

Pilgrimage in India.

Introduction.

This pilgrimage in India, in 1975, was my third one in a long series that would follow. Acharn Sujin Boriharnwanaket, our friend in the Dhamma and our teacher, was our spiritual leader and Khun Suwat Chansuvityanant was in charge of the organisation of the tour. The late venerable Bhikkhu Dhamma-dharo from Australia who had recently been ordained, venerable Jetanando, a novice (samanera) from Japan, Jonothan Abbot, and a few friends from Thailand also joined this tour. Khun Suwat who would also organise all the following pilgrimages in India, always found a suitable picknick spot in the fields when the bus drivers had to take a break. There were often flat tyres or other defects of the bus and then we could walk along in the village and have some tea. Since our group was small we could stay in Thai temples on the way. Acharn Sujin helped us all the way with reminders of the Dhamma, for example, when the bus had to stop and we were walking up and down, waiting. In each of the holy places texts were read that related to that particular place. Venerable Bhikkhu Dhammadharo explained the Dhamma with great enthusiasm, emphasizing that, in whatever situation we would be, there were just mental phenomena, *nāma* and physical phenomena, *rūpa*, appearing through the six doorways. We discussed the Buddha's perfections as we did during each pilgrimage. These were the indispensable conditions for his attainment of Buddhahood. We were reminded that also for us the development of the perfections along with *satipaṭṭhāna* is a necessary condition for the attainment of enlightenment.

Chapter 1.

Visiting the Holy Places

The Buddha was born 623 B.C. in Lumbini as Prince Siddhatta, the son of Suddhodana, King of the Sākya and Queen Māya. He attained enlightenment at the age of thirtyfive in Bodhgaya, delivered his first sermon in Sarnath, at the Deerpark of Isipatana, and, after having taught for fortyfive years, he passed finally away in Kusināra.

Today, after more than twothousandsixhundred years, people still visit the holy places where he was born, where he attained enlightenment, where he delivered his first sermon and where he passed away. People pay respect to the Buddha at these places. We read in the “Dialogues of the Buddha”(Mahā-Parinibbāna sutta, Ch V, 140) that the Buddha, in the night of his passing away, said to Ānanda:

“The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say:

--’Here the Tathāgata was born!’ is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.

The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say:

--’Here the Tathāgata attained to the supreme and perfect insight!’ is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.

The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say:

--’Here was the kingdom of righteousness set on foot by the Tathāgata!’ is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.

The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say:

--’Here the Tathāgata passed finally away in that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever to remain behind!’ is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence. These are the four places, Ānanda, which the believing clansman should visit with feelings of reverence.

And there will come, Ānanda, to such spots, believers, monks and sisters of the Order, or devout men and women, and will say:--’Here the Tathāgata was born!’ or, ’Here the Tathāgata attained to the supreme and perfect insight!’ or, ’Here was the kingdom of righteousness set on foot by the Tathāgata!’ or, ’Here the Tathāgata passed finally away in that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever to remain behind!’

And they, Ānanda, who shall die while they, with believing heart, are journeying on such pilgrimage, shall be reborn after death, when the body shall dissolve, in the happy realms of heaven.”

People were wondering what we were looking for at the holy places and what we were doing while we traveled. What was the reason we went to these places?

The Buddha passed finally away, but we can still pay respect to the Buddha. We can show our gratefulness for his teaching by outward signs such as the offering of incense, candles and flowers, or by chanting texts taken from the teachings. It is fitting that we show our gratefulness, because if the Buddha had not taught the development of wisdom which can eradicate defilements how could we develop this wisdom today? We are learning to be mindful of the *nāmas* (mental phenomena) and *rūpas* (material phenomena) which appear now and we have confidence that in this way the clinging to “self” can be diminished. Confidence in his teachings and above all the development of understanding of *nāma* and *rūpa* is the way to pay respect to the Buddha.

During our pilgrimage we talked about the Buddha’s life and about the perfections he accumulated as a Bodhisatta in the course of innumerable lives. This is also a way of paying respect to the Buddha. Contemplating the Buddha’s perfections can remind us to consider the reality appearing at the present moment. If we have only theoretical knowledge of the Buddha’s teachings, acquired from reading, we cannot understand what Buddhahood means. We may begin to know what this means if we develop mindfulness and right understanding of *nāma* and *rūpa*.

The Buddha could only become foremost in wisdom and virtue because he had cultivated the right conditions for it. He had accumulated mindfulness and wisdom for an endlessly long time, with great patience and perseverance. He had fulfilled all the perfections (*pāramís*) necessary for the attainment of Buddhahood. When we consider his perfections we understand more how only the right cause could bring such result and it fills us with great respect. He fulfilled all the perfections out of compassion, also for us today who can still listen to his teachings and develop the eightfold Path. We too should cultivate the right cause in order to have the appropriate result: right understanding of the phenomena of our life. We too should cultivate understanding with great patience and perseverance, in learning to be mindful of *nāma* and *rūpa* over and over again. The Buddha knew all phenomena as they really are: impermanent, *dukkha* and non-self. He knew the arising and falling away of all realities which appear through the doorways of the senses and the mind-door. For fortyfive years he taught the development of the Path that is mindfulness and understanding of *nāma* and *rūpa*. He taught about the following:

the eye, seeing and visible object,

the ear, hearing and sound,

the nose, smelling and odour,

the tongue, tasting and flavour,

the bodysense, the experience of tangible object and tangible object,
the mind, the experience of mental objects and mental objects.

During our pilgrimage to the holy places we talked about the eye, seeing and visible object; the ear, hearing and sound, and about the other realities appearing through the different doorways, in order to have right understanding of them. We had many conversations about this subject and at such moments we were reminded to consider the different *nāmas* and *rūpas* that appeared. We talked about mindfulness and the way to know oneself; about different defilements such as jealousy and stinginess and the way to eliminate them. We had Dhamma conversations at airports, in the train, in the bus, in hotels, gardens and parcs, and during our picnics in fields and woods. We had conversations in the morning, in the afternoon and at night time. While we were in the train, on the way to Bodhgaya, it happened to be “Uposatha Day”, a day when the “Pāṭimokkha” or the Disciplinary code is recited before the community of monks and when devout laypeople visit the temples where they sometimes stay overnight, listening to the Dhamma and observing eight precepts. Since we were on the way to Bodhgaya we thought that having a Dhamma conversation and studying and considering realities would be an excellent way of paying respect to the Buddha. Seated in one compartment of the train, our group consisted of Venerable Dhammadharo, an Australian monk, Venerable Jetanando, a Japanese novice (*samanera*), Acharn Sujin, three other Thai ladies, Jonothan Abbot, Sally, an Israelian, and myself. We had not planned to talk the whole night, but the conditions were such that we lived from moment to moment and did not pay any attention to time. Thus, we did not think of sleep, food or drink. While we were discussing Dhamma time went by unnoticed and before we knew it was morning. We were approaching Gaya. A very thoughtful lady, Khun Kesinee, had prepared food for Venerable Dhammadharo and Venerable Jetanando and also for all of us.

The monk has to reflect wisely while eating. We read in the “Middle Length Sayings” (I, 2, Discourse on All the Cankers):

“Wisely reflective, he uses food not for sport, not for indulgence, not for personal charm, not for beautification, but just enough for the support and sustenance of the body, for keeping it unharmed, for furthering the Brahma- faring...”

For us, laypeople, eating is mostly motivated by *lobha*. Being present while monks are having a meal reminds us that the purpose of food does not necessarily have to be enjoyment. Instead of *akusala cittas* there can be *kusala cittas* that consider food as a medicine for the body, or *kusala cittas* with mindfulness. We should remember the Buddha’s words to be mindful in all circumstances, also while eating.

During that night in the train we talked about the misunderstandings that may arise concerning the development of *vipassanā*. We discussed *sati*, mindfulness, and the fact that one erroneously may take for *sati* what is merely thinking about realities. For

example, we may take for direct awareness of hardness or sound what is merely noticing them and thinking about them. When there is a short moment of noticing a reality without thinking we may mistakenly believe that that is sati. There is still an idea of “I am noticing a reality”. This night’s discussion greatly helped me to see my misunderstandings. Acharn Sujin reminded us that we may believe that we have a great deal of awareness already while we are merely have intellectual understanding about nāma and rūpa. Intellectual understanding of nāma and rūpa can condition direct understanding and mindfulness of them later on, but mindfulness cannot be directed, it arises because of its own conditions. Also sati is non-self. It is necessary to often discuss what sati is and what its object is.

During that night we also considered the Buddha’s perfections he had to accumulate during many lives in order to become a Sammāsambuddha: a person who discovers the truth and attains enlightenment without the help of any teacher and who is able to teach others the Path leading to enlightenment. The fact that the Buddha attained Buddhahood in Bodhgaya while sitting under the Bodhi-tree could not have occurred without the right conditions. How could he have become an omniscient Buddha without having cultivated sati and wisdom in countless previous lives when he was a Bodhisatta? The perfections (pāramī) the Buddha fulfilled can be classified as follows:

generosity (dāna)

morality (sīla)

renunciation (nekkhamma)

wisdom (paññā)

energy (virīya)

patience (khanti)

truthfulness (sacca)

resolution (adhiṭṭhāna)

loving kindness (mettā)

equanimity (upekkhā)

According to the “Visuddhimagga” (Ch IX, 124) the four “brahma vihāras” (divine abidings) which are loving kindness (mettā), compassion (karuṇā), altruistic joy (muditā) and equanimity (upekkhā) bring the ten “pāramīs” to perfection. We read:

“For the Great Beings’ minds retain their balance by giving preference to beings’ welfare, by dislike of beings’ suffering, by desire for the various successes achieved

by beings to last, and by impartiality towards all beings ¹. And to all beings they give gifts, which are a source of pleasure, without discrimination thus: 'It must be given to this one; it must not be given to this one.' And in order to avoid doing harm to beings they undertake the precepts of virtue. They practise renunciation for the purpose of perfecting their virtue. They cleanse their understanding for the purpose of non-confusion about what is good and bad for beings. They constantly arouse energy, having beings' welfare and happiness at heart. When they have acquired heroic fortitude through supreme energy, they become patient with beings' many kinds of faults. They do not deceive when promising 'We shall give you this; we shall do this for you'. They are unshakably resolute upon beings' welfare and happiness. Through unshakable loving kindness they place them first (before themselves). Through equanimity they expect no reward..."

The Buddha accumulated these perfections in the course of innumerable lives as a Bodhisatta, a being destined to Buddhahood. He made his resolution to become a Buddha many aeons ago, when he was born into a brahmin family as Sumedha, during the time of the Buddha Dípaòkara who declared him to be a future Buddha ². The Buddha Dípaòkara was succeeded by other Buddhas who lived before the Buddha Gotama, the Sammāsambuddha of this Buddha era. When the Bodhisatta who would be the future Buddha Gotama made his resolution, he knew that he would have to endure innumerable lives in order to accumulate the perfections necessary for the attainment of Buddhahood.

A Sammāsambuddha has to accumulate a higher degree of wisdom and virtue than others who attain enlightenment. All those who have attained arahatship have eradicated defilements, they are "perfected ones". However, arahats do not have the same degree of wisdom and they all have different talents and abilities. Some arahats are experts at teaching, others have accumulated clairvoyance, others are inclined to be forest-dwellers, others again are experts in jhāna (absorption concentration) or in remembering past lives.³ The person who is destined to be a Sammāsambuddha, however, is born at a time when the teachings of past Buddhas have disappeared completely. He has to discover the truth all by himself and he has to teach the Path to others as well. Therefore, he has to accumulate the highest degree of wisdom and he has to be foremost in all perfections. We read in the "Gradual Sayings" (Book of the Ones, Ch XIII, § 5):

"Monks, there is one person born into the world who is unique, without a peer, without counterpart, incomparable, unequalled, matchless, unrivalled, best of bipeds he. Who is that one person? It is a Tathāgata who is Arahant, a fully Enlightened One. This, monks, is that one person."

¹ These are the four brahma vihāras.

² Introduction to the Therīgāthā by the commentator Dhammapāla.

³ "Gradual Sayings" Book of the Ones, Ch XIV, Pre-eminent ones.

The Bodhisatta made his resolution to become a Buddha out of compassion. He did not only wish to gain the truth for himself, he also wanted other beings to attain enlightenment. He had the welfare of other beings in mind when he decided to develop insight, to win the truth and to eradicate defilements. He made the resolution to become a future Buddha at the feet of the Buddha Dīpaṇkara and renewed his resolution time and again during his innumerable lives as a Bodhisatta. He was unshakable in his determination to accumulate all the perfections necessary for the attainment of Buddhahood. His determination, made out of compassion for other beings, is one of the “perfections” he fulfilled.

We read in the “Paramattha Mañjusa”(commentary to the “Visuddhimagga”, quoted in Vis. Ch VII, note 9):

“... Or it was through compassion that he faced the round of rebirths as a Bodhisatta and through understanding that he took no delight in it... Likewise it was through compassion that he became the world’s helper, and through understanding that he became his own helper...”

Through compassion he faced the round of rebirths...through compassion he became the world’s helper, as has been stated in the text. Out of compassion he accumulated all the perfections for innumerable lives. In his last life as a Buddha he taught for fortyfive years out of compassion. He showed his compassion to his disciples every time he reminded them not to be heedless but to develop right understanding of *nāma* and *rūpa*. Thinking of the Buddha’s compassion can, even at this very moment, be a reminder for us to consider and investigate any reality which appears. We should remember that also thinking of the Buddha’s compassion is not self, but a *nāma*, arising because of conditions.

