## Pahankanuwa Sermon #166

English Translation

Translated from Sinhala

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(Pahankaṇuwa Sinhala Audio Dhamma Sermon No.20)

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

(Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Self-Enlightened One)

**Pali Stanza:**

*"Dunniggahassa lahuno,*

*yatthakāmanipātino;*

*Cittassa damatho sādhu,*

*cittaṃ dantaṃ sukhāvahaṃ."*

**From:**

Dhammapada Verse 35 (Citta Vagga)

Dear Listeners,

The lesson taught and declared to the world by the Buddha, the supreme Teacher of the three worlds, is the taming of the mind. The Blessed One declared that this entire world is led by the mind, and that everyone is subject to the control of the mind. To the Buddha's divine eye, it was visible that the world, burdened with defilements and inclined toward defilements, is being dragged by this mind into the terrifying abyss of *saṃsāra*, the ocean of *saṃsāra*, filled with the *Dukkha* (Suffering) of the planes of misery. Therefore, as the only way, the unfailing path to escape from this *Dukkha* (Suffering), the Blessed One taught the method of taming the mind. Today, we have chosen as our theme a Dhamma stanza containing this very lesson of taming the mind. It is a stanza from the Citta Vagga of the Dhammapada. The background story related to this stanza unfolds as follows:

While the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatthī, a group of about sixty monks obtained meditation subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*) from the Buddha to practice until they attained Arahantship. Having obtained these meditation subjects, before the rainy season retreat (*vassa*), they set out to find a suitable place. Passing through villages and market towns, they eventually arrived at a village named Māti, also known as Mātigāma. While they were going for alms-round (*piṇḍapāta*) in that

village, a very faithful female lay devotee (*upāsikā*) named Mātika Mātā (mother of Mātika), who was the mother of the village headman named Mātika, invited these monks to her house. She offered them alms and other requisites with great respect and asked them, "Venerable Sirs, where are you traveling to?" The monks replied, "We are traveling in search of a suitable place." The lay devotee understood these words, in the usage of that time, to mean that they were monks seeking a suitable place to spend the rainy season retreat. Having understood this, she invited them, saying, "Venerable Sirs, please reside at this place for these three months. This will give us an opportunity to observe the Triple Refuge and the Five Precepts, as well as the Eight Precepts on Uposatha days." The monks accepted her invitation. This lay devotee then prepared lodgings (*senāsana*) for the monks to reside in.

While the monks were meditating in this place in this manner, before many days had passed, they gathered together and made an agreement: "We have received these meditation subjects directly from the living Buddha. For ordinary worldly people, the four planes of misery (*apāya*) are like their own home. Since we have not yet freed ourselves from that state, it is not proper for us to remain gathered together as a group like this. We must strive individually, with great effort and diligence, meditating according to our meditation subjects, and attain Arahantship." Thus they agreed. They resolved: "Let us practice our meditation subjects separately, without even two of us standing or sitting in the same place. Except for the times of going for alms and attending to the Elder of the Sangha, let us spend all other times meditating. If any monk falls ill or experiences discomfort, in such an emergency, let him strike the wooden gong (*gaṇḍi*) in the monastery to signal the others." After making this agreement, these monks practiced meditation with great dedication.

Meanwhile, one evening, the lay devotee Mātika Mātā came to the monastery with her servants, bringing some medicinal beverages (*gilanpasa*). Seeing no monks around, she asked someone nearby, "Why are there no monks to be seen?" The person, knowing that the monks had made an agreement to stay apart, replied, "They must be staying separately in their respective places." When she asked, "How can we call them?" he said, "If you strike this wooden gong, they will come." When the gong was struck, the monks arrived separately from their respective places. The lay devotee thought that this separation might be due to anger, some dispute, or discord, and asked the monks, "Venerable Sirs, has there been any dispute among you?"

The monks replied, "There is no dispute. Why do you ask so?" She said, "When you come to my house for alms, you all walk together, but on this occasion, why did you come separately without even two of us walking on the same path?" The monks answered, "We are fulfilling our monastic duties (*samaṇa-dhamma*)." She asked, "What is this fulfilling of monastic duties?" The monks then explained, "Fulfilling monastic duties is like this: we practice the meditation on the repulsiveness of the thirty-two parts of the body. We contemplate the impermanence (*anicca*) of this body. We practice meditation in this manner."

