Then the fourth benefit of walking is healthiness. If a person practises walking he is healthier than the person who is lazy. By practising walking you can be healthy both mentally and physically. Mental health is much more important than physical health. Regarding healthiness, the Buddha said the food you have taken is easily digested. Because of the digestion you are healthy. That's the benefit of walking. After you have taken a lot of food into your stomach, if you lie down or if you sit it's somewhat difficult for you to digest it. After you have taken that much food, then if you walk the food is easily digested. So healthiness together with digestion is one of the benefits of walking.

If you are lazy you can't meditate. If you are lazy you do not come here for meditation. Because you are not lazy you come here to meditate. Yesterday when I explained how to practise walking meditation systematically, after the talk most of the yogis took an interest in walking and they practised it. Then at the time of the interview they told me, 'I enjoy it.' Why do you enjoy it? Because you like to be industrious and to be perseverant as the result of walking meditation.

(5) The most important benefit of walking, what the Buddha said in accordance with this discourse, is concentration. The Buddha said the concentration you have attained in walking meditation lasts very long. You can easily concentrate your mind on the movement of the foot in a short time when you take an interest in walking, and also do it strenuously, because in walking the object of meditation is more pronounced than in sitting.

In sitting the respiration or abdominal movement is not distinct to your mind. In the beginning of sitting you may find it and you may be able to note it very well: rising, falling, rising, falling. Sometimes it becomes irregular because you make too much effort in your noting of the abdominal movement so that it can be more distinct. But in walking you didn't have such a problem. In walking naturally the lifting movement, pushing

movement, dropping movement of the foot is very prominent, very distinct to your mind so that you can easily note it.

When the object of meditation is prominent or predominant then you can easily note it. You can easily watch it. Because you can easily watch it your mind becomes very quickly concentrated on it. Then that concentration becomes also deep so it will last very long. One of the benefits of walking is to attain a long lasting concentration of the mind. Naturally some of you practise walking meditation systematically and diligently so you have had some concentration of the mind which is somewhat deep, better than you have had in sitting meditation. You know it through your experience.

That's what the Buddha said, you can attain long lasting concentration by means of walking. So when you are aware of each individual movement of the foot, and sometimes the intention too, then the mind becomes gradually concentrated on the movement of the foot very well. And the more energetically you note the movement the more deep is the concentration of the mind. Then when concentration becomes deeper and deeper you feel your feet become light as they automatically lift, automatically push forward, automatically drop down. You come to realise it. Sometimes you get startled at the experience of this automatic lifting and pushing and dropping of the foot. and as soon as you feel it you say to yourself, 'Hah, what's that? Am I mad or not?' In this way you get startled at the unusual experience of the movement of the foot.

When I conducted a meditation retreat in England at the Manjusri Tibetan Monastery, the Manjusri Institute in northern England near the border of Scotland, one of the meditators had put much effort into his practise both sitting as well as walking, and awareness of the activities too. So after about four days' meditation he came to me and asked a question. 'Venerable Sir, my meditation is getting worse and worse,' he said. 'Now what happen to your meditation?' I asked him. Then he said, 'When I am walking one day, Venerable Sir, then gradually I am not aware of myself. The foot itself had lifted, and it itself pushed forward, and then dropped down by itself. There's no I or no me, no self, no myself. Sometimes though I control my foot, the foot doesn't stay with the ground. It lifted by itself. Sometimes it pushed forward very long. I couldn't control it. Then sometimes it's getting down by itself. So my meditation is getting worse and worse. What should I do?' Then eventually he said, 'I think I have gone mad.' Such an experience was very amazing.

This is a benefit of walking meditation. First of all he said, 'I don't know myself. I'm not aware of myself. I don't know my body, my leg.' That means the realisation of the movement of the foot. The movement of the foot has destroyed the idea of an 'I' or a 'you,' a 'self' or a 'soul,' a 'person' or 'being.' Here what he was realising was the impersonal nature of our bodily process called Anatta. No soul, non-ego, non-self nature of our bodily phenomena.

When he said, 'The foot is automatically lifted up by itself. It's automatically pushed forward by itself,' that means there's no person or no being, no self who lifted the foot, who pushed it forward, who dropped it down. It's the realisation of the impermanent nature of physical processes or physical phenomena: Anatta. Before he didn't realise the

physical process of the rising-falling movement and the other parts of the body in sitting, he realised the processes of rising, lifting movement, pushing movement, the falling movement of the phenomena as it really is. So he has destroyed the false idea of an I or a you, a person or a being, a self or a soul. Anatta.

It was very interesting. Not only this yogi but also many yogis in Burma experienced it in this way. And sometimes before you experience this stage of insight knowledge you feel you are walking on waves of the sea. Or you are standing on a boat which was floating on the waves of the sea. Sometimes you may feel you are walking on a heap of cotton. Sometimes you feel you are walking in the air. That is also one of the insight knowledge which penetrates into the true nature of material process, material phenomena.

In accordance with the Buddha's philosophy this so-called person is composed of six elements: the four material elements and the one mental element. Of the four physical, material elements the first one is the element of hardness and softness. We call it pathavi-dhatu. The second is the element of fluidity and coalition. We call it apo-dhatu in Pali. The third is the element of heat and cold, temperature. We call it tejo-dhatu. The fourth is the element of motion, movement, vibration, expansion and contraction. This is called vayo-dhatu in Pali.

These four primary material elements constitute the so-called bodily process. When you feel your body then you may have a sensation of hardness or softness. That is pathavi-dhatu. You may feel heat or cold. That's tejo-dhatu. You feel the nature of fluidity or coalition. That's apo-dhatu. You may feel motion, movement, vibration, supporting. This is vayo-dhatu, one element.

These four primary elements together with the other minor elements are composed as a material unit called the indestructible unit - Kalapa. These eight elements cannot be divided, cannot be destroyed even with the atomic bomb. You can divide the atom into say nucleus and proton and neutron and so on. But the tiniest detail of the atom consists of these four primary elements. So you can't divide it. You can't destroy it so it is called the unit of indestructibility - Avinibhoga-rupa in Pali. So when the innumerable number of these material units are composed then they become a body: a finger, a nail, a hair, and so on.

So, in between these units there's a space. That space is known as akasa-dhatu,. This is one of the six elements which constitutes the so-called bodily process.

Then the sixth one is the mental element. That is, mind, consciousness, mental processes, emotional processes. All these are called vinyana-dhatu, the mental element or mind element.

Normally we are not able to penetrate into these elements and realise them in their true nature. That's why we take these compounded elements for a personal being, an I or a you, because we can't divide. Our intellectual knowledge is not enough to penetrate into these elements, and realise them in their true nature. So we think this is a body, this is a

mind, this a man, this is a woman, this is a leg, this is a nose, this a hair. If we have penetrating insight knowledge through our vipassana meditation, insight meditation, then we can penetrate into these primary elements and know them and their nature and also their appearance and disappearance, and the nature of transitoriness of these elements.

So here when you practise walking meditation you feel that you are walking on a boat which is floating on the waves of the sea, or as though you were walking on the air, or as though you are walking on a heap of cotton. You are realising the specific nature or specific characteristic of the wind element vayo-dhatu. Vayo-dhatu, the wind element has movement, motion, supporting, vibrating as its specific characteristics, or individual characteristics.

Normally we do not realise it. But when we watch the movement of the foot while we are walking very closely, attentively and precisely, then our concentration becomes deeper and deeper. Then, because of deep concentration the insight knowledge or experiential knowing becomes penetrating and sharp. So that penetrating insight realises the process of movement and its specific characteristics of movement, motion, vibrating and supporting. So we feel we are walking on the air, or we are standing on the boat, or on the waves of the sea. Because the waves of the sea are always moving.

Then, gradually our concentration becomes deeper. You will feel the specific characteristics of the wind element in that way. At that time you very often feel you are not yourself. Here 'you are not yourself' means you are not mad. You are not aware of your body. You are not aware of yourself. What you are here realising is just movement. A great deal of movement which is going on of its own accord. So in this way you have destroyed the idea of a personal being, a self or a soul by means of the walking meditation.

But here you should be careful not to expect any unusual experiences when you are walking. When you expect anything, the expectation disturbs your concentration. Then the concentration becomes weak. Then you can't experience anything new. So you mustn't expect anything. But what I have explained to you is that your noting of the movement of the foot has such and such a benefit you can experience.

So what you should do is just be mindful of what is happening to your body and mind, that's all. Except for mindfulness you mustn't do anything else. You mustn't expect anything, you mustn't be curious or inquisitive about anything. But what you should do is be mindful of what's happening. If you have expectation, that expectation must be aware of expecting. If you have curiosity, curiosity must be aware of curiosity, and so on until it has disappeared. You mustn't allow them to disturb your concentration and mindfulness. So what you should do is just be mindful while you are walking, while you are sitting, while you are lined up, while you are eating, while you are dressing, while you are showering, whatever you are doing. What you should do is just be mindful of it as it is, that's all.

In the time of the Buddha there was a bikkhuni named Patajara. Bikkhuni is a woman monk. This Patajara was the daughter of a wealthy person. Say a billionaire, not a millionaire. But when she was grown up she married a servant, so she had to go to the other village and stay there because she was afraid of their parents. Then she had a great deal of trouble because she was a human being. Human beings are surrounded by many sufferings, dukkha. Her husband died. Her two sons and her parents also died. Her half brothers died. The house of Patajara collapsed in a storm due to the heavy rain. So she was mad because of her anxiety, sorrow, worry, lamentation, and despair and she roamed in the city.

But one day the Buddha summoned her to the audience in the monastery of Jetavana who listened to the Buddha's sermon. The Omniscient Buddha knew that she was Patajara and also that her mental faculties were ripe for the attainment of enlightenment. So the Buddha said to her, 'Oh beloved sister, please be careful, please come round.' When she heard what the Buddha said she came round. Her mind became normal. Then the Omniscient Buddha told her to sit and listen to the sermon.

While she was listening to Dhamma the Buddha explained to the audience the Four Noble Truths. The first is the truth of suffering, Dukkha. The second is the Truth of the Cause of Suffering, Samudaya. The third is the truth of the Cessation of Suffering, Nirodha. Then the fourth is the Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. That is Mindfulness and Meditation. When the Buddha explained the truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering, and how to practise mindfulness and meditation -- when anyone wants to get rid of all kinds of suffering -- then Patajara with a great deal of suffering wanted to get rid of it.

So while listening to Dhamma she tried to be mindful of what is happening to her body and mind, and also consciousness, the hearing. In this way she gradually concentrated her mind very well. And when she had attained a deep concentration her insight knowledge became penetrating and realised all mental and physical phenomena in their true nature. And eventually she attained the four stages of enlightenment which completely uprooted all mental defilements together with their potentialities. Then she lived happily and peacefully without any suffering, stress or worries, sorrows and lamentation. She became free from all kinds of mental and physical suffering.

But what I should tell you is this woman attained the first stage of enlightenment while she was listening to Dhamma and after that she asked the Buddha for ordination as a Bikkhuni. So the Buddha told the other Bikkhunis to ordain her. After he ordained her as a Bikkhuni she proceeded with her practise of mindfulness and meditation.