When we read the beautiful sutta texts about the Buddha’s compassion and we are delighted about them without developing understanding whereto does it lead? During this pilgrimage Acharn Sujin said to me in the bus that whenever I feel delight about the words of a sutta it should remind me to develop right understanding at that very moment. She said that it is so sorrowful when *paññā* remains only at the level of theoretical level acquired through reading and considering texts. I still remember her words and they remind me to begin considering realities when I enjoy reading a sutta. Did the Buddha not teach so that even we, today, would know realities as they are, such as visible object or seeing? Also when we read suttas there is not only thinking; visible object appears too and so does seeing. Visible object should be known as a reality appearing through eyesense. Seeing should be known as a reality that experiences visible object, different from paying attention to what we read or delight about what we read. If we are forgetful of realities we forget the aim whereto the Buddha taught with such great compassion: to show us the way to penetrate the truth of realities and to be freed from defilements.

In the Jātakas, the “Birth Stories”, we read about the many virtues the Bodhisatta accumulated, even during the lives when he was an animal. We can read about his practice of dāna, for example, in the “Vessantara Jātaka”(no. 547). We read about his life as Prince Vessantara. He was born with his eyes open and immediately after his birth, holding out his hand to his mother, he said:”Mother, I wish to make some gift; is there anything?” One by one he gave away all his goods in alms and he was banished because of his charity. While he was in exile, he even gave away his children and when Sakka, the King of the devas of the “thirtythree” came to him in disguise he gave away his wife. Then, however, his wife and children were restored to him. This story may be misunderstood, but we should consider the point that is emphasized: he did not want to keep anything for himself, he was prepared to sacrifice even what was dearest to him.

During our journey we talked about the value of giving. Giving is important because it will help us to become less attached to our property. Generosity is a way of giving up one’s defilements. So long as we are stingy and cling to our property paññā cannot be developed to the degree that it can bring about detachment from nāma and rūpa. The aim of vipassanā is detachment from the concept of self and later on from all kinds of nāma and rūpa.

The Buddha had accumulated the highest degree of generosity. He had given up everything in order to help other beings to find the truth. As a Bodhisatta he had accumulated the highest degree of dāna and of all other virtues so that there were conditions for complete detachment from all nāma and rūpa when he attained enlightenment. At that moment all defilements were eradicated. He who had practised generosity to the utmost gave people the best of gifts: he taught them the Path leading to the end of all sorrow.

Chapter 2.

Detachment

The Buddha fulfilled in his previous lives all the perfections necessary to become a Sammāsambuddha. Sīla (virtue or morality) is one of the perfections he had accumulated.

Sīla is our behaviour through action and speech; this can be kusala sīla or akusala sīla. The Buddha, in his former lives as a Bodhisatta, accumulated kusala sīla of the

highest degree out of compassion. He had people's welfare in mind continuously. We read for example in the "Cariya-piṭaka" (Khuddaka Nikāya, quoted in the Visuddhimagga IX, 32) that the Bodhisatta, in his existence as the Royal Nāga (serpent) Búridatta, had undertaken the precepts on Uposatha Day. When he was lying on an anthill he was caught, sprinkled with medical charms that caused him great pain and put into a box. He could have killed his captor but he had no hate and did not break his precept vow. When he was the royal Nāga Campeyya (Visuddhimagga IX, 33) he was cruelly treated by a snake charmer but he kept the precepts and did not kill the snake charmer:

"...Now had I given way to wrath
I could have seared him into ash,
Had I relaxed mind-mastery
I should have let my virtue lapse;
And one who lets his virtue lapse
Cannot attain the highest goal."

Sīla is not only abstaining from ill deeds as laid down in the five precepts; sīla can be considered under various aspects. For example, laypeople can also observe eight precepts and there are ten precepts binding on all novices and monks. These ten precepts consist of the five precepts and in addition five other rules, namely:

abstaining from eating after midday,
from dancing, singing, music and shows
from garlands, scent, cosmetics and adornment, etc.,
from luxurious high beds,
from accepting gold and silver.

Another sīla monks have to observe are the rules of Paṇimokkha or Disciplinary Code, consisting of two hundred twenty seven rules. We read in the "Gradual Sayings" (Book of the Elevens, Ch II, § 4) that the Buddha said to Subhūti:

"In this connection, Subhūti, a monk is virtuous, he lives restrained with the restraint of the Obligation (Paṇimokkha), well equipped with range of practice, seeing danger in minutest faults, and undertaking the practice of the precepts of the training, applies himself thereto..."

The rules of Paṇimokkha help the monk to "fare the Brahma-faring completely fulfilled".

The Buddha had also observed the monk's sīla in the lives when he was leading the "Homeless life". In his last life he left his luxurious life in his palace in order to become a monk. We read in the "Middle Length Sayings" (I, 36, "Greater Discourse to Saccaka") that the Buddha said to Aggivessana:

"... Now, Aggivessana, before my Self-awakening while I was still the Bodhisatta, not fully awakened, it occurred to me: Narrow is the household life, a path of dust, going forth is in the open, nor is it easy while dwelling in a house to lead the brahma-faring completely fulfilled, utterly purified, polished like a conch-shell. Suppose now that I, having cut off hair and beard, having clothed myself in saffron garments, should go forth from home into homelessness?..."

Those who have accumulations for monkhood can "go forth" in order to "lead the Brahma-faring completely fulfilled, utterly purified, polished like a conch-shell". We all have different accumulations and not everyone can lead the monk's life. But both monks and laypeople can develop the eightfold Path in order to have right understanding of the phenomena of their lives.

After his enlightenment the Buddha taught the eightfold Path. The factors of the eightfold Path are: right understanding, right thinking, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. The three factors of right speech, right action and right livelihood are the sīla of the eightfold Path. When one observes sīla with mindfulness of nāma and rūpa there is at that moment sīla of the eightfold Path which leads to the eradication of akusala sīla.

Both monks and laypeople can observe sīla more perfectly through satipaṭṭhāna. If the monks observe the rules of Pāṇimokkha and also develop satipaṭṭhāna these rules will truly help them to "fare the Brahma-faring completely fulfilled".

Renunciation, nekkhamma, is another of the perfections the Buddha had fulfilled. We read in the "Dialogues of the Buddha", "The Great King of Glory" (Dīgha Nikāya XVII), that the Buddha told Ānanda that he was once the Great King of Glory in a former life. He was surrounded by all the pleasant things of life, he dwelt in beautiful palaces and had innumerable possessions. The rival kings in the region of the East came to see him and asked him to be their teacher. The Great King of Glory taught them the five precepts. The king was an example of virtue; he also practised dāna, he gave abundantly to those who were in need. He reflected wisely on his wealth and knew that this was the result of previous kusala kamma; the result of generosity in the past, of moderation and of restraint. We read that he could attain the four rūpa-jhānas (absorption concentration of the fine-material sphere) and practised the four Brahma-vihāras (divine abidings). This shows that he did not lead a life of indulgence in sense pleasures and that he was full of wisdom. When the queen thought that the end of his life was drawing near she tried to induce him to cling to life and to his possessions. The king told her that she should not speak thus but that she should address him in a different way. We read:

“Thus, O Queen, should you address me-- The nature of all things near and dear to us, O King, is such that we must leave them, divide ourselves from them, separate ourselves from them. Pass not away, O King, with longing in your heart. Sad is the death of him who longs, unworthy is the death of him who longs. Yours, O King, are these four and eighty thousand cities, the chief of which is the royal city of Kusāvati. Cast away desire for those, long not after life...”

We read that the queen wept and shed tears. She then wiped away her tears and spoke to the king as he had told her. The king died full of noble thoughts (the Brahma-vihāras) and was reborn in the world of Brahma.

The king had understood that all things in life are impermanent and that he should not cling to them. Although he possessed everything that is pleasant to the senses he was not enslaved to his possessions. He practised renunciation.

The understanding that all that is dear to us will not last may be only intellectual understanding acquired through thinking about our life. This kind of understanding cannot achieve detachment from the things we are clinging to. There is a wisdom of a higher level, that is, the wisdom that directly experiences the arising and falling away of nāmas and rūpas appearing through the six doors. When this wisdom has been developed it can finally lead to complete detachment from all nāmas and rūpas. The Buddha had developed this wisdom during his lives as a Bodhisatta. He could not have become a Buddha by only thinking about realities. When he attained enlightenment his wisdom could bring about complete detachment.

As a Bodhisatta he had accumulated renunciation in many different lives. We read in the “Discourse on Ghaṇikāra” (Middle Length Sayings II, no 81) that he renounced worldly life for the “homeless life” when he was born into a brahman family as Jotipāla, at the time of the Buddha Kassapa. Together with his friend the Potter Ghaṇikāra he visited the Buddha Kassapa and listened to the Dhamma. Jotipāla decided to renounce worldly life and to become a monk. He was ordained by the Buddha Kassapa.

In his last life the Buddha, when he was born as Prince Siddhattha, renounced again his worldly life. He met on his way to the park, outside the palace, an old person, a sick person and he saw a corpse. Thus, he was confronted with old age, sickness and death; he considered how nobody can escape these. When he was on his way to the park for the fourth time he met a monk and then he decided to renounce worldly life in order to seek the truth. He who in a former life as Prince Vessantara had given up his wife and children renounced again his family life, his life with Queen Yasodhāra and his new-born son Rāhula.

Some people do not understand how he could leave his new-born son. However, after he had attained enlightenment he gave his son the greatest gift a father could possibly give his son: he taught him Dhamma and at the age of twenty Rahula

reached the end of lobha (attachment), dosa (aversion) and moha (ignorance), when he attained arahatship.

The Buddha renounced all in order to teach others to develop the wisdom leading to the end of clinging. During our pilgrimage we had many conversations about detachment. Sometimes fellow-guests of the hotels where we stayed happened to drop into the monk's room where we were sitting on the floor, talking about right understanding of our life. They would join in our conversation and ask questions about the Buddha's teachings and about detachment. For many people the goal of life is enjoyment of pleasant things which can be experienced through eyes, ears, nose, tongue and bodysense. They are afraid that the Buddha's teachings will take the "spice" out of life. However, the Buddha taught the "Middle Way" which is the development of right understanding of all phenomena of life. We do not have to force ourselves not to enjoy the pleasant things of life but we can develop right understanding of whatever reality appears through one of the six doors, be it enjoyment, generosity or any other reality. Some people think that for the development of right understanding it is necessary to retire from worldly life. However, we should not force ourselves to lead a life for which we have no accumulations. Both monks and laypeople can develop the eightfold Path and attain enlightenment.

Our life is nāma and rūpa, arising because of conditions. If right understanding has been developed, paññā, not self, will perform the function of detachment from nāma and reupa. Therefore, "we" should not try to change our life; all that occurs is beyond control, it is anattā. What matters most is the development of right understanding just now, and that also is not self, it is anattā. This development is conditioned by listening to the teachings and considering them. If one truly has accumulations to retire from worldly life, the conditions in one's life will lead to this without the need to force oneself.

We all are attached to what we can experience through the senses. Attachment makes us enslaved. The more one obtains for oneself the more will one wish to have. Our wishes will never be satisfied. Even the more subtle attachment is harmful, unknowingly one accumulates more and more. Attachment conditions aversion because if one cannot satisfy one's wishes there will be aversion. Not everyone can see the difference between the moments of attachment and the moments of unselfish loving kindness in one's relationship with family and friends. Attachment is akusala, it makes us enslaved. Pure loving kindness is kusala, it should be cultivated. The Buddha cultivated loving kindness during his lives as a Bodhisatta, because he wanted to help all people, without preference for this or that person. Therefore, he left his family in order to seek the truth.

We cannot force ourselves not to have attachment because we have accumulated it for such a long time. Is there not at this moment attachment to what we see? Attachment to what we see is a reality. It is different from the reality which is visible

object and different from the reality which is the experience of visible object. Right understanding of these different characteristics can be developed. What is it that we see? We think that we see people and different things and we are bound to be attached to what we see. However, through the eyes it is only visible object which appears, nothing else. When visible object appears there must also be the experience of visible object, otherwise visible object could not appear. It is not self which experiences visible object, but a kind of *nāma*. We take visible object for “something”, for “self”, and we take the experience of visible object for self. Sati, which is *nāma*, not self, can be mindful of the different realities that appear, one at a time, and in this way there will be less clinging to the self. When we begin to realize that what is seen is merely visible object which appears through the eyes and which cannot be experienced, for example, through touch, *paññā* will realize visible object as it is: just visible object, a kind of *rūpa*, not something or somebody. We can begin to understand that thinking about what we see is another reality, different from visible object and different from seeing. There is no self, no person in visible object, it is only visible object.

We cling to what we see and we take for a “whole”, for “self” what in fact are many different realities appearing through different doorways. For example, we may think that we can touch what appears through the eyes, but what is touched is a completely different reality experienced through a different doorway; it is tangible object. Tangible object is entirely different from visible object and it arises through different conditions. Hardness, softness, heat, cold, motion and pressure are tangible objects which can be directly experienced through the bodysense, not through the eyesense. The understanding of different realities appearing through different doorways is the Middle Way that will lead to detachment from the concept of self and eventually from all realities.

Before hearing the Dhamma we knew about the attachment that is coarse, but we did not realize that there is clinging time and again to what we experience through the six doorways. When we like what we experience, for example, through the eye-door, we continue thinking of it with attachment. We are inclined to build up in our mind long stories about the person or thing we believe we see. We all have accumulations for building up stories, but we can realize thinking as *nāma*, different from seeing or from visible object. We should not try to suppress thinking, but we should realize as it is. Thinking is a reality and, thus, its characteristic can be known when it appears. The story we are thinking of is not a reality, it is merely a concept.