Since she knew nothing about it, the mother asked, "Can we also practice this meditation? Or is this something reserved only for monks?" The monks replied, "Although it is called monastic duties, this Dhamma is something that everyone can practice, without any distinction between lay and ordained." Then she said, "In that case, please teach me this meditation." The monks instructed her on how to meditate. The lay devotee Mātika Mātā went back to her home and started meditating. Before long, even before those monks, she attained the fruit of Non-returning (*Anāgāmi-phala*), along with the five supernormal powers (*pañca-abhiññā*) and the four analytical knowledges (*paṭisambhidā-ñāṇa*). Having attained these, arising from the meditative attainment of the fruit of Non-returning (*anāgāmi-phala-samāpatti*), she examined with her divine eye (*dibba-cakkhu*) when the monks had attained these achievements. When she looked, she saw that all these monks were still in the state of worldlings (*puthujjana*), and not a single one of them had attained any absorption (*jhāna*) or insight (*vipassanā*). They were living like ordinary people, possessed of defilements such as lust, hatred, and delusion.

Next, she directed her divine eye to see whether these monks possessed the supporting conditions (*upanissaya-sampatti*) and potential to attain Arahantship. Upon looking, she saw that they did. However, when she looked for the reason why they had not succeeded, she saw that it was because these monks did not receive other suitable conditions, such as suitable food (*āhāra-sappāya*). With the intention of providing these, this great lay devotee prepared suitable food in her house—meaning food conducive to meditation—invited the monks, and offered it to them to consume as they wished. Since the monks had certain physical needs corresponding to their ailments, by taking food and drinks according to those needs, their physical ailments were dispelled, and their minds became tranquil. Generating concentration (*samādhī*) with those tranquil minds, and then practicing insight meditation (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*), all of them attained Arahantship before the three months of the rainy retreat had passed. Having reached the noble fruit of Arahantship, the monks reflected, "Mātika Mātā has been of great help to us." Afterwards, these monks went to visit the Buddha to report this matter. When they arrived, the Buddha, as was his custom, inquired from the monks about how they had spent the rainy retreat. In response, these monks declared, "We were provided with great comfort because our lay devotee Mātika Mātā prepared suitable food and other requisites for us. Because of those, we were able to realize the paths and fruits (*magga-phala*) as we had hoped."

Another monk was listening to this. He thought, "I too must go there." Perhaps he was a monk who expected greater comforts. Thinking thus, he obtained a meditation subject from the Buddha and departed for the village of Mātika. On the way, the monk reflected, "I have heard that this great lay devotee Mātika Mātā has the ability to read the minds of others. Right now, because of the fatigue of the journey, it is somewhat difficult for me to sweep this lodging. Therefore, it would be good if she sent someone to sweep it." Sensing his thought, the lay devotee sent someone to clean the lodging. Next, he thought, "Now it would be good if she sent me a beverage

sweetened with jaggery." Sensing that thought as well, the great lay devotee sent him such a beverage.

The following morning, early in the day, he thought, "It would be good if she sent me some good rice gruel along with some delicious food." The great lay devotee sent that too. Next, he thought, "It would be good if she sent some sweets." The lay devotee sent that as well. Then he thought, "It would be great if she would prepare a fine midday meal and bring the alms-food herself so that I could see this lay devotee." The lay devotee saw that thought too with her divine eye. Having the knowledge of reading others' minds, she knew this and arrived preparing the midday alms-food accordingly. Having arrived, she offered the alms-food. When the monk finished his meal, he asked the great lay devotee, "Are you Mātika Mātā?" "Yes, Venerable Sir." Then he asked, "I have heard that you have the power to read other people's minds. Is that true?" The great lay devotee, being very humble, asked, "Why do you ask so?" He replied, "Because you acted according to everything I thought."