And one day at night she practised walking meditation the whole night. Then because of her walking meditation her concentration became deeper and deeper and also stable and firm. When she had realised the viability of her concentration she went to her room and sat for meditation. When she approached her bed she noted all activities: her standing, standing, and bending bending, then turning, turning, when you sit down on the bed, sitting down, sitting down. Then after she had settled herself on the seat she took a small

stick and stretching her arm, reached her arm to the lamp which was flaming. Then with that stick she noticed stretching, stretching. She then pressed the flame with the stick, pressing, pressing, pressing. Then the flame submerged into the oil and it was extinguished. As soon as the flame had submerged into the oil she attained three other higher stages of enlightenment, and all defilement was destroyed by this enlightenment. She became Arahant and lived in peace and happiness. Here, because of deep concentration she attained from walking meditation, she could be aware of all daily activities, and that awareness made her attain to the other higher stages of enlightenment which totally destroy all defilements.

Talk 4

Practical Exercises, Mental Defilements, Noble Eightfold Path

Today we continue the discourses on practical exercises of Mindfulness meditation. Yesterday I explained systematic walking and also systematic sitting.

Sometimes when you sit for meditation, after you have meditated about fifteen or twenty minutes you have a desire to change your position because of the severity of the painful sensation or any mental distraction. When you know that it's not good to change your position and your sitting then you do not change it. But though you do not change your position your hands are moving here and there. Sometimes the hand touches the face or the head. Without any sensation of itching you may rub the face or the hand. While your hand is placed in the lap, when you feel restless or when you feel severe pain, then you do not change the position but the hand lifted itself and then touched the knee, and so on.

So what I mean is that in systematic sitting for meditation you mustn't move even the hands. You should sit like a statue so that your concentration doesn't break but becomes deep and stable. When you move your hand from one place to another then the mind goes with the hand and concentration breaks. So you mustn't move the hand. So when you sit for meditation please be careful. You must remind yourself of this statue. [Say to yourself]: I must sit like a statue of the Buddha, here.

Unconsciously you moved your hand. But even when we say it's an unconscious movement, actually your mind goes with the hand. Without intention to move, you don't move. Because you have intention to move, you do move. That one thing - wishing, intention - is mental process. The concentration of the mind is also mental process. And when you move your hand then your mind goes with the hand and concentration breaks. So please be careful not to move even your hands from one place to another.

Then in walking meditation the most important thing is not to look round here and there. Once you look round, then the mind goes with the eye and concentration breaks. You have to control your eyes not to look round. The best way to control your eyes is noting the desire to look round. Without desire or tendencies you won't look round here and there. Because of the desire to look round you do it. So that desire or tendency must be noted until it has disappeared. When the desire has disappeared, you won't look round. So please be careful to watch the desire to look round. If the desire is watched and if the desire's stopped you won't look round and your concentration doesn't break.

In walking meditation yesterday I explained to you how you experienced the movement of the foot when your concentration's good enough. But here what I want to tell you is there are two levels of understanding, right understanding of the physical process and mental process.

First of all, what you should know is that there are five mental faculties a yogi must be possessed of. The first one is **saddha**. Saddha is Pali; sradha is Sanskrit. It means faith or confidence of belief. Here faith is not blind faith. It is faith through right understanding of the truth. Because you have some knowledge of the truth then you believe in it. That belief is known as saddha, faith.

So faith through right understanding is one of the mental faculties a yogi must possess. Without faith or belief in the Dhamma or the truth you do not follow it, you do not practise it. Because you have some degree of faith or belief in the truth, you follow it, you practise it. So faith or confidence of belief in the Dhamma is a very important mental factor to enable a meditator to practise systematic meditation strenuously. Without firm or strong faith in Dhamma or the truth you won't practise any Dhamma.

The second one is **viriya**, in Pali. Viriya is effort or energy. When you believe in any Dhamma you make enough effort to practise it or follow it. So faith or belief or confidence is the cause, strenuous effort is the effect. When you put enough effort into your practise you will be able to be mindful of each and every activity of your body and mind for the whole day. When you can be mindful of all mental and physical phenomena in nature, then mindfulness becomes continuous, constant and powerful. Then here viriya, effort or energy, is the cause mindfulness is effect.

Mindfulness is called **sati**. Because of strenuous effort mindfulness becomes continuous, constant and powerful. When sati, mindfulness, becomes constant and powerful then your mind is well concentrated on any mental process or physical process which is observed. Unless mindfulness is continuous and powerful you won't gain any deep concentration. Only when mindfulness becomes continuous and constant and powerful then your concentration becomes better and better, deeper and deeper.

Then concentration is called **samadhi** in Pali. The Lord Buddha said, 'Oh bikkhus, cultivate concentration of the mind. The mind which is concentrated gives rise to realisation of phenomena.' Another word: cultivate the concentration of the mind. One who is well concentrated realises the phenomenon as it really is. That's what the Buddha

said. Here the concentration is the cause and realisation or right understanding is effect. Without deep concentration you are not able to realise any phenomena and their true nature as they really are.

So samadhi, concentration, is the cause, realisation or right understanding, **pannya**, is effect. Pannya is Pali. Here panna means right understanding of mental and physical phenomena. Pannya is translated into wisdom, insight, enlightenment. So here what we need in this context, panna means penetrating knowledge, right understanding of body-mind processes. Without deep concentration you are not able to rightly understand any mental or physical phenomena and their true nature. Only if your mind is concentrated to a larger extent, then you are able to rightly understand body-mind processes and their true nature. Here samadhi, concentration, is the cause, panna, right understanding or penetrating insight, is effect.

When bodily and mental processes are fully realised then you don't have any mental defilements such as greed, desire, craving, attachment, hatred, ill-will, anger, ignorance, jealousy, false view, and so on. These are called mental defilements because when the mind is full of these undesirable mental or emotional states the mind gets defiled. They are called kilesas in Pali, in Sanskrit klayasas and are translated as mental defilements or mental impurities. So long as you have any of these mental defilements in your mind you are sure to suffer.

Suppose you are angry with someone or with something. That anger is mental defilement. When you get angry your mind gets defiled, and you suffer because of that anger. When you have anger you get suffering. Do you agree with me on this point? Then should you have or should you abandon it? Should you have the anger or should you welcome the anger?

Pali for anger is dosa. But dosa has two aspects, the dosa which is increasing and the dosa which is decreasing. So when you are angry with someone or something your dosa is progressive dosa. And again when you are unhappy or when you are dejected or depressed that state of mind is also called dosa. This dosa is depressive dosa. What I mean is whether you have anger or depression or unhappiness your mind is full of dosa, defilement. Then you are unhappy. You get a great deal of suffering. That's why we called dosa a mental defilement, or mental impurity.

So then we take another mental state, lobha. Lobha is Pali. It has very wide meaning. It means desire, greed, acquiring, lust, attachment. All the senses of these words are covered by that of lobha. So when we want to say lobha we use the word attachment as the equivalent to lobha, because attachment is an English word which covers all the senses of desire, craving, lust, greed, and so on.

When you have lobha you are sure to suffer. Say when you are greedy to be wealthy then you have to do many works to earn a great deal of money and you get a great deal of dukkha suffering. That lobha, greed, is the cause of suffering. If you are attached to your wealth you would have a great deal of suffering. Because when you are attached to your

wealth you try to maintain it, or you try to make it double. Then that attachment to your wealth is because of suffering, dukkha. If you are attached to your wealth you'll protect yourself from thieves, or robbery, undesirable relatives, especially sons and daughters. Then you have dukkha, suffering. The cause of suffering or dukkha is attachment. Lobha. Even if you are attached to your good experiences and meditation it's dukkha.

Meditation is the thing which you should experience, not the thing which you are attached to. If you are attached to your good experiences you had yesterday, today if your concentration is poor you get restless because you want to re-experience those good things you had yesterday. The more effort you put in and your noting, then the more distractions you have, and the more restless you become. Then the more suffering, the more dukkha you have. That is not because of meditational experience but because of attachment to it. That's why the Buddha said attachment is samodhyasacca. Samodhya is the cause or the origin, sacca is the truth. Samodhyasacca means the truth of the cause of suffering. So attachment is the cause of suffering.

This lobha, attachment, is also one of the mental defilements which is because of suffering, dukkha. Then should you be attached to anyone or anything? If you are attached to anyone or anything, what would happen to you? Yes, you would be surrounded by a great deal of suffering. When you are attached to your beloved friend, then when he gets into any trouble you feel sorry and unhappy. That sorrow and unhappiness, is it desirable or undesirable. Then it's dukkha, yes. Where does the dukkha come from? It comes from attachment to your friend.

Then if you are attached to your son or daughter or parent then you have more dukkha. The result of the attachment is dukkha. So whatever you are attached to or whoever you are attached to, it's sure you suffer, you have dukkha. Then should you have the attachment or shouldn't you have attachment? No. Yes, why? Because you are afraid of dukkha. Everyone, including me, is afraid of dukkha.

Then if we are afraid of dukkha what should we do? We should destroy the cause of dukkha, the attachment. If we are able to destroy attachment, the cause of dukkha, suffering, then there won't arise any dukkha at all. Then we are free from dukkha. The attachment is a mental defilement which must be destroyed by one who wants to get free from all kinds of dukkha. When the attachment has been completely destroyed you won't have any dukkha at all.

Say all of you are working at home or at the office or at the company or any place. Though you come here to meditate sometimes your mind goes back to work. Why? Because you are attached to it. When you have less attachment to the work you have less dukkha. When you have a great attachment to your work you have a great deal of dukkha even though you are meditating. So attachment is the cause of suffering. The Buddha said it is the second truth, the truth of the cause of suffering, dukkha.

You know there are the **Four Noble Truths**. The first truth is the Noble Truth of Suffering, dukkha. The second is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering, dukkha, attachment. The third is the Truth of the Cessation of Dukkha, suffering.

Do you want to destroy dukkha or not? When you have dukkha you're suffering. You are afraid of suffering so you want to destroy dukkha. If you want to exterminate this dukkha what should you do? You have to eradicate the attachment. You have to uproot attachment, the cause of dukkha. When attachment has been destroyed then your dukkha, suffering ceases to exist. Then you have attained the state of the cessation of suffering. This State of Cessation of Suffering is called Nibbana. This is the Third Truth, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

Then the fourth one is the Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering. That means if you follow this Way then you'll be able to destroy all kinds of mental defilement and there won't arise any dukkha at all. The Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering is called Magga-sacca, in Pali. The third one is called Nirodha-sacca, the truth of the cessation of suffering.

Have you heard of the way leading to the cessation of suffering? The **Noble Eight-fold Path**. You may not have some knowledge of this Noble Eight-fold Path theoretically, but practically you have it. This noting of your bodily-mental process comprises the Noble Eight-fold Path. When you know rising, falling, rising, falling. When you watch, pain, pain. When you are aware of the movement of the foot, lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, and so on. When you are aware of a bending movement, stretching of the arms, sitting down and rising from the seat. All this awareness or mindfulness or noting consists of the Noble Eight-fold Path.

So this is the way you are following which leads you to the cessation of suffering. This is the fourth truth. And when you note the lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement, touching sensation of the foot, then you have to make a mental effort to be aware of the movement. That mental effort or energy is one of the eight mental factors of the noble path. It's called Right Effort, or Right Energy. Samma-vayama.