When we were outside in the garden of the hotel, talking about Dhamma, there was the sound of a band playing music. When hearing that sound several of us had a mental image of people marching and playing music. A mental image of people marching and beating drums is only a concept we can think of. We were again building up stories.

Acharn Sujin gave an explanation of this in Thai which venerable Bhikkhu Dhammadharo translated:

“ When we see just for a moment, then what we see has already fallen away. When we see things with which were familiar, then immediately there's the tendency to build up or make up long stories about them. Things with which we are familiar, we tend to think about for a long time, whereas things we just know vaguely may only be with us for a moment or two and then we drop them. But things we are very familiar with, we carry on and on and on.

They're both the same – say visual object appearing through the eyes in both cases, carrying on the story, fantasizing. The thinking about the visual object can go on and on and on, short or long depending, but really in both cases it's just visual object. It's the same with every doorway.

Benares, Hotel de Paris, this garden and all the people who are sitting in it, talking about Dhamma - put them together in one moment of citta which is in fact what is happening because we have the concept of that all in one moment of citta, then suppose we should die at this very moment. Then as the citta containing the world, Benares, Hotel de Paris, people sitting in the garden, falls away. So does Benares, do does Hotel de Paris, so do all the people sitting in the garden, all fall away with that citta, never to appear again.

But the only reason that it seems to us that Benares, Hotel de Paris, the people sitting in the garden talking about Dhamma don't fall away is because we are carrying on the story, we keep it going. But if we would die, there is the end of the story.”

Venerable Bhikkhu Dhammadharo remarked: “ This must lead to more detachment.”

Different realities should be known one at a time. What is heard is only sound, or audible object. When sound appears, it should be understood as it is: only sound, a kind of rūpa. Sound is only sound, there is no drum, no trumpet in the sound. Sound may be sweet or harsh, but paying attention to its quality or defining it is not hearing but it is another moment of consciousness. When audible object appears we should not imagine it to be a neutral sound, sounds have different qualities. But at the moment of just hearing we do not pay attention to its particular quality. Gradually paññā will know precisely what object appears at a particular moment. At first we know in theory that thinking about sound is not the same as hearing and we believe that we have understood. But we can find out that, instead of the direct understanding of the characteristics of realities appearing one at a time, we are merely thinking of

them and that we take thinking for awareness. Nāma and rūpa are not just words, they are realities that can be directly known when they appear.

Through mindfulness of different characteristics we can prove that the Middle Way leads to detachment from the concept of self and eventually from all realities. There is no self who could try to be detached, it is paññā that brings about detachment. It is a blessing that the Buddha accumulated renunciation which reached its culmination at the moment he attained Buddhahood.

When he realized all phenomena as they are there was complete detachment from them. From then on he taught the Middle Way.

Chapter 3.

The long Way.

Out of compassion the Buddha developed during his innumerable lives as a Bodhisatta the wisdom that would enable him to become a Sammāsambuddha. A Sammāsambuddha is a person who discovers the truth without the help of a teacher and who is able to teach the truth to others as well.

We read in the commentary to the “Khuddakapāṭha”, the “Paramatthajotikā”, on the “Three Refuges”, 14:

“... and this is said ‘Buddha’: in what sense buddha? He is the discoverer (bujjhita) of the Truths, thus he is enlightened (buddha). He is the enlightener (bodhetā) of the

generation, thus he is enlightened. He is enlightened by omniscience, enlightened by seeing all, enlightened without being led by others....”

He could not have become a Sammāsambuddha without the right conditions for this. In his many lives as a Bodhisatta he developed sati and paññā because he had to accumulate paññā to a greater extent than anybody else. When the Bodhisatta at the feet of the Buddha Dípaòkara made his resolve to become a future Buddha he must have listened to the teaching of Dhamma and developed sati. He listened also to the teachings of other Buddhas who came after the Buddha Dípaòkara. In the “Sublime Story” (Mahāpadāna Sutta, Dialogues of the Buddha II, 14) we read that the Buddha spoke about six previous Buddhas, about their families, their span of life and the pair of disciples who were their attendants. In the “Discourse on Ghaṇikāra” (Middle Length Sayings II, 81) we read that the Buddha Kassapa taught him Dhamma when he, in his life as Jotipāla, visited him together with his friend the potter Ghaṇikāra. The Bodhisatta was in that life ordained as a monk and he must have developed mindfulness of nāma and rúpa. He did not attain enlightenment then, but he developed sati and paññā for many more lives, out of compassion for other beings and also for us. His enlightenment is the condition for us to be able to develop right understanding at this moment.

As we read in the “Paramatthajotikā”, “He is enlightened by seeing all...”. The paññā he had developed for countless aeons reached its fulfilment at the moment of enlightenment. He had seen the conditions for all realities of life and he had realized these realities as they are: impermanent, dukkha and anattā (non-self). After having understood conditioned realities as they are, paññā could experience the unconditioned reality: nibbāna.

The Buddha had discovered the “four noble Truths”: the Truth of dukkha, of the origin of dukkha, of the cessation of dukkha and of the Path leading to the cessation of dukkha.

All conditioned realities are dukkha (suffering), since they arise and fall away. What arises and falls away cannot be happiness, it is dukkha. Birth is dukkha and our whole life is dukkha, because there is the arising and falling away of nāma and rúpa continuously. What we take for “our body” and “our mind” are rúpas and nāmas that do not stay and are therefore dukkha, not worth clinging to. Since there is birth, there have to be old age, sickness and death.

The origin of dukkha is craving. Because of craving there is the arising of nāma and rúpa at birth and our lives have to go on and on. So long as there is craving the cycle of birth and death will continue and there is no end to dukkha.

The Buddha taught the Path leading to the end of dukkha. The third Truth is the cessation of dukkha, which is nibbāna. The fourth Truth is the Way leading to the cessation of dukkha, which is the eightfold Path.

We read in the “Kindred Sayings” (V, Book XII, Kindred Sayings about the Truths, Ch III, § 1, Knowledge) that the Buddha, while he was staying among the Vajjians at Koṭigāma, said to the monks that it is through not understanding the four noble Truths that “we have run on, wandered on, this long, long road, both you and I”. He then said:

“But now, monks, the Ariyan truth of dukkha is understood, is penetrated, likewise the Ariyan truth of the arising, the ceasing of dukkha ... is penetrated. Uprooted is the craving to exist, destroyed is the channel to becoming, there is no more coming to be.”

We then read the verse:

“Who have not really seen the fourfold Ariyan truth

A long, long road must wander on through many births.

Clear gone is that which leads to birth when these are seen;

Torn up the root of dukkha. There is no more becoming.”

The Buddha had as a Bodhisatta wandered a long, long road in order to fulfil all the perfections necessary for the attainment of Buddhahood. He had been mindful and developed wisdom in many lives. What was the object of mindfulness? Seeing, colour, hearing, sound, feeling, thinking and all the other realities appearing at the present moment through one of the six doors. After he had been mindful of these realities over and over again and developed right understanding of them he attained enlightenment. For us too the object of mindfulness is seeing, colour, hearing, sound and all the other realities appearing one at a time through the six doors. Only thus paññā can gradually develop.

There can be mindfulness of nāma and rūpa which appear now, such as visible object or seeing which appear now. Some people wonder why we have to know realities such as seeing or hearing. They think that the Buddha’s teaching is too common, too ordinary; they believe that the truth must be outside daily life. It does not appeal to them to be mindful of seeing or hearing.

All realities which appear now must be known, no matter whether it is seeing, colour or unpleasant feeling about what we see. This is the only way to know ourselves. Speculation about the truth does not lead anywhere. The truth can only be known through mindfulness of what appears now.

During our pilgrimage we talked about the meaning of the word awareness or mindfulness. Someone thought that while there is seeing, there is always awareness, that is, awareness of what is seen. He thought that when there is hearing, there is always awareness, that is, awareness of what is heard. We should remember that the

word awareness as it is used in common language means: experiencing an object. Awareness or sati of the eightfold Path has a very precise meaning: it is a sobhana cetasika (beautiful mental factor) which can arise only with sobhana cittas. When sati is mindful, non-forgetful, of a reality appearing through one of the six doors, the characteristic of that reality can be known. Seeing arises time and again but is that awareness of the eightfold Path? Seeing experiences an object, visible object, but is the experience of visible object the same as “awareness” or mindfulness of visible object? When there is seeing, that is, the experience of what is visible, there is also the reality of visible object, that which appears through the eyes. Visible object and the experience of visible object are two different kinds of realities and their different characteristics can be known when there is mindfulness of them. Sati or mindfulness is again another kind of reality, and it can be aware, for example, of visible object or of the experience of visible object. Sati cannot be mindful of both realities at the same time; it can be mindful of only one reality at a time. It depends on conditions of what reality there is mindfulness. Sati can be mindful of different characteristics appearing one at a time through the different doorways. When visible object appears sati can be mindful of visible object; visible object can be realized as just visible object, a reality that does not know anything. There is no thing or person in the visible object. When the experience of visible object, seeing, appears sati can be mindful of the experience of visible object, a reality different from visible object.

When sound appears, sati, not self, can realize sound as only sound. When we think of the sound of a bird or the sound of a piano, the object has changed; it is not sound but a concept or idea we are thinking of. Paññā is able to know precisely the object that appears at the present moment. When sound appears, it can be known as it is: only sound, not “something” or “self”. There is no bird in the sound, no piano in the sound. When hearing appears, hearing can be realized as only hearing, no self who hears. If sati and paññā are not being developed hearing cannot be known as it is, as a reality that is non-self. Thus, we see that sati of the eightfold Path is completely different from “awareness” as it is understood in common language. Awareness in common language simply means experiencing or knowing an object without there being the development of the eightfold Path.

Because of ignorance and wrong view we have accumulated for so long it is difficult to know precisely which object appears at the present moment. We have doubts at which moment nāma presents itself and at which moment rūpa. “We” shall never know, only paññā will know when it is developed more. We may also doubt the usefulness of knowing realities such as seeing, visible object, hearing or sound. When doubt arises we should not be afraid of it or try to push it away. It is so fortunate that the Buddha taught us the way to know all kinds of phenomena. Doubt is a reality that should be known as it is: not self but only a kind of nāma arising because of conditions. Right at the moment of awareness the value of sati can be proved. When phenomena are understood as different elements, as nāma and rūpa, the clinging to the concept of self will eventually become less. Whereas, when we think of a

“whole”, such as “my person”, “I see”, “I hear”, “I doubt”, there is no detachment from the concept of self. Doubt about the value of the development of the Path will gradually be eliminated when paññā becomes keener and it knows more precisely the object that presents itself. The more paññā develops the more can one prove to oneself the benefit of the Path in one’s life.

We read in the “Dialogues of the Buddha” (II, 19, “Mahā-Govinda Sutta”) that Sakka, the ruler of the devas, in front of the “devas of Thirtythree”, praised eight qualities of the Buddha. One of these was the following:

“Crossed, too, by that Exalted One has been the sea of doubt, gone by for him is all question of the ‘how’ and ‘why’, accomplished for him is every purpose with respect to his high resolve and the ancient rule of right. A teacher who has attained thus far, of this kind, of this character, we find not, whether we survey the past, or whether we survey the present, save only that Exalted One.”

The Buddha, by his supreme wisdom, “crossed the sea of doubt”. He could not have crossed the sea of doubt without having cultivated the right conditions. He had developed mindfulness and wisdom with the greatest perseverance and energy. Energy, viriya, is another one of the perfections the Buddha accumulated in many lives. In the ‘Visuddhimagga’ we read in the passage about the perfections fulfilled by Bodhisattas (Ch IX, 124) concerning energy:

“They constantly arouse energy, having beings’ welfare and happiness at heart. When they have acquired heroic fortitude through supreme energy, they become patient with beings’ many kinds of faults....”

In his last life the Buddha, before he attained enlightenment, searched the truth as a pupil of Ālāra the Kālāma and then of Uddaka, but their teachings did not lead to the attainment of the truth. He followed the severest ascetical practices with supreme effort and heroic fortitude but his effort was not yet the effort of the Middle Way. In the “Greater Discourse to Saccaka” (Middle Length Sayings I, 36) we read that he described to Aggivessana his ascetical practice of the ‘non-breathing method’ which caused him severe pains. Yet, he was not cast down by the pains. We read:

“...When I, Aggivessana, had stopped breathing in and breathing out through the mouth and through the nose and through the ears, there came to be a fierce heat in my body. As, Aggivessana, two strong men, having taken hold of a weaker man by his limbs, might set fire to him might make him sizzle over a charcoal pit, even so, Aggivessana, when I had stopped breathing in and breathing out through the mouth and through the nose and through the ears, did there come to be a fierce heat in my body. Although, Aggivessana, unsluggish energy came to be stirred up by me, unmuddled mindfulness set up, yet my body was turbulent, not calmed, because I was harassed in striving by striving against that very pain. But yet, Aggivessana, that painful feeling, arising in me, persisted without impinging on my mind...”

The Buddha took hardly any food and his body became completely emaciated. We read in the “Greater Discourse on the Lion’s Roar” (Middle Length Sayings I, 11) that the Buddha said to Sāriputta:

“Because I ate so little, all my limbs became like the knotted joints of withered creepers; because I ate so little, my buttocks became like a bullock’s hoof; because I ate so little, my protruding backbone became like a string of balls; because I ate so little, my gaunt ribs became like the crazy rafters of a tumble-down shed; because I ate so little, the pupils of my eyes appeared lying low and deep in their sockets as sparkles of water in a deep well appear lying low and deep; because I ate so little, my scalp became shrivelled and shrunk as a bitter white gourd cut before it is ripe becomes shrivelled and shrunk by a hot wind. If I, Sāriputta, thought: ‘I will touch the skin of my belly’, it was my backbone that I took hold of. For, because I ate so little, the skin of my belly, Sāriputta, came to be cleaving to my backbone. If I, Sāriputta, thought: ‘I will obey the calls of nature’, I fell down on my face then and there, because I ate so little. If I, Sāriputta, soothing my body, stroked my limbs with my hand, the hairs, rotted at the roots, fell away from my body as I stroked my limbs with my hand, because I ate so little. But I, Sāriputta, even by this procedure, by this course, by this mortification, did not reach states of further-men or the excellent knowledge and insight befitting the ariyans....”