The great lay devotee replied in this manner: "There are many monks who know the minds of others." She did not say that she herself knew it. Then the monk said, "I am not asking about others, but about you." At that moment, the lay devotee kindly but with a touch of irony remarked, "Those who do not know the minds of others are the ones who act in this way." At this, the monk was struck with great spiritual urgency (*saṃvega*). He realized his own shortcomings and thought, "Now, a person who is in the state of a worldling (*puthujjana*) thinks both wholesome and unwholesome thoughts. If I think of something improper, this lay devotee will know it, and like catching a thief, I will be disgraced." Then he thought, "I must leave this place." Thinking thus, he departed to see the Buddha.

The Buddha asked him, "Monk, why did you return from that place?" He explained the matter: "I cannot stay there. That great lay devotee possesses such a power. I thought that if I were to think of something improper, she would know it and I would fall into remorse." The Buddha then declared, "No, monk, you must go back to that very place. That is the very place that is suitable (*sappāya*) for you." The monk said he could not possibly go back. The Buddha then said, "In that case, monk, do just one thing: guard your own mind. It is difficult to guard the mind, but even with difficulty, guard your mind. Then your purpose in going will be successful." It was on that occasion that the Buddha uttered the stanza we took as our theme:

*Dunniggahassa lahuno, yatthakāmanipātino;*

*Cittaṃ dantaṃ sukhāvahaṃ.*

"Dunniggahassa lahuno..." "Dunniggahassa" means difficult to restrain or subdue. "Lahuno" means having the nature of arising and vanishing rapidly. "Yatthakāmanipātino" means alighting on whatever objects it pleases. Taming such a mind is good. A tamed mind brings happiness (*cittaṃ dantaṃ sukhāvahaṃ*). This is the meaning expressed by this short Dhamma stanza. He declared: "It is good to

tame the mind, which is difficult to restrain or subdue, which arises and vanishes rapidly, and which alights on whatever objects it pleases. A mind thus tamed brings happiness."

Having learned this Dhamma stanza, that monk returned to that very place. Having returned, he carried on with his meditation as before. At the same time, the great lay devotee also used her divine eye and her own ability to look into his needs and supported the monk. As a result of this, that monk finally attained the noble fruit of Arahantship. Thus, this story is highly exemplary for us. Especially when we think about this stanza, nowadays, both laymen and laywomen often discourage themselves when it comes to meditation. They think, "This is something we cannot do. This belongs only to the monks. We cannot do it."

But the character of Mātika Mātā is highly exemplary. We see that while she was supporting sixty monks, Mātika Mātā possessed such mental strength that she attained the state of Non-returning and the supernormal powers. Therefore, everyone, especially the lay devotees, should think that they too can do it. Thus, they must generate the perception of capability: "If that mother practiced meditation subjects, we too can achieve something." On the other hand, the character of Mātika Mātā is highly exemplary. Just as she supported the monks materially and spiritually, she also set a great example by penetrating the paths and fruits (*magga-phala-paṭivedha*). Accordingly, the example and the support that the monks received from the lay side helped them in their realization of the paths and fruits. Moreover, Mātika Mātā, very humbly and kindly, taught a good lesson to the monk who was thinking of various unusual things. This is highly exemplary. Just like a mother caring for her son, Mātika Mātā guided those monks to self-discipline and later guided the newly arrived monk as well. In this way, we can draw many examples from this story.

Next, let us look at the stanza. We must contemplate this matter declared by the Buddha regarding the nature of the mind. This is something everyone can experience. Often, when someone begins to think with defilements, more and more streams of thoughts flow accordingly. There is such a nature.

Furthermore, it is very difficult to subdue these thoughts. This means there is a nature in this mind that is difficult to restrain or subdue. Yet, even such a mind must be subdued. One must make an effort, an endeavor. You devotees know that Right Effort (*samma-ppadhāna* / *samma-vāyāma*) is a fourfold endeavor, or right energy and striving, to prevent unarisen unwholesome states, to abandon arisen unwholesome states, to arouse unarisen wholesome states, and to maintain arisen wholesome states, which is cultivated to tame the mind in this way. Thus, with this energy, one must restrain the mind. Ordinary worldly people only know about restraining others, but this is about restraining one's own mind. The Buddha has shown how to restrain the mind that goes towards the side of defilements. That is, the way to subdue defilements. The Buddha has expounded five methods in the Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya. These are five wonderfully practical

methods. The similes used to describe them are themselves sufficient, if grasped and retained in the mind correctly, to tame one's mind.