Because of that right effort you are aware of the lifting movement, pushing movement, dropping movement of the foot. That awareness is sammasati. Right Mindfulness. When you are aware of the movement of the foot precisely and attentively your mind is concentrated on the movement momentarily. That concentration is known as samma samadhi, Right Concentration. Why is it right? Because it causes the right insight, penetrating insight, to arise. Or because it's the cause of realisation of the mental and physical phenomena and their true nature, and eradication of all mental defilements. So that samadhi, is samma-samadhi, right concentration.

Though you put enough effort in the practise, in the noting, or in awareness, the mind doesn't stay with the object always. Sometimes the mind goes out, wanders. Then one of the mental factors which arises together with mindfulness directs the mind to the object

of meditation, to the movement of the foot. That mental factor is called Right Thought, samma-sankhappa.

In this way, whenever you observe the movement of the foot these four mental factors are working on the movement and gradually right concentration becomes deeper and deeper. Then you come to realise the movement of the foot without conscious awareness of your bodily form or yourself. When you are realising these movements very clearly you are not aware of yourself, your body. What you are realising at that moment is just movement. Then with the deeper concentration you come to the higher state of insight which penetrates into the movement and realises its rising and passing away.

When you note the lifting movement then you know you come to realise a series of many broken movements one after another, arising and passing away. Before you come to realise this state you think the movement is only one and the same. Before that you think, my foot, I lifted, I am pushing it forward, I dropped it down. There you have I or me. You think, who does lifting, pushing, dropping, and so on. But when you are able to realise a series of broken movements rising and passing away one after another, then you don't have that idea of I or you, myself or a person, a being.

What you are understanding is a series of broken movements which are arising and passing away in an ever-changing process. Then that realisation or that right understanding destroys the false idea of an I or a you, a person, a being, which is the seat of all kinds of mental defilement. When you have done with this false idea of a person there won't arise any defilement because mental defilements arise depending on this false idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul. When that idea has been exterminated you won't have any mental defilement, because its seat has been destroyed. Then when you do not have mental defilements there won't arise any suffering at all.

So you have attained the cessation of suffering by way of cultivating the Noble Eight-fold Path by being aware of the movement of your foot. If you are able to realise, `this is not me, this is not my foot, this is just a natural process of movement which is rising and passing away,` that understanding is Right Understanding, samma-ditthi, one of the eight mental factors of the Noble Path.

Then here you have developed the five mental factors. The first one is mental effort, Right Effort, samma-vayama. The second is awareness or mindfulness, Right Mindfulness, samma-sati, The third is samadhi, Right Concentration. The fourth is samma- sankhappa, Right Thought. The fifth is Right Understanding, samma- ditthi. Here samma ditthi, Right Understanding is the most important factor because it penetrates into the true nature of body-mind processes and their true nature, as they really are.

So you have cultivated five mental factors of the Noble Path. The Noble Path consists of eight factors. The other three are samma- vaca, Right Speech, samma-kammanta, Right Deed, and samma ajiva, Right Livelihood. Right Speech here means abstention from unwholesome or immoral speech. That's samma-vaca. Samma-Kammanta means

abstention from unwholesome or immoral deeds or actions. Samma-ajiva means abstention from unwholesome livelihoods.

When you are meditating and concentrating your mind very well on the object of meditation, the movement of the foot, do you abstain from bad speech or right speech? You are abstaining from immoral speech. Then you have samma vaca, Right Speech. And also abstaining from immoral deeds or actions. Then you have samma kammanda, Right Deed. Then when you are meditating having this Right Understanding do you take what's not given by the owner? Then are you killing some living being? No. And you are not smuggling goods? So abstention from bad livelihood.

These three - samma-vaca, samma-kammanta, samma-ajiva - Right Speech, Right Deed, Right Livelihood - are connected with moral conduct, precepts. When you fully observe the precepts you have these three. So when you note or are mindful of the movement of the foot how many mental factors you have? Eight. This eight is the Noble Eight-fold Path. When you have fully developed this Noble Eight-fold Path you are sure to destroy those mental defilements which are the causes of suffering beginning with attachment. Then you are free from all kinds of suffering.

First of all I would like to explain how you can make powerful and strong the five mental faculties. The first is saddha, faith. The second is viriya, effort or energy. The third is mindfulness. The fourth is concentration. The fifth is right understanding, panna. Because I wanted to explain to you how you can develop right understanding my talk went astray.

Please remember these five mental factors are very important for the yogi because he must be endowed with all of them. The first, saddha, faith; the second, viriya, effort or energy; the third, sati, mindfulness; the fourth, samadhi, concentration; the fifth, panna, right understanding. You have all of these five but sometimes it's weak. Sometimes it's strong. So you have to make it strong all the time. May all of you have these five mental factors stronger and stronger and achieve your goal.

Talk 5

The Way of Mindfulness

Yesterday I explained briefly the five mental faculties of meditators. Of these five mental faculties the last one, panna, wisdom, realisation or right understanding is the predominant factor of the five. So you have to practise insight meditation, vipassana meditation in order to rightly understand of mentality and physicality. When you have

rightly understood mental and physical processes as they really are you'll be able to do away with mental defilements which are the causes of suffering. That's why you have to develop your mindfulness, which is the cause of deep concentration on which right understanding or insight knowledge is built up.

So to do right understanding, bodily processes and material processes as they really are, you need deep concentration of the mind. To gain deep concentration of the mind you need continuous powerful and diligent mindfulness. To have continuous and constant mindfulness you need strenuous effort in your practise, intensively so that your mindfulness becomes continuous and constant for the whole day.

And to attain the continuity of mindfulness for the whole day you have to not only practise sitting meditation and walking meditation, but also awareness of our daily activities. Because aside from the times for sitting and walking there are times when you are doing your daily activities such as washing or showering, taking meals, drinking, and laundering, and also preparing your bed at bed time. So if you apply this mindfulness only to sitting and working, if you do not apply it to the other general activities of the day, then your mindfulness is not continuous and constant. It doesn't become powerful and sharp and diligent.

Mindfulness becomes continuous, constant and uninterrupted only when you make proper effort and awareness of your daily activities, and it becomes sharp. Only when mindfulness becomes continuous and constant does your mind become well concentrated on any mental or physical object which is observed. That concentration gives rise to right understanding or insight knowledge which penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. That's why it's indispensable for a meditator to put a reasonable effort into awareness of daily activities, as much as possible.

To be aware of your general activities of the day you have to slow down all actions and movements, all activities. Then you can be aware of almost all daily activities in more and more detail. Though you do these general activities of the day normally, in a normal pace, you can be aware of them but not in detail. But you can do it generally. General awareness is not so much powerful. It doesn't make your mindfulness continuous and constant, uninterrupted.

So meditators need to have detailed mindfulness of daily activities as much as possible, slowing down actions and movement as much as possible. Only then does mindfulness become continuous and constant and gives rise to deep concentration of the mind which is the cause of right understanding. That is why the Lord Buddha dealt with a separate chapter on awareness of daily activities in his discourse of the four foundations of mindfulness, the **Mahsatipatthana sutta**.

Without awareness of daily activities you can't concentrate your mind very well or deeply. When concentration's not deep enough there won't arise any insight knowledge or experiencing knowledge which penetrates into the intrinsic nature of mental and physical

phenomena. That's why we should try to be aware of more daily activities in more detail day by day.

So when you are successful in noting all these activities of the day in more and more detail, the mindfulness becomes constant and powerful, and concentration becomes deeper and deeper. Then panna or wisdom or right understanding or insight knowledge becomes penetrating and realises body-mind processes and two levels of understanding. Here those meditators who have obtained deep concentration realise the bodily processes of nama and rupa, mentality and mind, and two levels of understanding.

The first one is understanding of the specific or individual characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. The second one is understanding of general or common characteristics of mental and physical phenomena.

When you have understood the specific characteristics of mental and physical phenomena then you can exterminate the false idea of a person, a being, an I or a you, a self or a soul, which is the seat of all mental defilements and hindrances. Then what are the specific characteristics of mental and physical phenomena; what are the individual characteristics of mental and physical phenomena? As to mental phenomena, when you note rising, falling of the abdomen; or lifting, pushing, dropping of the foot; or bending of the arms, stretching of the arms, then there's a mental process that knows the object, rising, falling movement, lifting, pushing, dropping movement, bending, stretching movement of the arm.

The phenomenon which knows the object is called chitta. Chitta is sometimes translated into consciousness but in other times into mind. Whether it's translated into consciousness or mind its characteristic is cognising the characteristic instead of cognising the object or perceiving the object. So, cognising or perceiving of the object is the individual characteristic of **citta** or consciousness or mind. When you note rising, falling, rising, falling; or sitting, touching, sitting, touching; when your mindfulness becomes sharp and concentration becomes deep, then you come to distinguish between the object and the subject. The object is the rising and falling movement; the subject is the mind that notes it or cognises it or knows it or perceives it. You can differentiate between the object physical process and the subject mental process that knows it.

When concentration becomes deeper what you are realising is this dual process of mental and physical phenomena. Then you come to rightly understand that the rising movement is one process, the mind that knows it is the other process. There are two processes which are arising at the same moment. The falling movement is one process; the mind that cognises it is the other process. Then again you come to realise the rising movement hasn't any power to know any object. The same with the falling movement. Falling movement hasn't any ability to know or to perceive any object. But the mind that knows it has the ability of perceiving the object, of cognising the object. In this way you come to differentiate between nama and rupa, mental phenomena and physical phenomena.

Then here you come to know that so-called opposing is composed of physical processes and mental processes. So-called opposing is nothing but natural processes of mental and physical phenomena. When you have rightly understood in this way you don't have in your mind the false idea of opposing being, an I or a you, a self or a soul, because what you are realising is the dual process of mental and physical phenomena.

There, when you come to realise the noting mind is able to perceive the object or cognise the object, rising movement or falling; or lifting movement, pushing movement and dropping movement. But physical process hasn't any ability to perceive or to cognise anything. This understanding is that of specific or individual characteristics of the mind or the consciousness by rightly understanding the mind and its characteristics and also the physical process and its characteristics. Then you have destroyed the idea of a person, a being, an I or a you. That means when distinguishing physical processes from that of mind or mentality you don't identify mental processes, that's noting mind with yourself or your person. Then you have no idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul.

In the same way you do not identify physical processes, that's a rising and falling movement of the abdomen, with yourself or your person. You know separately mental process is one thing, physical process that the mind notes is the other. Neither mental process is a person or being. A physical process is also not a being, a person, a self or a soul. In this way you come to destroy the false idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul. It's called sakkaya-ditthi, atta-ditthi.

Sakkaya-ditthi, atta-ditthi, the false idea of a self, a soul, a person or being is the seat of all mental defilements such as desire, grieving, greed, lust, hatred, anger, ill-will, ignorance, conceit, jealousy, and so on. All these mental defilements arise dependent on the idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul. This false idea of a person, a being, a self or a soul, sakkaya-ditthi, atta-ditthi, is the seat of all mental defilements which are the causes of suffering, dukkha.

When you consider these mental and physical processes theoretically, you can have some knowledge of mental and physical processes which are neither a person nor a being, neither a self nor a soul. So when you are able to watch the rising and falling movement or lifting movement, pushing and dropping movement of the foot, or bending of the arm or stretching of the arm, you are able to know clearly or perceive there's a rising movement of the abdomen and there's a falling movement of the abdomen.