The Bodhisatta found that such severe austerity that he had practised with “unsluggish energy” was not the way leading to enlightenment. He decided to take solid food. From the hands of the girl Sujātā he received boiled rice and sour milk, near the river Nerañjarā. Afterwards he cast the golden dish upstream into the river and, full of his resolve “Today will I become a Buddha!”, he walked in the evening towards the Bodhi-tree (“Expositor” I, 34). He would attain enlightenment that very night.

We read in the “Gradual Sayings” (Book of the Twos, Ch I, § 5) that the Buddha spoke to the monks about the energy he exerted in order to attain enlightenment. He said that he did not “shrink back from the struggle”. We read that he said:

“...’Gladly would I have my skin and sinews and bones wither and my body’s flesh and blood dry up, if only I may hold out until I win what may be won by human strength, by human energy, by human striving.’ By my earnest endeavour, monks, I won enlightenment, I won the unrivalled freedom from the bond.”

The commentary to the Jātakas (I, 17) mentions that the Buddha had spoken the words: “Gladly would I have my skin and sinews and bones wither...” under the Bodhi-tree. The Bodhisatta had put forth heroic energy and his resolution had never faltered to gain the truth for the happiness of other beings. He persevered until the end.

When we read about struggle and energy we should not misunderstand these words. We are used to thinking that a self should make an effort for the attainment of the truth. But viriya or energy is not self; it is a type of *nāma* arising because of conditions.

After his enlightenment the Buddha taught the energy of the Middle Way, *sammā-vāyama* (right endeavour) of the eightfold Path. *Sammā-vāyama* is accompanied by *sammā-diñhi* (right understanding) of the eightfold Path. When *sammā-diñhi* realizes a characteristic of *nāma* or *rūpa* appearing through one of the six doors, there is *sammā-vāyama* already. There is no self who can make an effort to be mindful. The Buddha exhorted his disciples to apply energy and not to be indolent in order to encourage them to develop the eightfold Path. We too should not “shrink back from the struggle” and consider *nāma* and *rūpa* over and over again. Even when we are discouraged about the development of right understanding there should be mindfulness of the reality appearing at that moment: *nāma* or *rūpa*. Then there is right effort already, since it arises together with right understanding. The more mindfulness and understanding arise, the more phenomena will be known as they are: only *nāma* and *rūpa* arising because of conditions.

Chapter 4.

The Buddha's Perfections.

The Buddha, as a Bodhisatta, endured many lives in order to become a *Sammāsambuddha*. Had he not made the resolve to become a Buddha he would not have needed to accumulate all the perfections necessary for Buddhahood and he could have attained enlightenment sooner. It was out of compassion that he endured so many lives.

When we were on our pilgrimage in India, we also visited the Jeta Grove, the park that *Anāthapiṇḍika* had presented to the Buddha. The Buddha stayed in this Grove for twentyfive rainy seasons. When we were walking around in the Jeta Grove our friend Khun Kesane said to me: “He suffered so much for us.” At that moment I did not grasp these words very well. It seemed to me that a Buddha who suffers for other people is like a saviour who could redeem them through his suffering. This is an idea taught in some religions, but strange to the Buddhist teachings. However, now I understand better the meaning of my friend's words. He endured many lives also for our sake in order to become a Buddha.

Through the teachings we come to know the Buddha who is endowed with all the perfections necessary to attain Buddhahood. We come to know him as someone who preached about generosity, about sīla (morality), loving kindness, energy, forbearance and the cultivation of all other kinds of wholesomeness. We come to know the Buddha as someone who practised what he preached. We learn about his teaching of the development of wisdom through mindfulness of *nāma* and *rūpa* in our daily life. When we practise what the Buddha taught and we are mindful of the realities appearing through the six doors we begin to have some understanding of the Buddha's wisdom. His wisdom can even today change our life. Without the Buddha's teachings we would be unable to be mindful of realities, we could not have right understanding of our life. It is evident that the Buddha's perfections must have had their appropriate conditions. The Buddha could not have attained such wisdom and such purity of virtue immediately, they must have been cultivated for an endlessly long time. Only the right cause can bring about such result. Thus we come to understand that out of compassion for us he endured innumerable lives in order to accumulate the perfections that would make him foremost in wisdom and in all excellent qualities.

Someone of our group remarked that he did not understand why the Thais paid such deep respect at the holy places by bowing down, by incense, candles and flowers, by sticking gold leaf on the stupas and Buddha statues and by chanting texts of the scriptures. He said that he did not have accumulations for these forms of respect. Acharn Sujin explained to him that it is because of *satipaṭṭhāna*, the four Applications of Mindfulness the Buddha taught, that such great respect is paid to the Buddha. When we are mindful of *nāma* and *rūpa* we understand more deeply the value of the Buddha's teachings in our life. We come to know the teacher through the teachings and then we wish to pay respect to him, even though he passed away. In Buddhism one does not follow the teacher with blind faith, but one listens to the teachings, considers them and applies them in one's life. When we have seen for ourselves that the Dhamma can change our life, we come to know the teacher and we wish to pay respect to him. When we had come to the end of our pilgrimage the same person said: "Now I wish to return to the holy places and pay respect."

In order to be able to teach the Dhamma which can change people's lives, the Buddha endured so much during the "four incalculable ages and a hundred thousand aeons" when he was a Bodhisatta ("Visuddhimagga" Ch IX, 26). Forbearance, *khanti*, is one of the perfections he accumulated. In many Jātakas one can read about his forbearance and loving kindness. He did not allow hate to corrupt his mind even when his enemies tried to murder him on various occasions. In the "Khantivādi Jātaka" (no. 313) we read that when he was asked by the king of Kāśi "What do you preach, monk?", he replied "I am a preacher of patience". Then the king had him flogged with scourges of thorns and had his hands and feet cut off, but the Bodhisatta did not feel the slightest anger. He practised what he preached.

In his last life, when he had become a Buddha, his cousin Devadatta wanted to harm him and hurled a stone at him. The Buddha's foot was pierced by a stone splinter. We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (Sagāthā vagga, Ch I, part 4, § 8, The splinter) that although the pains were "keen and sharp", he bore them "mindful and discerning, nor was he cast down". When he was lying down in the "lion's posture", devas came to see him and expressed their admiration for his endurance:

"See! what a wondrous creature (Nāga) is the worshipful recluse Gotama! It is by this wondrous nature that he endures, mindful and discerning, the pains that have arisen in his body, keen and sharp, acute, distressing and unwelcome, and that he is not cast down...."

He who could endure anything exhorted the monks to have endurance. We read in the "Discourse on all the Cankers" (Middle Length Sayings I, no 2) about the getting rid of all the cankers. The Buddha said concerning the cankers to be got rid of by endurance:

"And what, monks, are the cankers to be got rid of by endurance? In this teaching, monks, a monk, wisely reflective, is one who bears cold, heat, hunger, thirst, the touch of gadflies, mosquito, wind and sun, creeping things, ways of speech that are irksome, unwelcome; he is of a character to bear bodily feelings which, arising, are painful, acute, sharp, shooting, disagreeable, miserable, deadly. Whereas, monks, if he lacked endurance, the cankers which are destructive and consuming might arise. But because he endures, therefore these cankers which are destructive and consuming are not. These, monks, are called the cankers to be got rid of by endurance."

Can we endure "ways of speech that are irksome, unwelcome"? Are we always forbearing with regard to other people and patient with ourselves? We tend to be impatient sometimes when we do not notice a rapid progress in understanding. We should accumulate patience and the way to do this is mindfulness of *nāma* and *rūpa*.

During our journey, when we had to sit in the bus for eighteen hours (and this happened now and then), we might have liked to change the situation. Don't we wish to change the situation when things are not as we would like them to be? However, right understanding of *nāma* and *rūpa* is more important than the fact whether a situation is pleasant or unpleasant. The experience of pleasant or unpleasant objects through the senses is *vipāka* and how could we change *vipāka* that is the result of *kamma*? Life is *nāma* and *rūpa* arising because of conditions and there is no self who could control *nāma* and *rūpa*. During our pilgrimage there were many reminders to consider *nāma* and *rūpa* and at such moments there were less conditions for *akusala citta*s with aversion. Nobody in our group complained during the long journey in the bus. Once we were sitting in the dark during the small hours of the morning and we still had not reached the hotel where we were supposed to stay overnight. One of the ladies asked the Thai monk who was with us whether he would preach about

endurance. The monk, who never showed any tiredness and preached all day long to us with great vigour, stood up and preached about endurance.

We should have endless patience with regard to the development of wisdom. The “Visuddhimagga” (Ch I, 135) gives us an example of a monk who attained enlightenment on his death-bed. It is not difficult to attain enlightenment when the right conditions have been cultivated, but it is difficult to be mindful over and over again, with great patience and perseverance, during all our activities. We read that the Elder Mahā-Saḍgharakkhita was lying on his death-bed and had not attained enlightenment. The young bhikkhu who was his attendant said that it would be a disappointment for many people who had come to see him if he would die an ordinary man. We read that the Elder said:

“...’Friend, thinking to see the Blessed One Metteyya ⁴, I did not try for insight. So help me to sit up and give me the chance.’ He helped the Elder to sit up and went out. As he went out the Elder reached Arahatship and he gave a sign by snapping his fingers. The Order assembled and said to him ‘Venerable sir, you have done a difficult thing in achieving the supramundane state in the hour of death’ - ‘That was not difficult, friends. But rather I will tell you what is difficult. Friends, I see no action done (by me) without mindfulness and unknowingly since the time I went forth’....”

Even though we have understood how to develop the eightfold Path we are often not patient enough to be mindful, day in day out, of visible object and seeing, sound and hearing and all the other realities that appear. At the moment of mindfulness and right understanding there is only the characteristic which appears and there is no impatience with regard to a result of our development, no worry about the future. When hardness, for example, presents itself there can be awareness of only hardness; when the experience of hardness presents itself there can be awareness of that characteristic. This is the way to become more patient with ourselves and with other people. This is the way to be able to endure any kind of situation.

Truthfulness, *sacca*, is another one of the perfections the Buddha had fulfilled. We read in the Jātakas that the Bodhisatta always kept his promises even when he was in danger of life. We read in the “Sutasoma Jātaka” (no 537) that a man-eater (who would be reborn later on in the Buddha’s time as Aḍḍulimāla) was going to kill the Bodhisatta in order to eat him. The Bodhisatta had to go away for a while first in order to fulfil a promise he had made to a Brahmin. After that he came back on his own accord to the man-eater since he had promised him to return. His truthfulness tamed the man-eater. When the man-eater was reborn in the Buddha’s time as Aḍḍulimāla he was tamed again by the Buddha and he even attained arahatship.

⁴ The Bodhisatta Metteyya will be the next Buddha.

In the “Lakkhaṇa Sutta” (The Marks of the Superman”, Dialogues of the Buddha III, no 30) we read how accumulated kusala kamma conditioned the bodily features of the Buddha. We read concerning his truthfulness:

“Whereas in whatsoever former birth... monks, the Tathāgata, then being human, put away lying, felt revulsion at lies, became truth-speaker, bound to truth, trustworthy, consistent, breaking his word to no one, he by the doing and by the accumulating of that kamma, by the mass and the abundance thereof... was reborn in a bright and blessed world. Deceasing thence, and attaining this life as you know it, he acquired these two Marks of the Superman, to wit, down growing in separate hairs, all over his body; and between the eyebrows a hairy mole, white and like soft cotton-down.”

He who discovered the truth all by himself and taught the truth to others had accumulated perfect truthfulness and sincerity. Through satipaṭṭhāna one can become more sincere. When we are mindful of realities we will come to know our more subtle defilements which were hidden to us before. We may have thought that we were sincere so long as we did not tell lies. But are we always sincere in our speech and behaviour? The “Visuddhimagga” (I, 60 etc.) mentions untruthfulness in speech or deportment of monks by which there is transgression of the purity of right livelihood. For example, a monk lays claim to a higher than human state that is non-existent in order to obtain requisites⁵. This is an offence of “Defeat”; he can no longer be in communion with the Sangha. We read about hypocrisy in the case of a monk who wants to have requisites but rejects them because he wants to make a good impression on people so that they will give him more. We read about the monk who composes his deportment so that people will admire him more (Visuddhimagga Ch 1, 70):

“... he walks studiously, stands studiously, sits studiously, lies down studiously; he walks as though concentrated; and he is one who meditates in public...”

The monk is not supposed to ask for requisites and he is not allowed even to give a hint or make a suggestion about what he needs. The “Visuddhimagga” gives many examples of wrong speech of monks who are seeking requisites. A few of these examples are the following (Visuddhimagga Ch I, 75):

“Ingratiating chatter is endearing chatter repeated again and again without regard to whether it is in conformity with truth and Dhamma. Flattery is speaking humbly, always maintaining an attitude of inferiority. Bean-soupery is resemblance to bean soup; for just as when beans are being cooked only a few do not get cooked, the rest get cooked, so too the person in whose speech only a little is true, the rest being false, is called a ‘bean soup’; his state is bean-soupery.”