First, the Buddha indicates that if an unwholesome mind connected with the defilements of greed, hatred, and delusion arises in someone—if evil unwholesome thoughts (*pāpaka akusala vitakka*) arise—what should that person do first? In its place, he should direct his attention to a wholesome object. Let's say a thought of hatred arises; instead, he intentionally arouses a mind of loving-kindness (*mettā*). By intentionally maintaining that mind of loving-kindness, the stream of unwholesome thoughts is broken, its power decreases, and its strength is weakened. The Buddha points to this method as the first method.

To understand this method briefly, the Buddha provides a simile. How does a skilled carpenter or his apprentice remove a peg when it is stuck? Just as a blunt peg is stuck in a piece of wood and cannot be easily removed, when a defiled object falls into the rough mind and gets stuck there, one takes a wholesome object like loving-kindness and knocks the other one out with it. Here, the first method is shown through this carpenter simile. Just as a carpenter drives out a coarse peg with a fine peg, one makes an effort to drive out an unwholesome thought with a wholesome thought. However, the Buddha states that sometimes this method may not work. The unwholesome thought might be extremely powerful. The Buddha acknowledges that such minds exist. What is being explained here is that it is difficult to tame a mind that has wandered with defilements for a long time in this *saṃsāra*. "Dunniggahassa" means that there is a nature in the mind that must be restrained with difficulty, with great effort, and subdued with difficulty.

If that is not sufficient, the Buddha gives a second method. What is the second method? One contemplates the danger/disadvantage (*ādīnava*) of the unwholesome thoughts that arise. "Such an unwholesome thought is flowing into my mind. These are unwholesome thoughts connected with greed, hatred, and delusion. They have dangerous consequences. They have a nature that defiles the mind." Thus, one contemplates their disadvantage. One develops a sense of shame and fear toward them. *Hiri* and *ottappa* mean shame and fear regarding unwholesome deeds; *hiri* is shame, and *ottappa* is fear. One contemplates their disadvantage. The Buddha has illustrated this too with a very simple simile that we can easily keep in mind. What is that simile? "Just as, monks, if a youth or a maiden fond of ornaments were to have the carcass of a snake, or a dog, or a human hung around their neck, they would be filled with loathing and fear, and would strive to get rid of it." Similarly, the Buddha taught us to arouse a sense of disgust and fear toward that unwholesome thought. This is the second method. When contemplating the danger of that unwholesome state, if one generates a feeling as if carrying the carcass of a dog or a snake, it is easy to abandon the unwholesome thought. The Buddha states that by contemplating the danger of evil unwholesome states and arousing disgust in the mind, the flowing stream of unwholesome thoughts is likely to be weakened to some extent.

Sometimes, one can be completely freed from it. However, if it is a very grave one—if the unwholesome thought is extremely heavy—it might still persist despite this.

The Buddha then presents a third method. The mind goes to those unwholesome thoughts and objects because of recollection and contemplation. If one recollects or contemplates something, it arises again and again. This is an everyday fact. Since this is something unwanted happening to the mind, what is advised is non-recollection and non-attention (*amanasikāra*). Non-recollection and non-attention. When said generally, this may not be immediately understood. Therefore, the Buddha gives an excellent simile to clarify this matter. That is: when an unwanted sight comes before you, what you do is either close your eyes or look away. Just like closing the eyes or looking away, so is this non-recollection and non-attention. One deliberately tries to divert the mind from that object. This is the third point. By this means too, some people may succeed in discarding those unwholesome thoughts. But the Buddha states that sometimes even this effort may fail. Then, he provides the fourth method.