So the mind that knows these objects, when you can differentiate between the rising and falling movement and the mind that knows it you can answer if someone asks you whether the mind that knows is a person or the process of a rising and falling movement, a person or being. That question can be very easily answered by you when you differentiate between the rising and falling movement of the abdomen and the mind that notes it.

Shall I put a question to you about this aspect of Dhamma? Which is a person or a being, a self, the rising or falling movement or the mind that notes it? The rising movement is

not a person. Then is the falling movement a person or a self? No. Then is the mind that notes it a person or a self or a soul. No. Then what are they? They are natural processes. The rising movement is a natural process of material phenomena. The falling movement is also a natural process of physical phenomena. The mind that notes, knows it, is a natural process of mental phenomena. All these three are natural processes. No part of them is a person, a being or a self.

Then during your contemplation of the rising and falling movement of the abdomen do you find any person or being, self or soul? No. Then, what's the thing you find? A natural process of mentality and physicality. But before we are able to realise this dual process of mentality and physicality we take the mind for a person, a being, an I or a you. I note, I know. Who knows? Who has the ability of perceiving or knowing the object? A person or a self has the ability of knowing or perceiving an object. Is it right? No. Then what has that ability? The mind has the ability of knowing, cognising the object.

Then is the mind a person, a being? No. But before we are able to differentiate between these two processes of mentality and physicality we take the mind to be a person, a being because we take, I know or you know. It applies to a person, but actually there is no person, no being, no self who knows the object. Only the mind has the ability of knowing or cognising the object.

When we clearly see the two processes of mental and physical phenomena in our practise of insight meditation we don't take mental processes to be a person. We don't take physical processes to be a person because we know that the physical is just the natural process of materiality. Mental process is just the natural process of mentality. Neither of them are a person, a being, an I or a you.

To rightly understand this dual process as just the natural processes of mentality and physicality what we need is deep concentration. Unless your mind is well concentrated on any mental or physical object which is observed, you are unable to realise in this way. So deep concentration of mind is required to rightly understand this dual process of mental and physical phenomena and their true nature. Then after entering into deep concentration what should we do? And what do we need? To obtain deep concentration of the mind what do we need? Mindfulness. Sparse mindfulness. Continuous mindfulness. Continuous constant uninterrupted mindfulness is the most important factor to obtain deep concentration and right understanding of phenomena.

If we need continuous and constant mindfulness what should we do? Should we speak to each other or should we lie down and sleep? What should we do? Yes. Note all activities in sitting, in walking, and doing daily activities. These are three aspects of this practise. When you lay stress on only sitting and walking does your mindfulness become continuous or constant? No. Then what should we do to have continuous and constant mindfulness? clearly. Be aware of all actions and movements for the whole day.

That's why the Lord Buddha teaches us in a separate chapter on awareness of all daily activities in the Maha-satipatthana Sutta. It's called sampajanna-papa. Sampajanna means

clear comprehension or full awareness. Papa here means the chapter. There the Buddha said, 'When you go forward you must be mindful of it, as it is. When you go backward you must be mindful of it as it is.'

Sometimes when you come to the interview room you mindfully come there, you walk left, right or lifting, pushing, dropping. But when you have interview you get up and walk out unmindfully. Is it in conformity to the Buddha's teaching? When you go forward you should be mindful of it. When you go backward you should be mindful of it.

'When you look straight you should be mindful of it. When you look aside you should be mindful of it.' And did you watch when you looked at something? No. That's what Buddha said. When you look at something you note looking, looking, then seeing, seeing. After looking you must note seeing. Why? When you look at something don't you see it? Maybe you're blind. A blind man cannot see even though he looks at something. You see the Buddha said, 'When you walk to certain distance you must be as if you are blind. You must be as if you are deaf.' That means a blind man cannot see anything when he walks to a destination. If he cannot see anything, in that case does he have any defilement in his mind as to the visible thing? No, because he doesn't see it.

The Buddha said, 'When you walk to a destination you must be like a blind man.' How? When you look at something you note looking, looking, looking, seeing, seeing, seeing, seeing. If you are noting of seeing and looking it is constant and powerful. You can't differentiate the visible thing, whether it's good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant. You don't have any idea of the visible thing which is looked at by you and seen by you. Why? Because of mindfulness. Seeing, seeing, seeing, looking, looking, looking, looking.

The same with hearing. When you hear some sound constantly and persistently note hearing, hearing, hearing, hearing, hearing, hearing. When that noting becomes powerful then you do not know what you are hearing. Or you do not differentiate between pleasantness and unpleasantness of the things which hurt, because of mindfulness. Then you don't have any defilement in your mind. You are like a deaf person or a blind person.

So when you want to be like a blind or deaf person what should you do? Note. Be mindful of what you are hearing and of what you are looking and seeing. Make a mental note as looking, looking, seeing, seeing, hearing, hearing, and so on.

That means at that moment it seems that there are two processes of mentality. One process is the process of seeing. The other process is the process for noting it. And the two processes are arising in the same way, you think. Actually the two minds don't arise at the same moment, but arising and passing away of mentality is so swift and so instant that you cannot differentiate the previous mind and the following mind. They become continuous. So you think at the same moment you have the process of looking and the process of noting it. When the process of looking and seeing becomes powerful the process of noting becomes weak. Then you can see the visible object, that's something, very clearly, and you get the idea of good or bad about this object.

When you take the object to be good then you feel pleasant about it. When you take the object to be bad you feel unpleasant about it. When you feel pleasant about this object then there arises a desire to have it. Desire, then attachment, then craving arises because you take it to be pleasant. And when you take that object to be unpleasant then you get aversion, dosa. Aversion is also defilement. Attachment, desire is also defilement, impurities of mind. Then which is better? Is aversion better or is desire better? Neither is better. Then either of these may be good. Yes, neither is it good. Why are these aversions and desires bad? Because they are dukkha. When you have aversion it is dukkha. When you have desire it is dukkha. When you have attachment it is dukkha. So these defilements are bad, disadvantages.

So if you want to feel sukkha, if you want to live in sukkha or happiness and peace, what you should do is overcome or remove these mental defilements which are dukkha and the causes of dukkha, suffering. That's why the Buddha teaches that when you look at something note looking, looking, seeing, seeing, so that your consciousness of seeing doesn't have time enough to analyse that object. If the consciousness of seeing has time enough to analyse the object then that consciousness will know pleasantness or unpleasantness of the object.

So as not to have enough time to analyse this object, what you should do? Note. Note seeing, seeing, or looking, looking. When a person is walking on the road very steadily then he can reach the destination in a short time. But if someone goes to him and knocks his leg with a stick what would happen to him? He couldn't walk properly and steadily. Sometimes he may fall. Then again he gets up again and walks. Could he reach his destination in a short time? No. In the same way is consciousness here. Looking is like a person who walks to a destination. The noting mind is like a person who knocks or who hits it with a stick. You follow this simile? That's the way.

So when you look at something note looking, looking, looking. When you see it note seeing, seeing, seeing, seeing, seeing constantly and persistently and energetically. When your noting is not energetic then consciousness of seeing becomes powerful and overwhelms this noting. Then that consciousness will think about or analyse that object which is seen and it will come to feel pleasant or unpleasant about the object. When the noting mind notes seeing, seeing, seeing, seeing, looking, looking, looking, the consciousness of seeing doesn't have enough time to think about the object or analyse it because it's weak. Why is it weak? Because of knocking or striking by the noting mind.

So, when you note seeing, seeing, looking, looking, the consciousness of seeing becomes gradually weak because of the noting mind. Then it is not able to analyse the object, think about the object. What he is able to do is just see it, that's all. Just seeing it, that's all. It see the object then it passes away. Then another consciousness arises and sees the object and it passes away. Then another consciousness see it and it passes away.

Then the mind which sees the object does not have any idea of good or bad about the object, or pleasant or unpleasant. It has just neutral feeling. This neutral feeling is also very weak. If you take the object to be bad or unpleasant, the unpleasant feeling will be

stronger. Then you'll have aversion or hatred towards this object. When that seeing mind takes the object to be good or pleasant that pleasant feeling will be stronger. Then you would have desire for the object because the pleasant feeling is because of desire or attachment.

You know the law of dependent origination. Attachment or desire arises through pleasant feelings, through feeling or sensation. So when the mind takes the object to be good or pleasant there will arise a desire or attachment. Then when the mind has very weak neutral feeling about the object do you have attachment or aversion? You have neither attachment nor aversion because your neutral feeling about the object is very weak. Then when you don't have any of the mental defilements do you have suffering, dukkha? No. Here suffering ceases regarding this physical object because you rightly know it, rightly understand it, and realise it. Just the one which is seen that's all.

In the same way when you know hearing, hearing. When the noting mind becomes powerful and constant, hearing becomes weak. Then the consciousness of hearing cannot analyse or think about the object. It doesn't take the object to be bad or good, pleasant or unpleasant. Then the consciousness of hearing would have very weak neutral feeling about the object. There won't arise any attachment, desire or aversion, hatred or anger and you won't have any mental defilements. Then you are free from suffering, dukkha as to these audible objects.

Talk 6

The Six Doors of the Senses

We'll continue our discourse on the chapter of clear comprehension in the Mahasatipatthana Sutra. Before I go to this chapter I would like to continue to explain the six sense bases and the six objects, and the six consciousnesses, because yesterday I dealt with contemplating on the consciousness of seeing with several objects.

In the chapter of Dhammanusati, Contemplation of dhamma, the Buddha said, 'Whatever you see you must be mindful of as it really is. Whatever you hear you must be aware of as it occurs. Whatever you smell you must be aware of as it really occurs. Whatever you taste you must be aware of as it really occurs. Whatever you touch you must be aware of as it really occurs. Whatever you think or think about you must be aware of as it really occurs.' The Buddha teaches us to be aware of all six sense bases and all six objects and the six final kinds of consciousness.

When we see a visible object the consciousness of seeing arises dependent on the eye - one of the six bases - and the visible object. When your eye has contact with a visible

object then there arises a consciousness of seeing. So consciousness of seeing arises dependent on the eye and the visible object. The eye is one of six sense bases. The visible object is one of six objects.

So when you see something you must be aware of it as seeing, seeing, seeing. As long as you see it you must be aware of it, you must note it. When you note the consciousness of seeing, it means you note the eye and visible object too, because when there is no eye and when there is no visible object the consciousness for seeing doesn't arise. Consciousness of seeing arises dependent on both eye and visible object.

So if you observe the consciousness of seeing then it means you observe eyes and visible object too. So whenever you see something you must not watch the thing which is seen. You must not watch the thing with which you see. What you need to observe is seeing, the consciousness for seeing - because when you observe the visible object which is seen then you have to note seeing, seeing, not object, object. When you note seeing, seeing, seeing it's the consciousness for seeing, not the visible object.

Only when you note the consciousness for seeing, the noting mind disturbs the process of seeing. So the process of seeing becomes weak and it doesn't see the object very well. It cannot judge about the object, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, bad or good. Then you won't have any defilement arising dependent on the consciousness for seeing or the visible object.

So whatever you see you must be aware of by making the mental note seeing, seeing, seeing. Whatever you hear you must be aware of by making the mental note hearing, hearing. Whatever you smell you must observe the consciousness of smelling, making the mental note smelling, smelling. Whatever you taste you must be aware of it, make a mental note tasting, tasting. Whatever you touch you must observe it as touching, touching, touching. Whatever you think about you must be aware of it, make a mental note of it as thinking, thinking, and so on.