⁵ The requisites of robes, food, dwelling-place and medicines.

These passages are useful reminders also for lay-people. Are there moments we wish to pretend to be wiser and more virtuous than we really are? Is there some untruthfulness in our speech, be it only a little?

When we come to know realities as they are there will be more truthfulness in our life. When, for example, sound appears and there is mindfulness of sound as only a reality, we will know sound as it is. We will know hearing as it is, visible object as it is, seeing as it is. We shall have a clearer understanding of what our life really is: only *nāma* and *rūpa*. When delusion about reality diminishes we shall be less inclined to delude ourselves and others.

When the Bodhisatta was the elephant Chaddanta (Chandanta Jātaka, no. 51) he was pierced in the navel by a poisonous shaft, but he had no hate towards the hunter. When the hunter told him that he had been ordered to take his tusks for the queen of Kāsi, Chaddanta knelt down, cut off his own tusks and gave them to the hunter. After that he died.

When the Bodhisatta was the Great Monkey he pulled a man out of a rocky chasm (Jātaka no. 71). The man who was hungry and wanted to eat the monkey dashed a stone on his head. The monkey looked at him with eyes full of tears and warned him for the result of such a deed:

“Oh act not so, good sir, or else

The fate you reap will long deter

All others from such deeds as this

That you would do to me today.”

The monkey felt no hate and wanted to help the man; regardless of his own pain he saw to it that the man reached his journey's end in safety.

The Buddha who had practised *mettā* without equal preached *mettā* to others. We read in the “*Mettā Sutta*” (*Sutta-nipāta* vs. 143-152):

“... May creatures all be of a blissful heart.

Let no one work another one's undoing

Or even slight him at all anywhere;

And never let them wish each other ill

Through provocation or resentful thought...”

Venerable Dhammadharo related to us an example of *mettā*. A woman in Indonesia lost her husband because of the reckless driving of a young man. They caught the

young man and brought him to her but she did not want to have him sent to court and even wished to pay for his education. This woman had mettā without limits.

The Buddha who extended mettā to all beings without exception exhorted others to have mettā as well. When we are treated unjustly by others we may wonder whether we should do anything about it. When we develop satipaṭṭhāna we shall understand more clearly that “we” cannot do anything. The experience of praise and blame, honour and dishonour is only vipāka which arises because of conditions.

We read in the “Parable of the Saw” (Middle Length sayings I, 21) that the Buddha said:

“... Monks, as low-down thieves might carve one limb from limb with a double-handed saw, yet even then whoever sets his mind at enmity, he, for this reason, is not a doer of my teaching. Herein, monks, you should train yourselves thus: ‘Neither will our minds become perverted, nor will we utter an evil speech, but kindly and compassionate will we dwell, with a mind of friendliness, void of hatred; and, beginning with him, we will dwell having suffused the whole world with a mind of friendliness that is far-reaching, wide-spread, immeasurable, without enmity, without malevolence.’ This is how you must train yourselves, monks.

If you, monks, were to attend repeatedly to this exhortation on the Parable of the Saw, would you, monks, see any way of speech, subtle or gross, that you could not endure?”

“No, Lord.”

“Wherefore, monks, consider repeatedly this exhortation on the Parable of the Saw; for a long time it will be for your welfare and happiness.”

Thus spoke the Lord. Delighted, these monks rejoiced in what the Lord had said.

In many lives the Bodhisatta had given the example of such mettā as he preached in the “Parable of the Saw”. We might find this parable rather incomprehensible. Is it not going too far to “dwell with a mind of friendliness” even when we are being carved limb from limb? Those who develop satipaṭṭhāna will understand this parable. When we see that our life is nāma and rūpa we will not try to “do” anything about people who treat us badly. There is seeing now, can we “do” anything about it? There is hearing now, can we “do” anything about it? We see and hear pleasant and unpleasant things, but we cannot prevent seeing and hearing from arising. They are only vipāka, arising because of conditions. All that matters is right understanding of the nāmas and rūpas that appear. When there is right understanding of realities we can cope with difficult situations in our life, without the need to “do” anything.

Upekkhā, equanimity, is another one of the perfections the Buddha had fulfilled. Upekkhā is in this case not indifferent feeling but the wholesome cetasika

tatramajjhataṭṭa, which literally means: keeping in the middle of things, evenmindedness. We read in the “Visuddhimagga”(XIV, 153) that its function is to prevent deficiency and excess or to inhibit partiality. It is manifested as neutrality.

We read in the “Visuddhimagga” (IX, 124) that Bodhisattas through upekkhā expect no reward. The Bodhisatta cultivated impartiality towards all beings since he had made the resolve to become a Buddha for the sake of all beings. He did not expect any reward in return.

We read in the “Cūla-Dhammapāla Jātaka” (no 358) that when the Bodhisatta was born as Prince Dhammapāla, his father the King Mahāpatāpa became enraged when the Queen was playing with him and did not rise when he entered the room. Out of jealousy he ordered the executioner that his hands and feet were lopped off like bamboo shoots. After that the King ordered that his head be cut off as well. The infant Prince Dhammapāla had no trace of hate, but he had firmly resolved thus:

“Now is the time to restrain your mind; now, good Dhammapāla, be impartial towards these four persons, that is to say, towards your father who is having your head cut off, the man who is beheading you, your lamenting mother, and yourself.”

We read in the “Greater Discourse on the Lion’s Roar” (Middle Length Sayings, I, no. 12) that the Buddha related to Sāriputta his ascetical practices to which he had applied himself before his enlightenment:

“Then I, Sariputta, lay down to sleep in a cemetery, leaning on a skeleton. Cowherd’s boys, having come up to me, spat and staled on me, and showered me with dust and stuck twigs into my ears. But I, Sāriputta, well know that I was not the creator of a malign heart against them. This then came to be for me, Sāriputta, through abiding in even-mindedness.”

The Buddha wanted to help all beings and he taught without partiality to anybody who was ready to listen. He was not partial towards his son Rāhula. Rāhula asked him many questions about Dhamma and, thus, he taught Rāhula as he would teach others who asked him questions.

In the “Discourse on the Analysis of the Sixfold (Sense-)Field” (Middle Length Sayings III, no 137) we read that the Buddha spoke to the monks about the “three arousings of mindfulness”, practising which an ariyan disciple is fit to instruct a group:

“...As to this, monks, a teacher teaches Dhamma to his disciples, compassionate, seeking their welfare, out of compassion, saying: ‘This is for your welfare, this is for your happiness.’ But his disciples do not listen, do not lend ear, do not prepare their minds for profound knowledge and, turning aside, move away from the teacher’s instruction. Herein, monks, the Tathāgata is neither delighted nor does he experience delight, but dwells untroubled, mindful and clearly conscious....”

We read that in the case that some disciples do not listen and others listen, the Tathāgata is neither delighted nor depressed. “Having ousted both delight and depression, he dwells with equanimity, mindful and clearly conscious.” In the case that his disciples listen, the Tathāgata is delighted and he experiences delight, but “he dwells untroubled, mindful and clearly conscious.”

The monk who has left his home for the “homeless life” has many opportunities to cultivate impartiality. Laypeople who are bound by their family life are apt to have preference for their own relatives. The monk is not bound by such ties and he has the opportunity to devote himself entirely to the task of helping without any partiality all people who are ready to listen to the Dhamma. The monk should not expect any reward for his teaching of Dhamma. Since he is not allowed to ask for anything he truly leads a life of contentment with little.

Also laypeople who practise the “Middle Way”, which is the eightfold Path, can cultivate tatramajjhataṅga, evenmindedness. Partiality is unwholesome. Having preference for certain people or expecting a reward from anyone are forms of attachment. Impartiality is wholesome. Tatramajjhataṅga arises with each wholesome citta. We can find out for ourselves that the cultivation of the eightfold Path makes us less apt to partiality. When we learn to see ourselves and others as only nāma and rūpa we shall have less preference for such or such person. We shall learn not to expect praise, honour or other kinds of rewards from others. We should remember that the Buddha was unruffled by praise or blame. He was even-minded, untroubled, mindful and clearly conscious.

The Buddha fulfilled the perfections of dāna (generosity), sīla (morality), nekkhamma (renunciation), paññā (wisdom), viriya (energy), khanti (patience), sacca (truthfulness), adhiṭṭhāna (determination), mettā (loving kindness) and upekkhā (equanimity). Thus, he could become the Sammāsambuddha:

“He is the Exalted One, arahant, fully enlightened, perfected in knowledge and way of life, one well-gone, a knower of the worlds, none higher, a tamer of tamable men, a teacher, the awake among devas and men, the Exalted One!” (Gradual Sayings, Book of the Sixes, Ch I, § 10, Mahānāma.)

Chapter 5.

The Buddha's Enlightenment.

In the “Discourse on Wonderful and Marvellous Qualities” (Middle Length Sayings III, no. 123) we read that the Buddha asked Ānanda to deliver to the monks a discourse on the wonderful and marvellous qualities of the Tathāgata. Ānanda said that the Bodhisatta arose in the Tusita heaven mindful and clearly conscious. This was a wonder, a marvellous quality of the Lord's. He remained in the Tusita heaven mindful and clearly conscious. Ānanda said that this too was a wonder, a marvellous quality of the Lord's. The Bodhisatta had accumulated mindfulness and wisdom in countless lives and his next life would be his last one in the course of which he would attain Buddhahood. He stayed in the Tusita heaven for as long as his lifespan lasted. This was another wonderful and marvellous quality. According to the commentary to the “Middle Length Sayings”, the “Papañcasūdani”, this was due to the fact that he had fulfilled all the perfections; there was no gift he had not given, no sīla he had not observed.

The Bodhisatta had fulfilled all the perfections and now the time had come for his last birth as Prince Siddhatta Gotama, son of Sudodhana, King of the Sakyans, and Queen Māya. He was born 623 B.C. in the Lumbini Gardens, in what is today the country of Nepal.

In Lumbini we saw the pillar King Asoka had erected 249 B.C. when he paid homage at the place where the Buddha was born. There is an inscription on the pillar saying that King Asoka, after he had been anointed for twenty years, came himself and worshipped this spot, because the Buddha Sakyamuni was born here. The inscription

also says that he made the village of Lumbini free of taxes and that it had to pay only an eighth share of the produce. We paid respect near the Asoka pillar with candles, incense and chanting, and also through considering and investigating *nāma* and *rūpa*. *Satipaṭṭhāna* is the highest respect we can pay to him who fulfilled all the perfections in order to teach devas and men *satipaṭṭhāna*. The pavement was extremely hot for our bare feet, but are there not *nāma* and *rūpa* that can be known when they appear? Also when we have aversion there are *nāma* and *rūpa* and *paññā* can begin to know their characteristics. At the moment of mindfulness there is no aversion and in this way one starts to attach less importance to the fact whether experiences are pleasant or unpleasant. We have accumulated attachment and aversion and when there are conditions they arise, but through right understanding we shall learn to see them as they are: only conditioned realities.

We read in the same sutta that the Bodhisatta's mother gave birth while standing and that four devas received him and placed him in front of his mother. Two streams of water appeared from the sky, one cool and one warm, which were used for a water-libation for the Bodhisatta and his mother. Today we see a pool which reminds us of those heavenly streams of water used for the water-libation. There is also a temple, erected on top of an older structure, in honour of Queen Māyā. She died on the seventh day after the birth of the Bodhisatta, as is always the case for the Bodhisatta's mother. We read in the same sutta:

“Face to face with the Lord, revered sir, have I heard, face to face have I learnt: ‘The moment, Ānanda, the Bodhisatta has come to birth, standing on even feet and facing north, he takes seven strides, and while a white sunshade is being held over him, he scans all the quarters and utters as with the voice of a bull: ‘I am chief in the world, I am best in the world, I am eldest in the world. This is the last birth, there is not now again-becoming’. And inasmuch, revered sir,... I regard this too as a wonder, a marvellous quality of the Lord’s.”

After Ānanda had enumerated all the wonderful and marvellous qualities, the Buddha added another wonderful and marvellous quality:

“Wherefore do you, Ānanda, regard this too as a wonder, a marvellous quality of the Tathāgata's: As to this, Ānanda, the feelings that arise in the Tathāgata are known; known they persist; known they go to destruction; perceptions are known; the thoughts that arise are known; known they persist; known they go to destruction. So do you, Ānanda, regard this too as a wonder, a marvellous quality of the Tathāgata's.”

After having heard about all the marvels connected with the birth of the Bodhisatta one might be surprised about the last mentioned marvellous quality. Some people are surprised that the Buddha's teachings deal with such common realities as seeing, hearing, thinking or feelings. They expect that there is mystery in Buddhism. The Buddha taught us the development of understanding in order to know the

impermanence of feelings, perceptions, thoughts and all the other realities. This kind of understanding leads to the end of birth and all sorrow. Not mystery is the aim of the Buddha's teachings, but discovery of the true nature of realities. Is this not the greatest "marvellous quality" of the Buddha?

In order to discover the truth the Bodhisatta left his life of sense pleasures for the "homeless life". He took instructions first from Ālara the Kālāma who could attain arūpa-jhāna (immaterial jhāna) as far as "the plane of nothing". Since the Bodhisatta mastered what he taught, Ālara regarded him as his equal and set him on the same level as himself. The Bodhisatta found that Ālara's teaching did not lead to enlightenment and he left Ālara. He then took instructions from Uddaka who could attain the highest stage of arūpa-jhāna which is "the plane of neither-perception-nor-non-perception". The Bodhisatta mastered what Uddaka taught and was set on the same level as the teacher. The Bodhisatta found that also Uddaka's teaching did not lead to "self-awakening", to nibbāna. Therefore, he decided to search for the truth all by himself. He practised rigid austerities and became like a skeleton. Then he found out that such practices were not the way to enlightenment. He decided to take some solid food ("Greater Discourse to Saccaka", Middle Length Sayings I, no 36).