What is the fourth method? Briefly, in terms of Dhamma, it is described as directing an inquiring eye toward the construction of that thought—that is, the way those thoughts are put together. "What kind of thought is this? How did it come? How is it structured?" It is like looking closely at a diagram before you. Each of these is a certain strategy. This must be done as a strategy to break the flowing stream of thoughts. Thus, this fourth method is to analyze the thoughts that arise. One examines it and makes an effort to suppress it gradually. One sees its structure, sees the speed of its flow, and then makes an effort to reduce its intensity. This can be understood much better through the simile given for it.

What is the simile? Imagine a man walking rapidly. Perhaps without even realizing it, he is walking fast. While walking fast, suddenly he thinks, "Why am I walking so fast? There is no reason to walk fast. Wouldn't it be better if I walked a bit slower?" Following that thought, he walks slowly. While walking slowly, he thinks, "Why am I walking slowly? Wouldn't it be better if I stood still?" So he stands still. Having stood still, he thinks, "Why am I standing here? Can't I sit down?" So he sits down. Having sat down, he then thinks, "Why am I sitting here? Wouldn't it be better if I lay down?" So he lies down. That is the Buddha's simile. The Buddha gives most wonderful similes.

What does this indicate? Just as a person gradually abandons coarse postures—meaning walking, standing, sitting—and shifts to subtler postures, in the same way, looking at the thought that comes to one's mind, looking at the structure of one's thought and the speed of its flow, one should gradually reduce that speed. This is the Buddha's advice. Thus, through this simile, we can understand that by looking at one's mind with an inquiring eye, one can suppress the flowing stream of thoughts. By suppressing it in this way, one gradually steers the unwholesome side toward the wholesome side. This is the fourth method. Having presented the fourth method, the Buddha then states, "Sometimes even the fourth method may fail. It might not succeed."

Then he presents the fifth method. This fifth method is extremely powerful. That is to say, what needs to be done to suppress that unwholesome thought—this is where the word "subdue" or "restrain" (*niggaha*) is most accurately applied. One must subdue the unwholesome thought by means of a wholesome thought. Relying on a wholesome thought, one beats down, crushes, and obliterates that unwholesome thought with the wholesome thought. It is something like that. The simile the Buddha uses for this is a highly powerful one: "Just as, monks, a strong man might seize a weaker man by the head or shoulders and hold him down, crush him, and beat him down," similarly, taking the wholesome thought as the strong man and the unwholesome thought as the weak man, one beats down and crushes the unwholesome thought with the wholesome thought, driving it away. In this way, the Buddha showed five methods that must be applied with difficulty to restrain the mind, knowing that this mind cannot be easily controlled.

Each of these is highly practical. These five methods are such that anyone can experience them and experiment with them. The five similes we mentioned are: first, a carpenter or his apprentice driving out a coarse peg with a fine peg. Next, a man or a woman fond of ornaments who, when someone tries to hang a carcass such as that of a dog or a snake around their neck, feels disgust and shame, and gets rid of it; this is contemplating the danger. Then, just as a person who does not want to see a light coming before them might look away or close their eyes, one tries to practice non-attention toward that unwholesome object. If even that fails, one tries to restrain that thought and gradually weaken the stream of thoughts, like the walking man standing still, the standing man sitting down, and the sitting man lying down. Finally, the last simile is like a strong man holding a weak man by the neck or torso and beating and crushing him; driving out the unwholesome thought by means of a wholesome thought.

In this manner, the Buddha shows these five methods as supporting techniques for a monk who is striving to concentrate his mind. Having shown them, the Buddha declares that if any person, any monk, tames his mind by applying these five methods, each in its proper time, then that monk is one who has gained mastery over his thoughts. This means he does not think thoughts he does not want to think, and he can think the thoughts he wants to think. Now, often, even if one does not wish it, there is a nature in the mind where unwholesome thoughts come flowing in. But for a person who has tamed the mind in this way, if he does not want a thought, he can dismiss it very quickly. He can think only the thoughts he wishes to think, the wholesome thoughts.