When you hear some sound or voice, that is an audible object, that consciousness of hearing arises dependent on the ear and audible objects. When you note smelling, smelling then consciousness for smelling arises dependent on nose and sense odour. When you note tasting, tasting the consciousness for taste arises dependent on the tongue and the food. When you note touching, touching the consciousness for touching arises dependent on the body and a tangible object. When you note thinking, thinking that thought arises dependent on the mind and the dhamma, that is what it to be thought about.

These six sense bases are also called 'sense doors.' The term door is used for these three sense bases. Literally it is translated into door. Eye is a sense door, ear is a sense door, nose is a sense door, tongue is a sense door, body is a sense door, and mind is a sense door. The sense door eye is called cakkha-dvara. That means the eye door. cakkhu means the eye, dvara means door. Cakkha-dvara means the eye door. In the same way the ear door, the nose door, the tongue door, the body door, the mind door, and so on.

Why these six sense bases are called doors is because the consciousness comes to your mind through the eye. Sometimes these mental states come to the mind through the ear, sometimes through the nose, sometimes through the tongue, sometimes through the body, sometimes through the mind. So they are called the doors. Here the Lord Buddha said, 'Your six sense doors must be closed so that you don't have any mental defilements.' Then do you know how to close the door? By noting of six things, six consciousness of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking about.

This is the point, what the Buddha said. When you see, say, a very beautiful rose you realise the rose is very beautiful. Its scent is very sweet. When you judge like that there arises a pleasant feeling about the rose. When you feel a pleasant feeling what will arise? Attachment, to what? To the rose. To the feeling or to the rose? To the rose. And pleasant feeling, attachment, arises dependent on that feeling. This attachment is to the rose. Then if the flower is not beautiful, is ugly and produces a bad smell, when you see it how do you feel, pleasant or unpleasant? Unpleasant. You'll judge the flower is very ugly, 'I don't want to see it.' Then what mental state arises? Aversion. Anger.

When you judge the flower is beautiful and pleasant then you have attachment or desire for it or to it. When you judge the flower is ugly and produces a bad odour then you have aversion or anger depending on the unpleasant feeling. Here you could not close your eye doors so these mental defilements come into the mind. One of the mental defilements comes to your mind through the eye doors. Then when you have defilements is it good or bad? Bad. Yes. Mental defilement is dukkha, suffering, and also the cause of dukkha, suffering.

Then what's the thing with which you have to close these six doors? Noting, yes, mindfulness. Mindfulness is called sati, in Pali. So you must close all these six doors with mindfulness. And do you know how to close them with mindfulness? Yes, noting, being mindful of. That's why the Buddha said, 'Whatever you see must be noted or mindful of, as it is. Whatever you hear must be mindful of or noted. Whatever you smell must be observed. Whatever you taste you must be aware of. Whatever you touch must be noted. Whatever you think about must be watched, as it is.'

This is how to close the six doors so that any of the mental defilements cannot come into the mind. If you open the door then these mental defilements are waiting there outside the door to come into the mind. When the mental defilements come into the mind you are lucky or unlucky? Unlucky. Sorrow, worry, anxiety, strain, stress and depression, agony, anguish - a lot of suffering coming into your mind through these six sense doors. So it's very important.

This technique which closes these six doors is called indriya-samatta in Pali. Here indriya means six doors, samatta means their closing or closed. So indriya-samatta is the most important factor in the teaching of the Buddha which enables a person to get free from all kinds of suffering.

Sometimes you practise walking meditation say, and here the place for walking is very narrow, very small. So sometimes when you pass each other you can't help to look askance. Then you feel pleasant or unpleasant, at least disturbed. Your concentration is disturbed by the consciousness for looking or seeing. Then concentration is gone. Then sometimes through that contact of the eye and the visible object, if any desire attachment comes into the mind then you suffer. Or any aversion or anger comes into the mind through those eye doors then you suffer. Why? Because you do not close your doors.

Here let me ask you a question. Which of these six doors is the worst thing, which makes man suffer? The mind. How do you know it? Through your experience? Yes. Though you are meditating sitting here, and noting rising, falling, rising, falling, sitting, touching, rising, falling, sitting, touching. At the beginning of sitting the mind is concentrated to a certain extent on the rise and fall of the abdomen. But gradually when your mental effort becomes less, concentration becomes weak. Then the mind goes to your son? Yes, and if the son is very good you feel pleasant about him. If the son is bad you feel unpleasant about him. Then that pleasantness causes attachment or desire or love to arise. Aversion causes anger or hatred or disgust to arise. These are mental defilements. Then you suffer. But you are sitting here in the hall. You suffer a lot. Why? Because you could not close your mind doors. So to close these six doors is very important to live happily and peacefully.

That's why I also ask you could you note every thought in our interview. I want to remind you to note almost every thought as much as possible. Do not fail to note the thoughts because these thoughts make you suffer a lot. Their rise depends on mind and the thinkable object, dhamma. We call it dhamma, that object.

So, yesterday I explained to you when you look straight you must be aware of it; when you look aside you must be aware of it. But the Buddha proceeded with his chapter of clear comprehension like this, 'When you bend your arms or legs you must be aware of it. When you stretch out you must be aware of it, as it is.' So when you bend the arms, observe, bending, bending, bending, bending, slowly. Not quickly. Slowly. Why do you need to slow down your activities? If you bend fast could you catch each movement of the arm? You can't. So to catch and to observe each movement of the arm you have to slow it down.

And why do you need to observe each movement of the arm very closely and precisely? Yes, here as you know there are three aspects of existence, mental or physical phenomena. Normally we do not realise or experience these three aspects of body-mind processes, or mental and physical phenomena. These processes of existence are called general characteristics of mental and physical phenomena or common characteristics of mental and physical phenomena.

Yesterday I told you about two levels of understanding of mental and physical phenomena. The first level is understanding of specific characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. I explained that the mind has its characteristics, cognising or perceiving the object. Then desire or lobha, attachment, has the specific characteristic of

clinging to the object. Then dosa had the specific characteristic of rudeness. When you become angry you become rude. So dosa, anger, aversion has the specific characteristic of rudeness. And moha is ignorance. Sometimes it is translated into 'delusion,' but 'ignorance' is better I think. Ignorance, moha has the specific characteristic of covering the truth. When moha covers the truth you can't rightly understand it. You can't realise it because the truth is covered by moha, ignorance. Ignorance has the specific characteristic of covering the truth.

These are the three main roots of evil, the Buddha said: lobha, desire, attachment, craving, and dosa, anger, hatred, aversion, and moha, ignorance of the truth. These three mental factors are the main roots of evil, the Buddha said, because they make human beings suffer a lot.

I should continue to explain to you the specific characteristics of the other physical, material elements. This body, or physical process, is composed mainly of four material elements as you know. What are the four material elements which constitute the so-called body? Pathavi-dhatu, apo-dhatu, tejo-dhatu, vayo-dhatu.

Here pathavi means earth; dhatu means the element. Pathavi-datu means the earth element. Apo means water; dhatu means the element. Apo-datu, water element. Tejo means the fire; dhatu means the element. Tejo-dhatu means the fire element. Vayo is wind or air; dhatu is element. Vayo-dhatu, wind element or air element.

These are the four primary material elements which constitute the so-called body of a man or a woman. There are twenty-four other minor material elements, twenty-eight all together. The primary material elements are four, then the secondary elements are twenty-four. But the twenty-four secondary elements arise dependent on the four primary material elements, so the secondary elements are not so much important as the primary ones. That's why we have to watch the four primary elements.

Here when we say pathavi-dhatu, earth element, actually it is not earth because we have not the proper term for this nature, physical characteristic. We have to name it as pathavi-dhatu or earth element. Hardness and softness are the specific characteristics of the earth element. This hardness and softness is called pathavi-dhatu or earth element.

Did you observe it while you were meditating? It may be difficult for a meditator who sits on the cushion to find this element. It's better for you to sit on the floor without a cushion, then you'll find this element very distinctly. When you sit even on the cushion and your legs touch the floor, there you find hardness. When you sit on the cushion you find softness. When you feel soft or hard on any part of the body you must be aware of it, you must watch it: hard, hard, soft, soft. Why should you watch it? To close the door. If you do not observe soft, soft, soft, soft, soft, then you feel it pleasant. That pleasant feeling gives rise to attachment, desire for your cushion. Because you do not observe soft, soft, soft you are enjoying softness of the cushion and a pleasant feeling as well. That pleasant feeling causes attachment and desire to arise. So wherever you go you have to take this cushion to sit on. Please be careful whenever you observe your physical

processes. Any of these specific characteristics of these primary four elements are distinct, so you should observe them. You can analyse or investigate them. Here analyse means not theoretically analysing, but when you know the softness or hardness through your experience by means of mindfulness of it. Then you don't take that softness as pleasant or unpleasant; you don't identify the feeling of softness with yourself.

The feeling of softness and the pleasant sensation is away from you. The feeling, the sensation of softness and pleasantness is here. Then you note it: pleasant, pleasant, soft, soft, soft. This pleasantness and the feeling of softness is not a person, not a being, not I, not you. You know that through your experience. Because you observe it you are mindful of it, you are aware of it. When you don't feel this pleasant or unpleasant sensation of soft as a person a being, an I or a you, then there won't arise any attachment or anger or aversion depending on that softness. Then you shut up your bodily sense doors and mental defilement cannot come to your mind through these doors. That's why the Buddha said, 'When you feel soft or hard you must be aware of it.' That is the specific characteristic of the hard element.

The water element actually is not water. Its characteristics are fluidity and coalition. Fluidity and coalition are the specific characteristics of the water element and your body. Did you find fluidity and coalition in your mind when you were meditating? Yes, you experience them when you sit and note arising, falling, sitting, touching, arising, falling, sitting, touching. Sometimes you have a tearing, and also sometimes you have a sweating. These are the specific characteristics of the water element. Sometimes you feel some fluidity on your face or on your back. Then you have to note fluidity, fluidity and so on. Then when you open your eye and see, there's nothing because the fluidity is internal not external. Your internal bodily process, material process, had fluidity as its characteristic.

Then tejo-dhatu. We call it the fire element. Except that's actually not fire. It's temperature. Tejo-dhatu has as its characteristics heat and cold. Heat and cold are the specific characteristics of tejo-dhatu the Fire element or temperature element. Then do you experience that tejo-dhatu when you sit for meditation? A lot! Sometimes you feel as if you are sitting on the fire. Sometimes you are sitting on a block of ice. Cold and hot. Then you have to watch it, cold, cold, hot, hot. If you do not observe it then you'll identify that feeling of cold with yourself: 'Oh I am cold, I am cold. I need some sweater or some blanket to cover on me,' because you identify the cold with yourself.

Actually cold is not yourself. Theoretically you know cold is not a person, not a being, not a man or not a woman, but you perceive it to be a person because, 'I cold.' I am the man who feels cold. I am the woman who feels hot. Then cold and hot are identified with yourself and your person. Why? Because you do not close your door. Then what should you do? You should close your door, and note cold, cold, hot, hot, hot.