On the full-moon day of May (Visākhā) he accepted boiled rice and sour milk from Sujātā, near the river Nerañjarā. The five disciples who attended to him left when they saw him accepting solid food, because they thought that he had reverted to a life of abundance. We read in the "Commentator's Introduction" to the "Therī-gāthā" that, after the Bodhisatta had eaten the food, he cast the golden dish upstream into the river, and, full of his resolution "Today will I become a Buddha!", ascended at eventide the Bo-tree seat. He had made the resolution to become a Buddha aeons ago and he had renewed this resolution time and again during his countless lives as a Bodhisatta. That evening he walked full of his resolution to the Bodhi-tree, after he had spent the day in various attainments in the dense Great Forest on the bank of the river (Expositor I, 34). According to the commentary to the Jātakas, when he sat down under the Bodhi-tree he resolved that he would not change his seat until he had attained enlightenment, speaking the following words:

"Gladly would I have my skin and sinews and bones wither and my body's flesh and blood dry up, if only I may hold out until I win what may be won by human strength, by human energy, by human striving."

Later on he spoke these words to the monks when he told them about the energy he had applied in order to attain enlightenment. He exhorted them to apply energy as well (Gradual Sayings, Book of the Twos, Ch 1, § 5).

We read in the "Discourse on Fear and Dread" (Middle Length Sayings I, no. 4) how he spent the three "watches" of the night during which he attained enlightenment. He first attained the four rūpa-jhānas. We then read:

“Thus with the mind composed, quite purified, quite clarified, without blemish, without defilement, grown soft and workable, fixed, immovable, I directed my mind to the knowledge and recollection of former habitations: I remembered a variety of former habitations, thus: one birth, two births... a hundred thousand births, and many an aeon of integration and many an aeon of disintegration and many an aeon of integration-disintegration; such a one was I by name, having such and such a clan, such and such a colour, so was I nourished, such and such pleasant and painful experiences were mine, so did the span of life end. Passing from this, I came to be in another state where such and such a one was I by name...Passing from this I arose here. Thus I remember divers former habitations in all their modes and detail. This, brahman, was the first knowledge attained by me in the first watch of the night; ignorance was dispelled, knowledge arose, darkness was dispelled, light arose, even as I abided diligent, ardent, self-resolute....”

From this quotation we see how the Bodhisatta remembered previous lives, even as long as a “hundred thousand births” ago. He remembered these lives in all their details. When one reads the Jātakas, the birth-stories of the Bodhisatta, one might consider them as only legends. We should note that, just as the other parts of the Tipiṭaka, also the Jātakas deal with realities. They relate us how the Bodhisatta accumulated all the virtues necessary for Buddhahood. These virtues are real, not fictitious. He had accumulated all the perfections ever since he had made the resolve to become a future Buddha. In this very night he remembered his previous lives there would be the fulfilment of his resolve for the sake of which he had endured so much, out of compassion for all beings.

The sutta then continues concerning the second watch of the night:

“Then with mind composed... I directed my mind to the knowledge of the passing hence and the arising of beings. With the purified deva-vision surpassing that of men I see beings as they pass hence or come to be; I comprehend that beings are mean, excellent, comely, ugly, well-going, ill-going, according to the consequences of their deeds... This, brahman, was the second knowledge attained by me in the middle watch of the night; ignorance was dispelled, knowledge arose, darkness was dispelled, light arose, even as I abided diligent, ardent, self-resolute....”

The Bodhisatta who had always been intent on the happiness and welfare of all beings must have felt great compassion after he had seen the passing away and rebirth of beings. Always gentle, compassionate, merciful and kind, he had been intent on the happiness of others by giving gifts, by observing sīla and by dispelling people’s fears. He had always been extremely patient with people’s many kinds of faults and he had never felt a trace of hatred when they tried to harm him. That night he saw how people reaped what they had sown, how they were heirs to their deeds. He saw some people who had a happy rebirth and others who had an unhappy rebirth. He who would very soon make an end to the cycle of birth and death was full of compassion for those who were still caught up in ignorance and craving and, thus,

subject to the dangers of rebirth. He was unshakable in his resolve to help as many beings as he could by attaining Buddhahood that very night.

The sutta then speaks about the third watch of the night during which he realized the four noble Truths. He who had listened to the teachings of previous Buddhas and had accumulated mindfulness and understanding during countless lives must have cultivated satipaṭṭhāna also during the third watch of that night. While sitting under the Bodhi-tree he must have been mindful of all realities such as visible object, seeing, sound, hearing, hardness, softness, feelings and other phenomena. Only thus could he have attained enlightenment. For us too, mindfulness and understanding of nāma and rūpa appearing now is the sure way to enlightenment. The sutta continues:

“Then with the mind composed... fixed, immovable, I directed my mind to the destruction of the cankers. I understood as it really is: This is dukkha, this is the arising of dukkha, this is the stopping of dukkha, this is the course leading to the stopping of dukkha. I understood as it really is: These are the cankers, this is the arising of the cankers, this is the stopping of the cankers, this is the course leading to the stopping of the cankers. Knowing this thus, seeing thus, my mind was freed from the canker of sense-pleasures, and my mind was freed from the canker of becoming, and my mind was freed from the canker of ignorance. In freedom the knowledge came to me: I am freed; and I comprehended: Destroyed is birth, brought to a close is the Brahma-faring, done is what was to be done, there is no more of being such or such. This, brahman, was the third knowledge attained by me in the last watch of the night; ignorance was dispelled, knowledge arose, darkness was dispelled, light arose, even as I abided diligent, ardent, self-resolute.”

“Done is what was to be done” we just read. The Bodhisatta had done all that had to be done in order to become a Sammāsambuddha who could through his teaching of Dhamma help others to be freed from birth. He really had done his utmost in order to attain the goal for which he had lived as a Bodhisatta during aeons. How had he discovered the four noble Truths? He had seen the conditions for the arising of all phenomena and had understood how the cycle of birth and death is conditioned by ignorance and craving. He had seen how there can be an end to birth, old age, sickness and death: through making an end to ignorance and craving. He who thoroughly knew all conditioned dhammas realized at the moment of enlightenment the unconditioned dhamma: nibbāna.

During our pilgrimage we paid respect at the place of the Buddha’s enlightenment. Adjoining the Bodhi-tree is a temple, built on top of a much older structure. It is said that the actual place of enlightenment was where now this temple is located. The original Bodhi-tree was destroyed, but from one of the roots grew a new sprout which has become the Bodhi-tree we see today. One can see pilgrims of different nationalities worshipping at the Bodhi-tree. Tibetans walk around the tree with their rosaries at all hours of the day and night, reciting “Om mani padme hum”. We walked around the tree thinking of the Buddha’s words to be mindful also when

walking; the memory of his words at this place could be a condition for considering different *nāmas* and *rūpas*. Through the development of the Path he taught we can prove that the Buddha really attained enlightenment. We paid respect by chanting texts under the tree and later on we had Dhamma discussion. Leaves were falling down on us and we collected them.

Around the Bodhi-tree small monuments have been erected commemorating how the Buddha spent the first weeks after his enlightenment. After he had become an omniscient Buddha he did not move away from the Bodhi-tree, but he stayed in the same position, seated cross-legged under the tree, for another week. We read in the “*Atthasālinī*” (Expositor 13, Introductory Discourse) that after having penetrated all dhammas he thought:

“ ‘To this has my vision pierced! See, even to this Law have I reached, who seeking and inquiring for more than a hundred thousand ages, for over four incalculable periods, here seated in this cross-legged posture (as on a throne) have expelled every conceivable corruption.’ And he sat on the ‘throne’ for yet seven days, reflecting on the Law he had penetrated....”

According to the “*Visuddhimagga*” (Ch XXII, 19-21), those who have attained enlightenment, after the *phala-cittas* (fruition-consciousness which are the *vipākacittas* produced by the *magga-citta*, the path-consciousness) have fallen away, review the path, review fruition, review the defilements abandoned, review the defilements still remaining and review *nibbāna*. The arahat does not review any remaining defilements since they all have been eradicated. Thus, he reviews the path: “So this is the path I have come by.” He reviews fruition: “This is the blessing I have obtained.” He reviews the defilements that have been abandoned: “These are the defilements abandoned in me.” He reviews *nibbāna*: “This is the dhamma that has been penetrated by me as object.” The Buddha, after his enlightenment, also reviewed his attainments. We read in the “*Vinaya*” (*Mahāvagga* I, 1.1):

“At one time the awakened one, the Lord, being recently full awakened, was staying at Uruvelā on the bank of the river Nerañjarā at the foot of the Tree of Awakening. Then the Lord sat cross-legged in one (posture) for seven days at the foot of the tree of Awakening experiencing the bliss of freedom.”

We read that he contemplated the “causal uprising” of phenomena (*palicca samuppāda*) in direct and reverse order. He contemplated the “arising of this entire mass of *dukkha*”, of birth, old age, dying, grief, sorrow and lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair. And he contemplated the stopping of this entire mass of *dukkha*.

About the following weeks after his enlightenment we read in the “*Atthasālinī*”:

“Then after those seven days, he rose from the throne and stood gazing at it for seven days without blinking his eyes, thinking, ‘On this throne I have indeed attained omniscience.’ Hence this doubt occurred to the devas: ‘Surely today Siddhattha must still have something to accomplish, for he has not abandoned attachment to the throne.’ The Teacher, knowing their doubt, in order to quiet it, rose immediately into the sky and displayed the Twin Miracle.... Thus having displayed the Twin Miracle he descended from the sky and for seven days walked to and fro between the Throne and the place where he had stood....”

The “Path of Discrimination” (Paṭisambhidāmagga, I, 125) states concerning the “Twin Miracle”:

“... Here the Perfect One performs the Twin Miracle, which is not shared by his disciples. He produces a mass of fire from the upper part of his body and a shower of water from the lower part of his body....”

Some people may wonder whether it is possible to perform such a miracle. When the right conditions have been cultivated citta can perform “miracles”. Those who have cultivated jhāna can develop supernormal powers such as walking on water or diving into the earth. We read about several of the Buddha’s disciples who were skilful at supernormal powers. Therefore, it is not surprising that an omniscient Buddha could perform the Twin Miracle.

The “Atthasālinī” relates that the Buddha spent the fourth week in the “Jewel House” where he contemplated the Abhidhamma. It is said that when he contemplated the seventh book, the “Book of Conditional Relations” (Paṭiṭhāna) his body emitted rays of six colours. In this book are taught twentyfour classes of conditional relations, and, the “Atthasālinī” states, “his omniscience certainly found its opportunity therein.”

We paid respect at the place where the Buddha stood the second week, looking at the Tree without blinking his eyes. Then we paid respect at the place where he, the third week, walked up and down. After that we paid respect at the place of the “Jewel House” where he, the fourth week, contemplated the Abhidhamma. Only later on, during another pilgrimage, it was pointed out where the “Jewel House” was.

The Buddha spent the fifth week at the goatherd’s (banyan) tree where he met a brahman who asked him how one can become a brahman and what the things are which make one a brahman. The Buddha explained to him that he who eradicates defilements is a brahman.

The sixth week the Buddha spent at the foot of the Mucalinda tree and the seventh week he spent at the Rājāyatana tree. One afternoon we walked through the fields to the places which commemorate the sixth week and the seventh week. We had to walk six kilometers in the burning sun in order to reach the Rājāyatana tree and six kilometers back. On the way we passed the place of the Mucalinda tree. One lady of

our group had been sick during the journey but she was determined to complete her pilgrimage and also that afternoon she decided to come with us. In the morning she had already walked to the river Nerañjarā and that afternoon she walked with us, full of energy and endurance. The Dhamma gave her strength. Later on in Delhi she had to leave us and return to Thailand sooner, because of her sickness. A Thai monk, residing in the Thai temple of Bodhgaya guided us to the places. He walked in front with Venerable Bhikkhu Dhammadharo and the novice, Venerable Jetananda followed them; we walked behind in a long row. The Thai monk preached to us while we were walking and exhorted us to have energy and determination. On the way we talked about characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa*, and mindfulness of them. We talked about the phenomena appearing at the present moment, while walking.

We came first to the “Mucalinda Pond”, the place commemorating the sixth week after the Buddha’s enlightenment. We read in the “Vinaya” (Mahāvagga I, 2) that the Buddha sat cross-legged in one posture for seven days at the foot of the Mucalinda Tree, “experiencing the bliss of freedom”. At that time there was rainy weather and cold winds were blowing. Therefore, Mucalinda, the serpent king, encircled the Lord’s body seven times with his coils and spread a great hood over his head in order to protect him. At the end of that week, when the sky was clear again, he unwound his coils from the Lord’s body, assumed the form of a young man and paid respect to the Buddha.

We then went to the Rājāyatana Tree where we saw the remnant of a small stone post which King Asoka had erected in order to mark the importance of the place. When the Buddha was staying there two merchants, Tapussa and Bhallika, who had come from Ukkāla, passed that place. A deva, who was a relative of them spoke to them:

“My good fellows, this Lord, having just (become) wholly awakened, is staying at the foot of the Rājāyatana, go and serve that Lord with barley-gruel and honey-balls, and this will be a blessing and happiness for you for a long time.”