These are the five methods shown by the Buddha that can be cultivated. This is highly helpful in tranquility meditation (*samatha-bhāvanā*). In insight meditation (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*), the Buddha has shown various ways to control these thoughts in an even subtler manner. Especially there, what is used as support is the factor of attention/contemplation (*manasikāra*). Generally, there is a capacity within the mind to understand the things that arise in it. This can be understood through

wisdom and discernment. In that way, even in insight meditation—say, for someone who has sat down for mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*)—while doing so, whether it is a form (*rūpa*) one has seen, or a sound, an odor, a taste, a touch, which come through the five external senses, or a thought arising from the mind—what is used as support to nip every object in the bud at the very moment it arises? It is attention/contemplation (*manasikāra*).

If it is a form (*rūpa*), one does not grasp its sign (*nimitta*). One does not go on and on following its beautiful or ugly nature, or the feelings aroused by it, in terms of perception (*saññā*). One briefly notes, "Form, form." One briefly notes, "Sound, sound." Stopping this running nature of the mind in this gradual manner is indeed Nibbāna. When it is said, "Taming the mind is good, a tamed mind brings happiness," taming the mind means stopping the running mind. A term used for the Arahant is *ṭhitacitta*—the stilled mind, the mind that has reached stability. The ability to stop the mind. Attaining the paths and fruits of Stream-entry (*Sotāpatti*), Once-returning (*Sakadāgāmitā*), Non-returning (*Anāgāmitā*), and Arahantship means gaining the power to stop this running mind at those respective levels. Therefore, what supports this is attention/contemplation (*manasikāra*).

Generally, we know that there is something called the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*). We know that the aggregate of form (*rūpakkhandha*) is a heap of form. Next, a heap of feeling (*vedanā*) arises in association with it. Then, a heap of perceptions (*saññā*), which are recognitions, arises. Assisted by that heap of feeling, we employ the active energy of the mind, the active energy of the body, and the active energy of speech regarding things we like and dislike, thereby accumulating various kamma. We accumulate preparations/volitional activity (*saṅkhāra*)—a heap of Preparations (*saṅkhāra*). Next, assisted by this heap of Preparations (*saṅkhāra*), these seeds of kamma accumulated through Preparations are deposited in this mind of ours called consciousness (*viññāṇa*). These are what we have been traveling with for so long in this *saṃsāra*. Therefore, gradually dismantling this accumulated pile of five aggregates—dispersing instead of accumulating—is the path declared by the Buddha in this path of Dhamma.

Due to improper attention, that is, *ayoniso manasikāra* (unwise attention), moment by moment, kamma continues to accumulate, and as a result of the maturation of these accumulated kammas in the mind, we are forced to wander in this *saṃsāra* for an endless period of time. *Ayoniso manasikāra* means that we do not look at the place where these thoughts arise; instead, we look far away. Why does a deer run after a mirage? It runs thinking that the object far away is water. The deer has no awareness that "this appears as water because of these factors: the weakness of my eyes, the heat, or the rising vapor during this hot hour." It only contemplates based on what is far away, applies attention to it, and runs thinking, "I must go there."

Instead, the Buddha highlights *Yoniso manasikāra* (Wise attention). We must look at the very place where these arise, where these thoughts and reflections originate.

By applying the eye of wisdom, applying attention, and applying radical attention / wise attention to look at it, as ignorance (*avijjā*) is gradually discarded and greed, hatred, and delusion are removed, vision becomes clear. One can understand how they arise. It is in association with contact (*phassa*), with sensory impingements, that a multitude of these thoughts are generated moment by moment. By acting according to those thoughts, acting through body and speech, we go on in *saṃsāra* accumulating kamma for an extremely long time. At some point, such an understanding arises. Thus, radical attention / wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) means turning toward the place where defilements or thoughts arise, in order to know it. Through this method of attention, a person eventually realizes that this aggregate of form (*rūpakkhandha*) consists of these bodily cages that we think of as beautiful, ugly, or strong, along with the array of material goods we possess and consume. All of these are constructed from the four great elements (*mahābhūta*): earth (*paṭhavī*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), and air (*vāyo*). Not a single one of these great elements can be identified separately. These four elements join together to project and manifest this thing called form (*rūpa*). That is what is called attention to elements (*dhātu-manasikāra*). This body and external things are constructed in association with, and based on, these four elements that we think of as earth, water, wind, and fire; this bodily cage is built upon them. When a correct understanding of this form arises, a capacity is gained to maintain equanimity (*upekkhā*) regarding the feelings (*vedanā*) that arise because of that form.