When your mindfulness becomes powerful and concentration deeper then you realise cold separate from your body or away from your body. The feeling of cold or hot is there. You are here, you are realising and noting it. Sometimes when concentration becomes

deeper than there's no you or no person who notes the cold. But there's the mind that notes it. Then you come to realise the dual process of mentality and physicality and sensation too. At that moment your bodily form has disappeared from your mind. You are not aware of it; you are not conscious of it. Then you feel there's no person, no being, no I or no you, no self. What is really existing is a dual process of feeling of cold and the mind that notes it, that's all. Then there won't arise any mental defilement because these mental defilements arise dependent on the idea or the concept of a person, a being, an I or a you, a self. If you have destroyed that idea of a personal being then there won't arise any mental defilements because it has no seeds to grow out of it. Then here you have closed your doors.

After that there's the fourth one, vayo-dhatu, the Wind element or air element. It's also not actually wind or air. The wind element has movement as its specific characteristic: movement, motion, vibrating, supporting. Did you experience these specific characteristics when you sat in meditation? Rising falling, yes. Rising and falling, then sitting down and rising from the seat, you have the wind element. When you rise from the seat you have to rise gradually. Then that movement is the wind or air element. Both. So when you note rising, rising, rising, rising, or getting up, getting up, getting up, then what you should realise is the process of the rising movement from this your seat until you stand still.

There you realise the specific characteristic of the wind element, a series of many movements arising and passing away. The same way when you sit down, you have to be aware of sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting. Here what you are aware of is this sitting movement, all the movements which are involved in the act of sitting. Then you know the wind or air element. Then when your concentration is good enough and you come to realise when you sit down you don't find any man or human being or any body. What you find is a series of many movements going on.

You don't identify those movements with yourself. In other words you don't regard them as a person, a being, an I or a you. What is it? That's a natural process of physical phenomena. When you know that there won't arise any concept of a being a person an I or a you depending on that movement. You close your door. There won't arise any mental defilement, desire or attachment, anger or aversion. Then you live happy.

So, these are the specific characteristics of the primary material elements. I explained you the three specific characteristics of three groups of evil, lobha, dosa and moha, and also the specific characteristics of consciousness, mind. You have to realise them in the first level of understanding. Then when you proceed with your practise intensively and strenuously, when mindfulness is continuous and concentration deep, then you come to realise the general characteristics of mental and physical phenomena.

Those three aspects of existence, anicca, dukkha and anatta, Impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature, these are three characteristics of the existing mental and physical phenomena. Or these are known as general characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. After you have well realised the specific characteristics of mental and

physical phenomena you are able to realise these three general characteristics of existing physical phenomena: impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature or no-soul, no-self, non-ego nature, of mental and physical phenomena.

What's impermanent? When a mental process arises and then passes away, that's impermanence. Having, rising, and then passing away very instantly. So when your concentration is good enough to note rising, falling, rising, falling, then you have to realise a series of many rising movements one after another; a series of many falling movements. A series of many movements means one movement arises and then passes away, then another movement arises and passes away, then another movement arises and passes away. Then we come to realise these elements are impermanent because they arise and then very instantly pass away. You have to go to that stage.

May all of you be able to realise both specific characteristics and general characteristics of body-mind process and achieve your goal.

Talk 7

The Two Levels of Understanding

I will review my talk on the two levels of understanding so that you can remember it. The first level is understanding the specific characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. The second is understanding the general or common characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. Each mental process or physical process has its specific characteristics. Those characteristics are not concerned or connected with other mental processes.

The three main roots of evil, called mula priyaya in Pali, are anger, greed, and delusion or ignorance (I prefer ignorance): lobha, dosa, moha in Pali. You should have these terms because they are not very difficult to remember. Lobha is greed, desire, craving, attachment. All the senses of these words are covered by lobha. So when you say lobha, it means desire; when you say lobha it means greed; when you say lobha it means craving; when you say lobha it means lust; when you say lobha it means attachment. To cover the senses of all these words we use the word attachment. So, lobha or attachment or desire, greed is one of the main roots of evil, evil things, evil deeds, evil speech, evil mind. When the mind becomes evil it's due to one of these three roots. Either lobha or dosa or moha.

Dosa means anger, hatred, ill will, aversion. Dosa is anger, hatred, ill-will, aversion. Moha is ignorance. Occasionally it is translated delusion. I do not like this word delusion. I preferred 'ignorance,' because when you say illusion sometimes you get confused with wrong view: sakaya-ditthi, atta-ditthi. Say when you stretch out your legs towards the Buddha statue, does it mean respect or disrespect to the Buddha? When you stretch out your arms towards the Buddha statue then do you mean it as respect or disrespect to the Buddha? Respect, when you stretch out your arms. When you stretch out your legs towards the Buddha statue what do you mean? Disrespect. Yes. But sometimes you did it out of mere ignorance because you did not know it was disrespectful. You happened to stretch out your legs towards the Buddha. That behaviour is regarded as something with no volition or motive. Without disrespect you happened to do it. So if you feel disrespect towards the Buddha when you stretch out this leg then you must withdraw it. But if you do not withdraw it and keep stretching out then it's disrespect. It's done out of ignorance.

There's a Burmese story but it may be everywhere in the world. There were two carpenters working together. One was the father, the other his son. The son was very foolish. The father was chopping a log when a deadly fly, one that is very harmful, that bites and sucks the blood of human beings, came to the father's forehead. The father was occupied over this work. He couldn't do anything with the fly. Then the son saw it. Out of compassion for his father he took an axe and he killed the deadly fly. The dead fly has gone. And father is very happy. He lie down and sleep for good. Now that killing was done out of ignorance, moha. This evil thing was done out of moha, ignorance.

So to eradicate this ignorance is the most important thing, in your daily life as well as your meditative life too. What should you do? Ignorance must be replaced by right understanding. Moha must be replaced by wisdom, or insight knowledge or enlightenment. To attain this what should you do? Yes, be mindful of your body-mind processes as they really are. You can learn scriptures so that you have a theoretical knowledge of the teaching of the Buddha, but theoretical knowledge has nothing to do with insight knowledge or enlightenment. While you are being mindful of any mental or physical process, if any theoretical knowledge comes to your mind and you use it for analysing any experience or technique then that theoretical knowledge is a hindrance to your concentration. It can't eradicate the ignorance. Ignorance must be replaced by right understanding through personal experience of Dhamma, body-mind processes.

Any evil deed or evil speech, evil mind, arises dependent on any of these three roots of evil, on lobha or on dosa or on moha. So these three roots of evil are completely destroyed. There won't arise any evil deed, evil speech or evil mind, and you have a wholesome speech and mind which result in happiness and peace. For example lobha: greed, desire, craving, lust, attachment. Lobha has as its characteristic the nature of clinging to the object. So clinging or being attached is the specific characteristic of lobha. The specific characteristic of dosa is rudeness. Dosa is translated 'aversion.' It cannot have any characteristic of clinging because aversion is the opposite of clinging. Every mental state or emotional state, mental process, has its own specific characteristics.

So in the course of your meditational practise when the mind becomes deeper and deeper and more and more concentrated you come to realise mental or physical processes which are observed in their true nature. In the beginning of this realisation of mental and bodily processes you rightly understand their specific characteristics which are observed. So when you note attachment: attachment attachment attachment attachment, the attachment doesn't go away. It passes there in you mind and you continue to note attachment attachment attachment attachment. The more mindful of attachment the more concentrated your mind is on it. When the mind is well concentrated on the attachment you come to realise attachment has the clinging nature to the object. You come to realise this. That is insight knowledge you have attained through your experience of mental processes. That is the first level of understanding of the specific characteristic of lobha, attachment.

Then when you observe the rising and falling movements of the abdomen very attentively and energetically, when concentration becomes deeper you come to realise the rising and falling movements without being conscious of the form of the body or the form of the abdomen. The form of the abdomen has disappeared in your mind; you are not aware of it. What you are realising is just the rising movement and falling movement and the mind that notes it. When your realisation becomes more and more clear and sharp what you are realising is just motion, movement, outward movement and inward movement. These are two processes of movements rising and passing away alternately. And also you know the mind that notes it is also rising and passing away. When you are realising the motion without being aware of yourself and your bodily form and the abdomen it means you are rightly understanding the specific characteristic of the wind element vayo-dhatu.

Why can you say this understanding of the process of dual movement is right? It may be wrong, because we have an abdomen and that abdomen rises and then falls back. If we are not conscious of the form of the abdomen and the form of the body and note just movements then it may be wrong. We can say definitely it's right because this right understanding has destroyed the false idea of a self, a soul, a person, a being. When you rightly understand just the outward movement and inward movement only you do not identify any movement of rising and falling with yourself, with your person, with your being. Then that idea or concept of a person a being an I or a you has been destroyed. When you don't have any idea of an I or you, a person or being, there won't arise any mental defilements such as lust greed hatred ignorance and so on. When mental defilements are destroyed there won't arise any suffering at all. Then you have attained the state of the cessation of all kinds of suffering. This cessation of suffering is attained through right understanding of the specific characteristic of the wind element which is constantly observed.

It leads you to the cessation of suffering because you follow any teaching of any religion to destroy dukkha, suffering and live happily and peacefully. That's your aim of following any doctrine, is it not so? That aim can be fulfilled by right understanding of mental and physical processes, especially here, rightly understanding the specific characteristic of the wind element Wyandotte. Is the doctrine which instructs you to be mindful of any mental or physical process so you can rightly understand it in its true

nature right or wrong? Right, why? It leads you to the cessation of suffering which is undesirable for you. So out of two levels of right understanding, as soon as your concentration is good enough, deep enough, you come to realise the first understanding, the specific characteristic of mental and physical phenomena. Then when you proceed with your practise mindfulness becomes clear and sharp and concentration becomes deeper.

When concentration becomes deeper you come to realise the second aspect of mental and physical processes. That's the second level of understanding, that is, impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of the process or no soul, no person. In Pali these are called anicca, dukkha, anatta. Anicca, impermanence; dukkha, suffering; anatta, impersonal nature or no soul no self. These three characteristics are concerned with all mental and physical processes. They are called common characteristics of mental and physical processes because they are in common with all mental and physical processes. So when you have lobha, attachment to have tea at this time, then does that lobha, attachment last very long? No. Then how long does it last? Yes. It lasts until you note it. When you note it you no longer have attachment to having tea. Then could we say attachment lasts very long or attachment is permanent? Because it rises and then passes away, it's impermanent. In other words lobha has the characteristic of impermanence, and the same with dosa and moha and the other mental and emotional states.

Some meditators are very sensitive to the arising of anger. So if you feel anger then is that anger everlasting or transient? Transient. Yes. When you note it very attentively it goes away, it disappears. It arises and then vanishes, so it's impermanent. There, dosa has also the characteristic of impermanence. In the same way, the rising and fall of the abdomen has the characteristic of impermanence. The bending movement and stretching movement of the arms has the characteristic of impermanence. Lifting, pushing, putting movements of the foot have the characteristic of impermanence. So it's the nature of impermanency to be in common with every mental and physical phenomenon. So they are called common or general characteristics.

Not only impermanence but also suffering, dukkha. Also the impersonal nature of mental and physical processes, anatta, no self-nature. So these three are called the common or general characteristics of body-mind processes. But at the third stage of insight knowledge you can more clearly realise these three characteristics of mental and physical processes. In the first stage of insight knowledge you realise the specific characteristics of mental and physical processes. Then it goes on the second stage and the third stage too. So when you proceed with your practise strenuously and intensively, concentration becomes deeper and deeper. Then you come to realise the movement of the foot and, say, the second level of right understanding. That's the general characteristic of the wind element vaya-dhatu.