We read that the merchants approached the Buddha in order to offer this food, but that the Buddha did not have a bowl to receive the food in and, therefore, the “four Great Kings” (devas) offered him four bowls made of rock crystal. Thus, the Buddha received the barley-gruel and honey-balls in a new bowl made of rock crystal. We then read:

“Then the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika, having found that the Lord had removed his hand from the bowl, having inclined their heads towards the Lord’s feet, spoke thus to the Lord: ‘We, Lord, are those going to the Lord for refuge and to Dhamma; let the Lord accept us as lay-disciples gone for refuge for life from this day forth.’ Thus, these came to be the first lay-disciples in the world using the two-word formula.”

They did not use the three-word formula of refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, because there was no Sangha at that time. In the “Gradual Sayings”(Book of the Ones, Ch XIV, f) it is said:

“Monks, chief among my disciples, lay-followers, of those who first took refuge (in my teaching), are the merchants Tapassu (in Burmese manuscript Tapussa) and Bhalluka.”

Yasa’s father (Vinaya, Mahāvagga I, 7. 10) would be the first lay-disciple using the threefold formula, since the Sangha had been formed at that time, and countless people after him would take their refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. At this place we took refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. We paid respect with candles, incense and chanting. The taking of refuge at this place has a special significance when one commemorates the two merchants who were the first lay-followers to have confidence in the Buddha and his teaching and who expressed this confidence through taking refuge in the Buddha and the Dhamma for their whole life. We also want to express our confidence in the Buddha’s teachings because we are developing satipaṭṭhāna and we see the benefit of it in our lives.

On the way back it was very hot and I became thirsty. My former Thai teacher gave me the last drop of water from her bottle. Throughout our journey all people were most generous and helpful. They were attentive to the needs of others day and night. The two doctors in our group gave medicines to every-one who had a stomach ailment until their supply was exhausted towards the end of the journey. The leader of our group, Khun Suwat, took care of all our material needs. He arranged for our food on the way and saw to it that the monks and the novice had their meals in time, before midday, and he took care so that nobody ever went hungry. When we could not have a picnic in a wood or field he managed to find a room, for example, in the back of a shop where he provided cardboard lunchboxes for us, complete with forks and spoons. Such a room suddenly became a delightful place when there was an opportunity for a Dhamma conversation. In this way any place was delightful throughout our journey.

We stayed for two days in the guest-quarters of the Thai temple in Bodhgaya. Venerable Bhikkhu Dhammadharo was so impressed by the holy places. He repeated aloud the text: “Iti pi so Bhagava...”, meaning: “the Blessed One is such since he is accomplished, fully enlightened...” He deeply considered this text which refers to the cause of the Buddha’s enlightenment. We have to think of all the aeons he accumulated as a Bodhisatta wisdom and all good qualities, the perfections, so that he could become a Sammāsambuddha. He taught Dhamma out of compassion, also for us now.

Several times a day we went to the Bodhi-tree where we paid respect, walked around or had Dhamma conversations. As a sign of respect we sprinkled water over the roots of the Bodhi-tree and I remembered to “extend the merit” to all beings who were able

to rejoice in our kusala. We visited the Abbot of the Thai temple and presented to him the recordings with “The Lives and Psalms of the Buddha’s Disciples”, composed by Khun Amara Chayabongse. Inspired by the “Thera-therí-gāthā” (Psalms of the Brothers and Sisters) she wrote in a very lively way about men and women in the Buddha’s time who proved in their daily life that the Path can be developed and enlightenment be attained. She read these talks with an accompaniment of Indian music which emphasized the words in a very effective way. Seated in the temple we listened to her story about Ambapāli who had been a courtesan but who attained arahatship after she had contemplated the impermanence in her own ageing body. We listened to the quotation from the text of the Therígāthā (LXVI):

“Glossy and black as the down of the bee my curls
once clustered.

They with the waste of the years are liker to
hempen or bark cloth.

Such and not otherwise runneth the rune, the word
of the Soothsayer.”

Further on the poem says:

“Gleamed as I smiled my teeth like the opening buds
of the plaintain.

They with the waste of the years are broken and
yellow as barley.

So and not otherwise runneth the rune, the word of
the Soothsayer.”

The poem ends as follows:

“Such has this body been. Now age-weary and
weak and unsightly,

Home of manyfold ills; old house whence the
mortar is dropping.

So and not otherwise runneth the rune, the word of

the Soothsayer.”

Afterwards we talked about old age. We all are subject to old age. So long as we are in the cycle of birth and death we cannot escape old age. When we notice bodily changes it can remind us at that moment to be mindful of *nāma* and *rúpa*. Thus, we shall be less inclined to take the body for self; we shall have “wise attention” instead of attachment to the body or aversion from old age. The Buddha found the way leading to freedom from birth, old age, sickness and death.

Chapter 6.

Patience in the Development of Understanding.

In the third watch of the night when the Buddha attained enlightenment, he realized a Dhamma deep in meaning and, for those who are enslaved to sense pleasures, difficult to grasp. Therefore, he was for a moment inclined not to teach Dhamma.

We read in the “Vinaya”(Mahāvagga I, 5) that the Buddha spent the eighth week after his enlightenment at the foot of the Goatherd’s Banyan. It was there that he was inclined not to teach Dhamma:

“This that through many toils I’ve won--

Enough! Why should I make it known?

By folk with lust and hate consumed

This dhamma is not understood.

Leading on against the stream,

Subtle, deep, difficult to see, delicate,

Unseen ‘twill be by passion’s slaves

Cloaked in the murk of ignorance.

In such wise, as the Lord pondered, his mind inclined to little effort and not to teaching dhamma....”

We then read that the Brahmā Sahampati vanished from the Brahma-world and appeared before the Buddha, entreating him to teach Dhamma:

“Lord, let the Lord teach dhamma, let the Well-farer teach dhamma; there are beings with little dust in their eyes who, not hearing dhamma, are decaying, (but if) they are learners of dhamma they will grow.”

We read that he spoke in verse:

“There has appeared in Magadha before thee
 An unclean dhamma by impure minds devised.
 Open this door of deathlessness, let them hear
 Dhamma awakened to by the stainless one.
 As on a crag on crest of mountain standing
 A man might watch the people far below,
 Even so do thou, O Wisdom fair, ascending,
 O Seer of all, the terraced heights of truth,
 Look down, from grief released, upon the peoples
 Sunken in grief, oppressed with birth and age.
 Arise, thou hero! Conquerer in the battle!
 Thou freed from debt! Man of the caravan!
 Walk the world over, let the Blessed One
 Teach dhamma. They who learn will grow.”

We read that the Brahmā Sahampati entreated the Buddha three times to teach Dhamma. Then the Buddha, out of compassion, surveyed the world with the eye of an Awakened One and saw beings with little dust in their eyes and beings with much dust in their eyes, of good dispositions and of bad dispositions. He saw beings who would be able to understand Dhamma and beings who would not be able to understand Dhamma.

The account which is given does not tell us whether the Buddha also saw us today who listen to his teachings and develop the Path. He was an omniscient Buddha and Enlightened Ones can by their omniscience know everything they direct their attention to. As we read in the “Visuddhimagga”(Ch VII, 29, note 7):

“All dhammas are available to the adverting of the Enlightened One, the Blessed One, are available to his wish, are available to his attention, are available to his thought. ((Ps. II, 195) And the Blessed One’s knowledge that has past and future as its objective field is entirely actual experience since it is devoid of assumption based on inference, tradition or conjecture.”

Out of compassion he surveyed the world with the eye of an Awakened One and out of compassion he was going to teach Dhamma. He who was “from grief released” had compassion for “the peoples sunken in grief, oppressed with birth and age.”

The Buddha wanted to teach Dhamma first to his former teacher Āṣāra the Kālāma, but he had passed away seven days ago, as a deva told the Buddha. The Buddha then wanted to teach Dhamma to Uddaka, but he had passed away the night before. The Buddha decided then to teach the five monks who had been his attendants and who were staying now near Varānāśī at Isipatana in the deerpark. On the way to Isipatana the Buddha met Upaka, the naked ascetic, whom he told that he had destroyed all defilements. Upaka shook his head and took a different road.

When the five monks saw the Buddha from far they decided not to attend to him. They believed that he had reverted to a life of abundance since he had accepted solid food from Sujāta. But when the Buddha came near they changed their mind and attended to him.

The Buddha explained to them that the two extremes of addiction to sense pleasures and of self-torment should be avoided and that the Middle Way should be followed which is the eightfold Path (Vinaya, Mahāvagga I, 6. 17, 18). He then explained to them the four noble Truths. Thus, he set rolling the “Wheel of Dhamma”.

In Sarnath, which is the site of the first sermon, we saw the great Stupa, erected on top of an older stupa, and excavations of old structures which were once the monks’ dwellings. The Chinese pilgrims Fa Hian (beginning of the fifth century) and Hiuen Tsang (640) who gave accounts of their pilgrimages to the Buddhist sites, also described Sarnath and the monuments they saw there. Hiuen Tsang described the whole monastery as he saw it with fifteen hundred monks, a vihara, a statue of the Buddha represented as turning the Wheel of Dhamma and a stone pillar erected by King Asoka. One can still see a remnant of this pillar. The capital is kept in the museum of Sarnath. In the modern temple built by the Mahā-Bodhi society, relics of the Buddha are kept which are shown only once a year.

When we were in Sarnath it was full moon, Uposatha day. In the afternoon we were sitting on the grass, not far from the place of the first sermon. We listened to the same words the Buddha once spoke to the five disciples (Vinaya, Mahāvagga, I, 6. 19 a.f.):

“And this, monks, is the ariyan truth of dukkha: birth is dukkha, and old age is dukkha and disease is dukkha and dying is dukkha, association with what is not dear is dukkha, separation from what is dear is dukkha, not getting what one wants is dukkha-- in short the five khandhas of grasping are dukkha...”

The Buddha then explained the ariyan truth of the arising of dukkha, the ariyan truth of the ceasing of dukkha and the ariyan truth of the course leading to the ceasing of dukkha.

Venerable Bhikkhu Dhammadharo spoke to us about Koṭṭhāṇṇa, the first of the disciples who attained enlightenment. We read that the Buddha said:

“ ‘Indeed, Koṭṭhāṇṇa has understood, indeed, Koṭṭhāṇṇa has understood.’ Thus it was that Añña Koṭṭhāṇṇa became the venerable Koṭṭhāṇṇa’s name.” (Vinaya, Mahāvagga I, 6. 31)

Añña Koṭṭhāṇṇa had understood, he had “crossed over doubt”, which means that he had attained the stage of the sotāpanna. We read that he asked for ordination and that the Buddha ordained him with the words: “Come, monk, well taught is dhamma, fare the Brahma-faring for making an utter end of dukkha.” The other four disciples also became sotāpannas and asked for ordination. Thus, the Sangha was formed. After the Buddha had taught them more about the five khandhas which are impermanent, dukkha and not self, they all attained arahatship.

The full moon was rising and after an outdoor picnic in the garden of the Thai temple we all went around the Stupa three times, paying respect with candles and incense. While we were going around the Stupa we considered nāma and rūpa. The development of understanding of them is the only way to know that seeing is dukkha, visible object is dukkha, hardness is dukkha, the experience of hardness is dukkha. After the chanting we returned to the Thai temple where we sat outside for another Dhamma conversation. We talked about the perfections the Buddha had accumulated during his lives as a Bodhisatta and we talked about satipaṭṭhāna.

The Buddha taught for fortyfive years and when he was eighty he passed finally away. In Kusínara we visited the place of his parinibbāna and the place of his cremation. A temple with a recumbent Buddha image marks the place of his parinibbāna. When the Buddha was resting he was doing so in the “lion’s posture”: lying on his right side, “putting one foot on the other, collected and composed, with his mind set on rising up again” (Kindred Sayings IV, Fourth Fifty, Ch IV, § 202). He lay down in the “lion’s posture” also when the time had come for his parinibbāna, the end of the cycle of birth and death.

We read in the “Mahā-Parinibbāna Sutta” (Dialogues of the Buddha II, no. 16) that simultaneously with his parinibbāna the Brahmā Sahampati said:

“All must depart-- all beings that have life

Must shed their compound forms. Yea, even one,

A Master such as he, a peerless being,

Has passed away.”

We read that Sakka, King of the Devas said:

“All transient are the elements of life;
 Into existence having come, they pass away,
 Good is the peace when they forever cease.”

It was already dark when we went around the large Stupa, erected near the temple. While going around we remembered the Buddha's last words not to be heedless but to be mindful; mindful of what appears at the present moment.

During our pilgrimage we followed the same procedure at all the “holy places” we visited. We paid respect with candles, incense and chanting and we considered the Dhamma. Whenever there was an opportunity we would have a conversation on satipaṇhāna. When we entered the bus again we would continue our Dhamma conversation. We also visited some other places where the Buddha used to stay, such as Rājagaha, where we climbed the Vulture's Peak and saw excavations at the sites where once were the dwelling places of the Buddha and his disciples.

We visited the Jeta Grove near Sāvathī where the Buddha stayed for twentyfive rainy seasons. Also at that site one can see the excavations where the dwelling places of the Buddha and his disciples were located. Anāthapiṇḍika whose house was not far away had offered the Jeta Grove to the Buddha. He visited the Buddha several times a day and also other people who lived in the village nearby came to see the Buddha towards the evening in order to hear him preach the Dhamma. Acharn Sujin said to us that people who walked in this Grove walked with mindfulness. This was a reminder for us not to be forgetful of nāma and rūpa while we walked.