For a person who has developed equanimity in that way, the accumulation of preparations/volitional activity (*saṅkhāra*)—specifically the energy that accumulates kamma in terms of "I" and "mine" based on the recognitions arising through feelings (*vedanā*)—begins to diminish. As this happens, if one correctly understands the existence of this mind, which is this illusory consciousness (*viññāṇa*), as an illusion, as a deception, such a person does not hold on even to this mind, thinking, "This is my mind." It is in this way that disenchantment (*nibbidā*) toward the five aggregates arises. Then, the Buddha points out that escaping from the five aggregates, escaping from this *saṃsāra*, is not something that can be done by traveling. The Buddha made a most wonderful declaration, unlike any other teacher: "Monks, within this very fathom-long body, endowed with perception and mind, I declare the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path leading to the cessation of the world."

That is to say, this world is indeed *Dukkha* (Suffering). Therefore, *Dukkha* (Suffering), preparations/volitional activity (*saṅkhāra*), and cessation—all of these exist within this very fathom-long body, endowed with senses, perception, and mind. Furthermore, this world continues to exist through the arising of these unwholesome defilements: craving (*taṇhā*) and ignorance (*avijjā*). When these are eradicated—when greed, hatred, and delusion are eradicated, or when ignorance is eradicated—there is this calming. The calming of preparations/volitional activity (*saṅkhāra*) is Nibbāna. What does it mean to have stopped the mind? It means the momentum of

Preparations (*saṅkhāra*) has been completely stopped; Preparations have been stilled.

Now we can understand: during the rainy season, water falls drop by drop, becomes a canal, a stream, and flows towards the ocean. This stream of thoughts is just like that. Through the specific energy generated in these thoughts, just as a river flows toward the ocean according to its slope, these thoughts lead us to *saṃsāra*. There is a nature that drags us toward the *Dukkha* (Suffering) of *saṃsāra*. This thought-energy is what is called preparations/volitional activity (*saṅkhāra*), which arises because of ignorance. Therefore, what helps to still all of this is separating from ignorance and arousing the eye of wisdom within understanding. The primary thing to open this up is attention/contemplation (*manasikāra*). It is directing the eye of wisdom to look at the reality of all these things.

Through this, the speed of the stream of thoughts flowing into the mind and the speed of the defilements are gradually suppressed, and at some point, the mind stops. The mind stops because it no longer receives the things that help it to move. This is exactly like the extinguishing of a fire. Nibbāna is a state like the extinguishing of a fire. Or rather, it is the stilling of the momentum of Preparations (*saṅkhāra*). It is a peaceful bliss of that nature. What we call the supreme peace of Nibbāna is a peaceful state that can be experienced right within this mind, a state where one can let go of everything.

Therefore, one should contemplate in that manner. These characteristics declared by the Buddha—"Dunniggahassa lahuno, yatthakāmanipātino"—are things that can be experienced in one's own life. That this mind is difficult to restrain is an obvious fact for everyone, based on the matters that present themselves daily. Thus, the Buddha does not advise us to give up. He shows the first method, and if that does not work, he shows the second method. If that does not work, he shows a series of methods as third, fourth, and fifth. The Buddha indicates that in the final, fifth method, one must restrain those defilements with such great effort, just as a strong man holds down and crushes a weak man.

In that way, that is the method of tranquility (*samatha*). Next, if one makes it one's ultimate goal to apply knowledge and wisdom to realize their true nature through insight (*vipassanā*), one will not be overcome by the momentum of defilements. Instead, one analyzes what is before oneself and looks at it closely. One develops one's eye of wisdom. That is what is meant by the comprehension of preparations/volitional activity (*saṅkhāra*). One understands the true nature of Preparations (*saṅkhāra*) with the eye of insight.