When you note lifting what you are aware of is the lifting movement of the foot. When you note pushing what you are aware of is the pushing movement of the foot. When you note dropping what you are aware of is the dropping movement. When you note touching what you are aware of is the touching sensation. When you note pressing you note

pressure. There, when you are aware of the lifting movement with deep concentration you do not realise it as permanent, a single process of movement. You realise it as a series of broken movements rising and passing away, from the very beginning of the lifting of the foot. There are many many movements which are rising and passing away.

Then sometimes meditators report their experience like this. 'When I note the lifting movement - lifting lifting lifting - there are many many movements I experience, from the very beginning of lifting many tiny movements.' Then sometimes they said, 'When I note lifting I find it as a folded Chinese fan.' This is folded, then it's stretched out it. The yogi knows it. He realises there are a series of many tiny movements arising and passing away one after another and he thinks, 'Oh this is like a Chinese fan.' That means he realises the impermanence of each movement. One movement arises and then passes away, then another movement arises and passes away. In this way he sees a series of many gentle and soft tiny movements arising and passing away one after another. Then he realises impermanence. When he experiences the state of impermanence he is sure to realise the other mental and physical processes too as impermanent. So when he bends the arm he aware of bending bending bending, slowly slowly. Then because his concentration is good enough, deep enough, he comes to realise this bending movement is a series of many bending movements arising and passing away one after another. That is the realisation of the impermanence of mental and physical processes. Also he realises the mind that notes it is impermanent. This realisation is the second level of right understanding upon the general characteristic of the wind or air element, vayo-dhatu. When you are realising this impermanence of phenomena you come to realise they are rising and passing away, never lasting even a minute or second, ever changing, always appearing and disappearing. So they are not good or bad.

Then he comes to dukkha, suffering, because when he sees any mental or physical process ever changing, constantly rising and passing away every instant, the so-called mind is oppressed by that constant appearance and disappearance of phenomena. That is dukkha. Then when he discovers nothing is permanent, everything is transient and ever changing, appearing and disappearing, then does he take this mental process of ever changing as a person or a being, an I or a you? No. The idea of a person, a being arises dependent on the idea of a permanent body-mind process.

When you take this body of mine as permanent then you take it as a person, a being, an I or a you. When you realise this body-mind process is ever changing and transient and impermanent, it doesn't last even a millionth of a second, you don't take it to be a person, a being, an I or a you. Then you don't have the idea of atta. When you don't have the idea of atta it's called anatta. Anatta means non-self, non person, no person, or the impersonal nature of mental and physical processes. So in this way you come to realise the general or common characteristics of physical processes and at the same time the mind notes it.

When your right understanding or insight knowledge of mental and physical processes as impermanent becomes clearer, you come to realise the mind that notes it is also impermanent. Then you don't take any of the dual processes of mentality and physicality to be a person a being an I or a you. What you are realising at that moment is the

incessant and continuous and constant changing of mental and physical processes which are arising and passing away one after another. When you take a set of phenomena which are forever changing you don't take them to be a person or a being. That false idea of a person a being, a self or a soul has been destroyed by right understanding of mental and physical processes.

So when you have rightly understood these body-mind processes in their true nature in these two aspects ignorance has been replaced by right understanding, insight knowledge we call it: vipassana nana. Vipassana nana. In other words, right understanding, vipassana nana, insight knowledge or experiential knowledge, has destroyed ignorance. Yesterday I told you ignorance has the characteristic of covering the truth. When ignorance has been destroyed, you uncover the truth. You can realise this truth: impermanence, suffering, no soul, no self nature of mental and physical phenomena. But because they are ever changing and constantly appearing and disappearing you come to realise it's dukkha. Then, do you want that to occur? If that occurs it's not wanted, not desired. Then you have to be mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind so that you can rightly understand mental and physical processes in their two aspects, their specific and general or common aspects: specific aspects of materiality and mentality, and general characteristics of materiality and mentality. Specific characteristics are where any mental or emotional state has its own characteristics, which are nothing to do with the other mentalities and physicalities.

There are only three common and general characteristics. Anicca, dukkha, anatta. Anicca means impermanence, transience, transitoriness, and flux. Dukkha, suffering, dissatisfaction, discomfort, and so on. Then anatta, no-self, no soul, no person, non-ego. These are the three characteristics of the whole of existence. If you rightly understand, if you can penetrate into these three aspects of body-mind processes, mental and physical phenomena, you are sure to be able to destroy attachment to any living being or non-living thing. When attachment, the cause of suffering has been destroyed there won't arise any suffering, dukkha at all. Without suffering, dukkha, you live in peace and happiness, when the cessation of suffering you have attained.

I think now you have rightly understood the aim of your mindfulness about all daily activities. So do not be reluctant, do not feel lazy. Be aware of all daily activities in more detail so you can have continuous mindfulness and deep concentration and a penetrating insight which realises the specific and general characteristics of mental and physical phenomena.

May all of you practise your meditation very intensively and continuously without any laziness, reluctance and tiredness and anger.

Talk 8

Daily Activities, Postures, Noting Objects, Benefits, Balance

Today I'll continue that chapter of clear comprehension and discourse on the Mahasatipatthana sutra. But I'll summarise it because there are some aspects of Dhamma which should be dealt with for your progress in your meditation.

The Buddha said, 'When you bend your arms and legs you must be aware of it as it is.' When you stretch out the arms and legs you must be aware of it as it is. When you dress you must all be aware of it. When you take off clothes you must be aware of it; when you put on clothes you must be aware of it. That's what the Buddha instructed us about daily activities. Then, when you hold the plate, you note it. When you hold the cup in the saucer you note it, holding. When you touch it, touching. When you decide to keep inside and so on. Whatever you are doing, in holding, drinking tea or coffee, you note it. The Buddha said when you answer the call of nature these activities you must be aware of as they are. When you go to the toilet you should be aware of all the activities involved. Then, every day, the Buddha said when you eat food then note all the activities in the act of having the food. When you drink water or when you drink anything you must be aware of all the activities involved in these actions. When you chew something you must note chewing. When you lick something you must note the licking. We have a Burmese medicine for clearing of the throat, called yessa. That means a lickable salt. There we have to lick it. We mustn't take it.

* Postures

When you walk you must be aware of all the movements of the foot, slowing down your stepping. When you sit you should note the upright posture of the sitting. Not the form of the body, but the upright position of your body must be noted as sitting. When you focus your mind on your sitting you know that you are sitting. Then you note sitting.

In Burma some meditators when they are instructed to note the sitting posture find out the form of the body, the shoulder, the leg, the eyes, the nose, the head. Because they are looking for the form of the body they couldn't note it. But the Buddha doesn't instruct us to note these forms of the body. What the Buddha instructs is to note the upright posture of the body as sitting, because he would like us to realise the supporting nature of vayo-dhatu, the wind element. When you sit there's an air inside the body, and also air outside the body. The two airs support the body so it is sitting in an upright position. So to realise the nature of the supporting wind element the Buddha teaches us to note sitting. So you should focus your mind on the upright posture of the body and note it as sitting. In the same way the upright position of standing must be noted: standing standing standing, sitting sitting sitting and so on.

Sometimes some yogis misunderstand this instruction so when they are instructed to note the sitting posture what they notice is the contact between the body and the floor or the seat. It's wrong. That's contact or touching, not sitting. The commentary to the text

explains that sitting means the bending posture of the lower and the upright posture of the upper body. I instructed you to be aware of the upright posture of sitting, the upper body, because if you go down and be aware of the bending posture of the lower body your mind tends to go to the contact.

* Noting objects

So in sitting meditation if you are able to note the rising and fall of the abdomen very well and the concentration is somewhat good, then the mind tends to go out and wander because it can easily note the two movements of the abdomen. Then you need some more objects to note so as to make the mind too busy to have any time to go out. So when you are able to note the rise and fall of the abdomen very well you should note the sitting posture and the touching sensation too, either of the two or one of the two. Say rising falling and sitting, or rising falling, touching - any point of the touching sensation which is more distinct than the other points. So, rising falling sitting touching, rising falling sitting touching. You must be aware of four objects successively and continuously, not separately.

Some meditators misunderstand so they note two objects separately. Sometimes they note rising and falling, rising and falling; sometimes sitting, touching, sitting, touching. When you are able to note these four objects constitutively and successively you must do four, not two separately. But sometimes you may be not able to note all the four constitutively. Then you should note their rise and fall separately, then sitting touching. If the abdominal movement is good for you to note you should stay with it. Unless it's good for some reason you can note the sitting and touching sensations alternately: sitting touching, sitting touching.

Sometimes some meditators very easily feel their heartbeat when concentrating on the movement of the abdomen, because when they note the rise and fall of the abdomen they make too much mental effort breathing. That effort makes the heart beat and sometimes they confuse the movement of the abdomen with the heartbeat. For such meditators the sitting posture and touching sensation are good at the beginning of the practise. Later on you will be able to note all these four objects very well, systematically and methodically.

So if a meditator has no problem with the heartbeat he should continue to note the rise and fall of the abdomen. But if he thinks he needs more objects then note the sitting posture and touching sensation too. So rising falling, sitting touching; rising falling, sitting touching. You have to note the sitting posture and touching sensation before the rising movement starts again. In other words between the falling movement and the rising movement you should insert the two objects, sitting and touching, so that your mind doesn't have any time to go out. The point is to make the mind quite occupied with the object.

One meditator here reported in his interview that he didn't note the intention before lifting. He noted only six objects of movements of the foot. I asked why he didn't note anything. He said because he was too busy to note this and this before lifting. A bit of

time, even a millionth of a second, and the mind goes out. So the mind must be occupied with objects. You should note intending, lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing, and so on.

The same with sitting. When you think you have a little bit of time between the falling movement and the rising movement of the abdomen, you must fill up that gap with the two objects or one of the two, the sitting posture and the touching sensation. So after you have noted the falling movement you note sitting, touching before you start to note the rising movement. Sometimes you may find it difficult to note two objects before rising again. Then you should note one object, the sitting or touching sensation, so that you have better and deeper concentration.

So when you sit you must be aware of the sitting posture. When you stand you must be aware of the standing posture. When you lie down you must be aware of the lying posture: lying lying lying. In Burma one of the old monks about ninety years could walk twenty-four hours; he could sit twenty-four hours; lie down twenty-four hours by being aware of it without sleeping. Two years back he passed away at the age of ninety-two I think. He had been meditating since forty years of age. I think you should imitate him. He could sit for twenty-four hours without changing position. He walked twenty-four hours. He lay down twenty-four hours. If you lie down two minutes then you fall asleep.

In lying down you see the abdomen movement is very distinct. When lying down note, rising falling lying, rising falling lying, rising falling lying. This is good medicine for insomnia. When you wake up the first thing of which you are conscious must be noted. During any meditation of ten days you are not able to do that even though you try it. As the Buddha said, as soon as you are awake you should note the consciousness about wakening: wakening wakening wakening wakening. After that you want to open your eyes: wanting wanting, or wishing wishing. And then when you open the eyes, opening opening. And so on.