The Jeta Grove is full of trees, it is still a real Grove. We were sitting on the grass, under the trees, near the site of the Buddha's dwelling place. We had a Dhamma conversation while many birds were singing. Nearby was a well with very clear water which must have been there since long ago. We all drank this water from a cup we passed around. Acharn Sujin said that we should have great patience while we develop satipaṇhāna. Awareness should be developed so that we do not confuse anymore the different realities appearing through the six doors. We should not take them as a “whole”, but their true nature should be realized as they appear one at a time. Through the eyes only visible object or colour can be experienced. We do not see Jeta Grove. Jeta Grove is a concept we are thinking of; it is different from visible object. Visible object should be known as it is: only visible object, a kind of rūpa that is experienced through the eyes. There is no Jeta Grove in the visible object. Through the ears only sound can be experienced. We do not hear the birds of Jeta Grove, that is again a kind of thinking. Sound is only sound, it should be realized as it is. There are no birds in the sound. Visible object, sound, our thinking of Jeta Grove, our memory of Jeta Grove, all these realities are impermanent, they fall away. Satipaṇhāna should be developed with great patience until there is no Jeta Grove in the visible object and visible object is realized as it is; until there are no birds of Jeta

Grove in the sound and sound is realized as it is. All phenomena should be known as they are so that we are no longer deluded about reality. This was the best Dhamma conversation we could possibly have in this spot, because the subject was the same as what the Buddha always taught and had taught also here: the eye, seeing and colour, the ear, hearing and sound, all phenomena should be realized as they are: not a person, not “something”, not self.

Chapter 7.

Clinging to Sati.

The Buddha who had fulfilled all the perfections in order to be able to teach us Dhamma, has passed finally away. Today there are still his teachings and the Order of monks. The Tipiṭaka (the “Three Baskets” of the Buddhist teachings) were preserved for a long time only by oral tradition. They were rehearsed for the first time during the First Council, convened three months after the Buddha’s parinibbāna. Under the presidency of Mahā-Kassapa fivehundred arahats recited together the teachings. Among them was Ānanda who had attained arahatship on the eve of the Council. The Second Council was convened one century later at Vesālī. The Third Council was held during the reign of King Asoka, in the third century B.C. at Pāṭaliputta. King Asoka was very active at the propagation of Buddhism. He instituted state pilgrimages to the Buddhist holy places instead of pleasure trips which were formerly undertaken by kings. He erected at the holy places monuments and memorial columns and on some of these he had rules of morality inscribed. After the Third Council King Asoka sent missionaries to different countries in order to propagate the Buddhist teachings. The arahat Mahinda, who is said to be his son, was sent to Sri Lanka where he founded the “Great Monastery”. Here the Tipiṭaka was committed to writing for the first time and the commentaries were translated into Sinhalese. Before leaving for Sri Lanka in order to spread the teachings, Mahinda came to the monastery on the hill of Sanchi. This monastery had formerly been built for him. He came in order to take leave of his mother who is said to have stayed there as a bhikkhunī.

We visited the stupas of Sanchi which are situated on the hill. One can see the stupa where relics of the Buddha were kept and the stupa containing the relics of Sariputta and Moggallana. At the south Gateway of the main Stupa there is a remnant of a pillar erected by King Asoka. We walked downhill and saw on the way excavations of the sites of the bhikkhunīs’ quarters, where Mahinda’s mother is said to have stayed. Further down the hill we passed another monument marking the place where Mahinda’s teacher, who was also an arahat, used to stay. Many people, even after the Buddha had passed away, attained arahatship and, thus, made an end to the cycle of birth and death.

After our visit to Sanchi we entered the bus again for a long ride and we had more Dhamma talks on visible object and seeing, sound and hearing and the characteristic of thinking. I was worried about the difference between seeing, which is the

experience of visible object, and paying attention to different colours. It is true that seeing does not see a neutral colour; the colour cannot be taken out of visible object. But paying attention to different colours is another moment of reality, it is different from seeing-consciousness which has as its function only the experience of what appears through the eyesense. Acharn Sujin said to me: "While looking out of the window you do not mind how many colours there are, or which colours, but there is visible object. There is something appearing just through the eyes, isn't there?" We should be aware of just the characteristic that appears, without any worry about it. If we worry about the object of awareness instead of being aware of the characteristic which appears at that moment, realities cannot be known as they are.

During our pilgrimage there were extremely long bus journeys, such as the stretches from Balrampur to Delhi, from Delhi to Sanchi and from Sanchi to Aurangabad from where we visited the caves of Ajanta. In Ajanta one can see Buddhist viharas, dwelling places, dating from 200 B.C. , decorated with many beautiful frescos. The monks used to stay here during the rainy season. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang (A.D. 650) went also to Ajanta and gave an account of his visit. The caves of Ellora which we visited as well are Buddhist, Brahman and Jain.

Sometimes we had to sit in the bus for the greater part of the night, but in between we got out of the bus when the tired drivers had to drink tea or when there was a flat tire. Then we had an opportunity to enjoy the Indian village life which has not changed much since the time of the Buddha. We had Dhamma conversations even during the night when we were sitting in the dark and, thus, we hardly noticed the bodily discomfort due to the long sitting in the bus and the lack of sleep.

The Thai monk who had been so kind to join us in Nalanda where he resides in the Thai monastery, often stood in the front of the bus and preached at all hours of the day and night. He often mentioned to us the "inner and outer sense-fields" (āyatana), which are the doors of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, bodysense and mind, and the objects experienced through these doors. We were looking out of the window to see all the nice sights, but these were only visible object. Venerable Dhammadharo remarked that he found it quite wonderful to be reminded of all these realities on a bus trip like this. Where would one have such an occasion, he found. We should not to waste the opportunity to understand the inner and outer āyatanas; they are not theory, they are here, now! In my memory I still hear the voice of the Thai monk, saying with much emphasis: "āyatana painai, āyatana painog" which are the Thai words denoting the inner and outer āyatanas.

The venerable bhikkhu had intended to be with us only part of the way, but he changed his mind and decided to accompany us a little further, until he finally decided to come with us all the way to Bombay.

One night when we were still sitting in the bus instead of sleeping in a hotel, he preached about all the different levels of giving, from the lowest to the highest level.

He explained that sīla can be considered also under the aspect of giving. If one abstains from ill deeds one gives other beings the opportunity to live in safety, without fear or worry. He said that the giving up of the āyatanas is the hardest to accomplish. He who has no more clinging has given up the eye, colour, the ear, sound and all the other āyatanas. The giving up of one's defilements is the highest level of giving.

During our pilgrimage we stayed in different hotels, some of which were very striking, such as the Raja's Guesthouse in Balrampur. What was once a splendid palace with exquisite furniture and paintings of famous British artists on the walls is now an old, neglected, dilapidated building. We all have accumulated defilements and when we look at things defilements are bound to arise, according to our accumulations. One of us admired the colour schemes of the rooms and had attachment. I looked at the place as a housewife and thought that it needed a good cleaning out. I had aversion, but less than I usually would have had, had I not been on this pilgrimage.

When there is seeing, citta rooted in lobha (attachment), dosa (aversion) or moha (ignorance) may arise almost immediately. When we are carried away by our defilements we are forgetful of the different realities that appear. We are mostly forgetful of visible object or seeing; then right understanding is not being developed. Visible object appears time and again, also now, but we are so absorbed in the details of what we see that we forget to be mindful. Visible object is only what appears through the eyes, nothing else. We may believe that we have to do something special in order to know visible object, but this is not so. We may worry that there is thinking about visible object instead of awareness of it, but are there not also moments that there isn't any thinking, just the appearance of what is visible? While our eyes are open are there not moments of seeing or is there thinking all the time? If there were no seeing we could not think of what is seen. We think about the details of what we see and we pay attention to different colours, but these moments are different from just seeing, the experience of what appears through the eyes. When there are conditions for the arising of sati it can be aware of only one reality at a time, it may be visible object, seeing, feeling or any other reality. It depends on conditions what reality is the object of mindfulness. When visible object appears it should be realized as just visible object, not something or somebody. There is no India, no Balrampur, no Raja's Guesthouse in the visible object.

Our pilgrimage was very fruitful in many ways. The goal of the journey was paying respect to the Buddha who taught the Dhamma out of compassion and, thus, there were many opportunities for kusala citta. At the holy places we were thinking of the Buddha's teachings and his words reminded us to consider and investigate nāma and rūpa. The Dhamma discussions were most helpful for clearing up misunderstandings about satipaṭṭhāna. It is mostly clinging to sati which causes one to deviate from the right Path. We should not forget that sati is anattā; it arises when there are conditions

and it is beyond control. Later on someone told me that he, after his return to Bangkok, hardly had any sati. However, there should be no regret. Who can control the conditions for the arising of realities, and, thus, also for the arising of sati? The conditions for sati of the eightfold Path are association with the right friend, listening to the Dhamma and considering it, applying the Dhamma and also, seeing the value of sati in one's life. Not everyone wants to associate with the right person and not everyone is ready to listen to the Dhamma. Thus, also these conditions are beyond control. During our pilgrimage we had many opportunities to associate with the right person and to listen to the Dhamma, but would this pilgrimage itself have been possible without the right conditions for it? Could we control those conditions?

Some people may think that being at the holy places is in itself a condition for mindfulness. However, if one goes to the holy places without having listened to the Dhamma as it is explained by the right person, these places cannot remind us to be aware.

We are bound to cling to sati, but having a great deal of sati without right understanding is not the aim of vipassanā. Right understanding is the most important factor. We all have accumulated both akusala and kusala; when there are conditions nobody can prevent them from arising, they are anattā. How can we expect that after our pilgrimage there will be sati all the time and no more defilements? When we see that also our defilements are anattā, not self, only phenomena arising because of conditions, we shall have less clinging to sati and less regret when there is lack of sati. When regret arises we should remember that it is only a conditioned reality. Regret is not self, it is a type of nāma. We can learn that our life is only nāma and rūpa.

We cannot organize our life in order to have a great deal of sati. During our journey we were reminded time and again to live more from moment to moment and to worry less about the future. We did not know what the next moment would bring, anything could happen. Our journey was full of unexpected events. For instance, we hardly ever knew what time we would arrive at the next hotel and at what time we would sleep. There were flat tires and many other reasons for delay. We did not worry about it whether there would be anything to drink or to eat. The experience of objects through the senses such as bodily discomfort is actually vipāka, the result of kamma, and who can control the results of past actions? There were so many opportunities for Dhamma conversations and the development of right understanding. Is this not most important in life? If there is more understanding of the present moment one worries less about the future. We were very happy during our journey, even when there was bodily discomfort.

During our pilgrimage we discussed the difference between awareness and thinking. In theory we understand that thinking about a reality is different from mindfulness of a reality when it appears, but we often confuse thinking and mindfulness. We may believe that we are mindful of sound as just sound while we are actually merely

thinking about sound and try to locate it. When we notice this we can realize that this is only a kind of thinking.

When we think about hearing and sound, seeing and colour and try to know the difference between *nāma* and *rūpa* there is no awareness of either of them. In theory we have understood the difference between *nāma* and *rūpa*, but when they appear we may erroneously think that we are mindful of *nāma* as *nāma* and of *rūpa* as *rūpa*. We may take our theoretical knowledge for the direct experience of their characteristics. In that way right understanding is not being developed.

When hearing appears it should be understood as only hearing, no self who hears. Only the characteristic of the reality appearing at the present moment, whatever it may be, should be known as it is. When sound appears, it can be realized as only sound, it does not belong to us. In this way right understanding of realities can be developed. When sound is known but not yet the experience of sound, there may be a condition for *paññā* to develop also the understanding of the experience of sound. We should not have an idea that we can direct *sati* to this or that particular object. There is no rule as to what object *sati* should take; *sati* may be aware of sound many times without there being awareness of hearing, or it may be aware of hearing without there being awareness of sound.

When we think about characteristics there is no need to worry about this, because thinking arises due to conditions. One can think with *lobha*, *dosa* or *moha*, or with *kusala citta*s; it all depends on one's previous accumulations. Thoughts are different every moment and, thus, how could thinking be self? How could we possibly direct our thinking? The characteristic of thinking can be realized as it is, as only *nāma*, not self.

Right understanding, not self, discerns the characteristics that appear as they are. When *paññā* is more developed it can realize the impermanence of realities, but first the characteristic which appears should be known more precisely. When, for example, sound appears it should be known as a kind of *rūpa* and when hearing appears it should be known as a kind of *nāma*. So long as the difference between the characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa* has not been clearly distinguished, their arising and falling away cannot be realized.

When *paññā* has not been developed yet one doubts when an object is experienced through a sense-door and when through the mind-door. Visible object is experienced by seeing and also by other *citta*s arising in the same sense-door process. After that visible object is experienced by *citta*s arising in a mind-door process. All the sense-objects are experienced by *citta*s arising in the relevant sense-door processes and after that by *citta*s arising in a mind-door process. Later on there are other mind-door process *citta*s which define the object and think about it. At this moment the mind-door process is concealed, but when *paññā* clearly knows *nāma* as *nāma*, different

from rūpa, there is no longer doubt about the mind-door, it is no longer concealed. This occurs at the first stage of insight knowledge.

Through our discussions we began to understand more than before that intellectual knowledge is different from direct understanding of realities. We may have a great deal of intellectual knowledge due to our reading of the scriptures and pondering over them. We may understand intellectually that all conditioned realities are impermanent but this kind of knowledge is not the same as the paññā that directly understands realities and that can eradicate the wrong view of self. We may read in the scriptures that the eye is impermanent, seeing is impermanent, colour is impermanent; that the ear is impermanent, hearing is impermanent, sound is impermanent. But if there is no awareness of them when they appear there will be only intellectual know-ledge and not the direct understanding of realities as they are.

The Dhamma deals not with merely words, but with reality that should be proved. There were many people before us who have proved the truth through the development of the eightfold Path. Our pilgrimage to the Buddhist places was most fruitful.