In that manner, the Buddha points out the path to taming the mind gradually. The primary requirement for this is virtue (*sīla*), which means taming the body and speech. Establishing oneself in virtue (*sīla*) is a support to calm the mind. Now, on this occasion, you have undertaken the eight precepts with livelihood as the eighth (*ājīv-aṭṭhamaka-sīla*) as well as the eight precepts of the Uposatha. What is the

purpose of this? This virtue (*sīla*) is the foundation for meditation. The Buddha states that someone who performs a heavy piece of work does so standing on solid ground. One cannot do it standing in the mud. When lifting a heavy weight, like lifting a log or a rock, one must stand on a strong rock or firm ground. If one does it from the mud, one will sink in along with the weight. That is why virtue (*sīla*) is shown as the foundation.

In this Buddha-sasana, virtue (*sīla*) is shown as the establishment, the foundation. Virtue means the taming of body and speech. For this too, one must use the mind. Otherwise, it will not tame itself automatically. Thus, using the mind and applying the strength of determination, one tames body and speech in that manner. When they are tamed to some level, great joy arises in the mind. Remorse is removed. This is not for building up pride thinking "I am virtuous," but through this, a great seclusion (*viveka*) arises in the mind. Within that seclusion, one next makes an effort to calm the mind—concentration (*samādhī*). In trying to gain that concentration, it is then that unwholesome states come crashing in, unexpectedly. It is for such situations that the Buddha has shown the methods in the similes we discussed earlier.

In that way, gradually, without giving up, one must unify the mind through this effort. Unification of the mind is called concentration (*samādhī*). The mind does not remain on one object; it is constantly scattered in association with greed, hatred, delusion, and various other defilements. By keeping the mind anchored on a single wholesome object—such as the object of repulsiveness (*asubha*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*), unattractiveness, recollection of death (*maraṇasati*), and so forth—the mind becomes concentrated. Once it is concentrated, one can directly experience the power of the mind. A concentrated person has a clear understanding of how small a fraction of the mind's power we usually employ in life. It is at such a moment that the full power of the mind can be experienced all at once.

Next, that person directs this wisdom, the eye of discernment, and directs attention, and through this attained concentration, unification, and oneness, investigates the true nature of these phenomena. The true nature of the aggregate of form (*rūpakkhandha*) is that it is something brought about by these four elements: earth, water, fire, and air. Feeling (*vedanā*) is something that arises because of contact (*phassa*). Perception (*saññā*) is also something that arises because of contact (*phassa*). Preparations/volitional activity (*saṅkhāra*), which are these flowing thoughts, also arise because of contact (*phassa*). Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*) refers to the group of mental factors consisting of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), intention (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*), and attention (*manasikāra*), together with the physical group of earth, water, fire, and air elements; it is based on these very Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*) phenomena that this consciousness (*viññāṇa*) exists. Because of consciousness (*viññāṇa*), Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*) exists; because of Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*), consciousness (*viññāṇa*) exists. He understands that

this mind has such an illusory nature. In this way, gradually, by understanding the true nature of these five aggregates directly through experience, one becomes able to let go of the five aggregates. Not by any other means. Therefore, the path to all of this is the path of virtue, concentration, and wisdom (*sīla, samādhi, paññā*) declared by the Buddha. Looked at from another perspective, it is this Noble Eightfold Path.

Accordingly, you devotees must strive to make your ongoing meditation successful. Therefore, make an aspiration: "May the virtue practiced today, the meditation performed, and this sermon heard, serve as supporting conditions for you devotees to realize the paths and fruits, and thereby put an end to the *Dukkha* (Suffering) of *saṃsāra* such as birth (*jāti*), aging/decay and death (*jarāmaraṇa*), and sickness, and to attain the supreme bliss of the deathless Nibbāna!" Aspire further: "If there are any beings from Avīci to Akaniṭṭha who wish to rejoice in the merits of this preaching of the Dhamma and hearing of the Dhamma, may they, by rejoicing, realize the supreme deathless Nibbāna through their aspired Bodhi!" Aspiring thus, recite these stanzas.

"*Ettāvatā ca amhehi.....*"