These are the examples you should take for awareness for daily activity. The Buddha teaches us these examples. The point is to have continuous and constant mindfulness for the whole day. There is not a mental state, emotional state or physical process of which you should not be mindful as it is so that you can have a continuity of mindfulness which is the cause of deep concentration on which insight knowledge is built up. When that insight knowledge is realised, or the specific characteristics or general characteristics of mental and physical processes, then you go through all thirteen stages of insight knowledge one after another, and higher and higher. After you have completed all the thirteen stages of insight knowledge you become enlightened. That means you attain the first stage of enlightenment. It's called Magga. The Path. When you have attained the first stage of enlightenment you totally uproot the most important defilement, sakaya-ditthi, the false view of a person a being an I or a you, and also doubt about the triple gems. These two mental defilements are uprooted, including their potentiality. Then you feel happy, you live in peace and happiness.

There are some who have gone through about four or five stages. There may be someone who has gone through about eight or seven. There may be some who have gone through ten or eleven. I would like all of you to complete all thirteen stages of insight knowledge. Ten days meditation is just training, just the learning stage. But you have some deep concentration occasionally and also some insight which penetrates into reality of the body- mind processes.

* **Benefits of mindfulness meditation**

So now I would like to explain to you the benefits of this mindfulness meditation, because we haven't time enough. I think I should explain to you the seven benefits of this mindfulness, vipassana meditation.

1. Purification

Saddana vissuddhi means this mindfulness meditation must be practised for purification of beings. This is the first benefit. If you are mindful of any mental or physical process, if your concentration is good enough, at the moment of deep concentration on this mental or physical process your mind is purified. It's free from all kinds of mental defilements, all kinds of hindrances. To purify one's mind one has to practise mindfulness meditation. Translated literally, the meaning is that to purify your mind and body you must practise mindfulness meditation.

2. Overcoming sorrow

Then the second benefit is overcoming worry, sorrow and lamentation. The second benefit is sorrow and worry. You overcome sorrow and worry even though you failed in your business. You don't worry about it; you don't feel sorry.

3. Overcoming lamentation

The third benefit is overcoming lamentation. When you have completely realised the mental and physical processes and their true nature by means of mindfulness meditation, even though your relative dies, or even though your sons or parents die you won't cry over it. You have exterminated this lamentation for the dead. When you practise this mindfulness meditation to attain higher stages of insight knowledge, at least eleven stages should be attained through this mindfulness meditation, then you don't feel sorry or worry and you don't have lamentation.

In Burma some of the female meditators practise this meditation in the first retreat say about ten or fifteen days, then the second two months or two and a half months then later on she may continue every day at home. Then when her husband dies she won't feel sorry. She won't lament. Is it good or bad? Good. Why doesn't she feel sorrow and find that she laments? Attachment. Attachment is destroyed to a certain extent. She can have less attachment to her husband by means of mindfulness meditation because she has realised the specific and general characteristics of body-mind processes to a large extent. So her attachment to her husband becomes less and less, because the less attachment doesn't make her weep or cry or lament. That's why I would like you to do it at least two

or three months intensively and strenuously. In Burma many meditators take two or three months. Some meditators practise six months continuously.

4. Overcoming grief

Then, the fourth benefit is the overcoming of grief. In the full retreat you can do away with grief, when your mindfulness meditation is fully practised. Here grief means mental suffering. Mental suffering is exterminated, done away with, by this mindfulness meditation.

5. Overcoming physical suffering

And also pain here means physical suffering. All kinds of physical suffering are destroyed through mindfulness meditation. In Burma there are some who cured illness by means of mindfulness meditation. The fifth benefit is overcoming physical suffering, dukkha. Mental suffering is known as domanassa in Pali. Physical suffering is known as dukkha. Domanassa is mental suffering, mental dukkha. Physical suffering is dukkha itself. These two aspects of suffering are removed by means of mindfulness meditation.

6. Enlightenment

Then the sixth benefit is attainment of path knowledge. That's one of enlightenment. In Buddhism there are four stages of enlightenment a meditator has to attain through his mindfulness meditation, after he has completed all thirteen stages of insight knowledge. The first stage is known as sotapanna-magga . The second stage is known as sakadagami-magga. Third stage is known anagami-magga. The fourth stage is known as arahatta-magga. All these four stages of enlightenment can be attained when you have thoroughly realised anicca, dukkha and anatta of bodily and mental processes. When impermanence, suffering, the impersonal nature of body-mind processes are thoroughly realised then you can attain all these four stages of enlightenment.

It's easy to explain about this attainment of four stages of enlightenment but practically it's very difficult. But difficulties must be overcome by perseverance. Patience and perseverance are needed to overcome difficulties in any work. Then the attainment of these four stages of enlightenment, path knowledge is the sixth benefit. Path knowledge here means the four stages of enlightenment.

7. Nibbana

Then finally you attain to Nibbana by mindfulness meditation. What do you mean by Nibbana? Where do you see Nibbana, on earth or underground or in heaven or in the sky? Nowhere. Ah, but the Buddha said Nibbana is in you. The place where you attain to Nibbana is yours, your body and mind. Unless you have realised your body-mind processes you cannot attain Nibbana. Only when you have fully realised your body-mind processes and two levels of understanding, then you are sure to attain Nibbana. So Nibbana is with you, not very far, very close.

Nibbana means the cessation of all kinds of suffering. When mental suffering as well as physical suffering ceases to exist that state is known as Nibbana. Where do you have mental and physical suffering? Mind and body. These two kinds of suffering exist in the

mind and body. Where do these two aspects of suffering stop or cease? Our mind and body. Because they arise in my mind and body, so they must stop at my mind and body. The cessation of all kinds of suffering, mental and physical suffering, ceases to exist when you have eradicated all mental and physical defilements by means of mindfulness meditation. So the attainment of the cessation of suffering is the seventh benefit of mindfulness meditation. You should remember these benefits theoretically and you should experience them practically.

*** The five mental faculties**

So to gain these seven benefits what you need first is faith or belief in the triple gems, especially in the technique of your meditation: faith or belief or confidence through understanding. Blind faith is not needed here. Faith through understanding is called *saddha*. That *saddha* is the first mental faculty. Here mental faculties we call *indriya* in Pali. There are five *indriyas*, five mental faculties a yogi must be endowed with. The first is faith, blind faith or faith with understanding. You have to understand the Buddha Dhamma or the technique to a certain extent so that you can have faith in it. Without understanding it you can't have any faith or confidence or belief in it. Faith with understanding is the basic requirement of a meditator for success in his meditation. The second need is energy. If you do not put enough energy into your practise you can't realise any mental or physical phenomena. It's called *viriya* in Pali.

The third need is *sati*. It's translated as mindfulness, awareness, the third faculty a yogi must be endowed with. It means when you have faith with understanding of the technique or the Dhamma, you put enough energy or *viriya* in your practise, then you are able to be mindful of any mental or physical process as it really is. Then when mindfulness becomes continuous and constant your mind becomes concentrated on the object of meditation very well. So the fourth one is concentration, *samadhi*, concentration of mind. When the mind is deeply concentrated on any mental or physical phenomenon there arises insight knowledge or penetrating knowledge or experiential knowledge which penetrates into the intrinsic nature of mental and physical phenomena, specific individual characteristics of the body-mind processes. This is the intrinsic or true nature of mental and physical phenomena.

So when you realise any specific characteristic of mental or physical phenomena you have insight. Or when you realise the passing away of any mental or physical processes, or their coming and going, then you come to realise the general characteristic of *anicca*, impermanence, the general characteristic of mental and physical phenomena. That realisation, right understanding or insight or experiential knowledge is known as *pannya* in Pali. *Pannya* is sometimes translated as wisdom. Here insight or enlightenment is the fifth faculty with which a yogi must be endowed.

You should have five mental faculties: faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and insight and enlightenment. Faith means *saddha*. Energy means *viriya*. Mindfulness means *sati*. Concentration means *samadhi*. Insight, enlightenment, *pannya*. So, *saddha*, *viriya*, *sati*, *samadhi*, *pannya*, these are the five mental faculties a yogi must be endowed with.

* Balance

And here these five mental faculties must be strong enough, powerful and sharp. The Vissudimagga, a meditation text, mentions when these five mental faculties become sharp you are sure to realise either the specific or general characteristics of body- mind processes. So you should try to make them sharp and keep balance. Here also the text said of the five mental faculties, saddha and panna, faith and understanding or insight must be kept balanced. So viriya and samadhi, concentration and energy or effort must be kept in balance. When saddha is strong and viriya is weak, when faith is strong and energy or effort is weak, then the yogi may become credulous. The yogi tends to have gullibility. He is easily deceived.

And saddha, faith or confidence must be balanced with wisdom or panna, insight knowledge. When you have some insight knowledge into the physical and mental processes then you know the only way which can lead you to the cessation of suffering or to the realisation of body-mind processes is mindfulness meditation. You can judge through your experience, then nobody can deceive you about the method or technique of the meditation. So you don't believe in any other technique or any other way because by way of mindfulness you have experienced some realisation or understanding of mental and physical phenomena. You yourself know it's the right way so you don't believe in any other way, you don't become credulous.

But if wisdom is strong and faith is weak, then he can be a fool in his meditation because his concentration is weak. His concentration is weak because he has a lot of preconceived ideas through theoretical knowledge of Buddhism and other philosophies. So whenever he has experienced, or before he has any experience, he analyses the technique or the experience. He thinks about it. He uses preconceived ideas to analyse this technique or the experience. Then he has a lot of thoughts which distract him. How can he concentrate his mind on the object?

That's why we ask our yogis to keep aside all thought, all analytical knowledge, preconceived ideas, philosophical thinking, logical reasoning while they are engaged in meditation, so that there won't be hindrances to their progress. If he has a great deal of knowledge about Dhamma or any other philosophy, he attempts to analyse or reason, he attempts to criticise the Dhamma or the experience or the technique. Then it's a hindrance. So wisdom or knowledge must be balanced with saddha. Because I have faith, confidence in this technique I come here and practise. So these must be kept aside as long as I'm engaged in this mindfulness meditation.

Then concentration and energy must be in balance. When concentration is strong and energy, effort is weak you have the close friend of a yogi, sloth and torpor. So when you can concentrate very well on the abdominal movement and concentration becomes deeper and deeper, the noting mind notes the object of its own accord without any effort. Then the effort or energy becomes gradually less and less, decreasing. Concentration becomes weaker and weaker and gets into sloth and torpor. So when concentration's strong and

effort is weak you are sure to get into sloth and torpor. To correct it you must make some more effort in your noting. Be careful, note energetically and precisely.

Then when viriya, energy is strong and concentration is weak you can't concentrate too well, because when you are greedy to experience more and more Dhamma you put too much effort into your noting. You note very energetically when the mind is not concentrated you are not satisfied with your practise. Then you get restless and have distraction distraction distraction, and depression. No concentration at all. So energy or effort must be kept by concentration, and balance. Your effort must be reduced. You must reduce your effort, then again you note feeling calmness and tranquillity. Be calm and tranquil and note steadily. Do not be greedy, do not hesitate. Then your mind will concentrate gradually. So these two twins mental faculties must be in balance. Then you are sure to attain the four stages of enlightenment.

Please try to make steady effort, enough effort, and have a great deal of faith and confidence in your practise.

***** End of Vipassana Meditation Course - by Venerable Sayadaw U Janaka *****