

Little Dhamma Book.

Contents.

The basic nature of human life.....	1
To cultivate the mind is to develop life.....	12
The result of mental development.....	24
The result of mental development (cont.).....	32
Mental development as superstitious belief.....	40
The general form of mental development.....	50
Looking at life from all points.....	60
The tree of life.....	70
Everything in life is a matter of the mind.....	79
Whatever it is it will just be elements.....	90
Studying sankhara and visankhara.....	98
Summing up the 'Little Dhamma Book'.....	108

Little Dhamma Book - Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, July to October, 1983 - (Translated by dhammavidu, ©2016)

I. The basic nature of human life.

This collection of talks I intend to be special, aimed at solving the problem of finding a comprehensive book, a 'Little Dhamma Book' to aid in the study and practice of people generally. The required information, being scattered about in an enormous number of publications, can be difficult to track down, so the intention is to produce a single yet complete book for general use. Hence we're calling this collection of talks the '*Little Dhamma Book*.'

These talks will proceed step by step, covering those subjects necessary for a general study. On this first occasion the subject will be the 'the basic nature of human life,' hence we'll be talking about people, talking of people to enable them to get the most out of being people. To do that we'll need to consider life in such a way so that an all around, fundamental understanding of what it is, of how it can be developed, and of how far that development can go will result, the intention being that one who studies and practises will then be able to develop their life, cause it to prosper in the *Dhamma* way, and ultimately meet with success by putting an end to all of their problems.

We really don't have anything much to do other than that. Everyone has problems, and continually: these problems, those problems, problems without end. However, people can,

gradually, bring themselves up to the mark and be able to dwell above all of that, that is, they can be *Arahant* (a perfected human being), but if we say this sort of thing it makes people nervous, they have a certain fear of being *arahant* because they think it too much, too elevated, and not really useful - suggest becoming *arahant* and few will want it because they'll see it in that way, so they remain stuck, stuck fast in the midst of trouble and strife, always with problems.

The human world has its problems, ascend to the heavenly worlds and there'll be problems there too, reach the *Brahma* worlds and there'll still be problems, even though the mind might be in a heavenly condition there'll still be problems.

The biggest problems of all are those of 'me' and 'mine,' the ignorant understanding that there's a 'me' and a 'mine' brew up almost endless desire for those things which cause us to have problems in the first place. People have endless problems to deal with, but that, it's said, is normal, is human nature.

If we could put an end to our problems so that life became problem-free that would represent the ultimate, the highest attainment, then our struggles would be over, which would represent the end, or culmination, of the system of practice known in the Pali language as '*Brahmacariya*,' after which it wouldn't be necessary for us to deliberately practise anything anymore. We'll only know this culmination when we become *Arahant*, become one who's stopped, who's completed the task, because then, when there aren't any of the usual problems left, it will mean that life has been freed from all the forms of *dukkha*.

If we're interested in this, not afraid that it will be too much, then perhaps we can look at it, consider it together and come to an understanding. If it's too much and we aren't interested, which, in truth, will mean that the mind doesn't want to be interested, then we can still talk but it will be a waste of time for both parties.

That's a problem we come up against, particularly in my case – me(Buddhadāsa), who's had the duty of talking about *Dhamma* for years, it feels like this, feels like a problem that we're not able to lead people to the high range, to solve all their problems for the several reasons we've mentioned. The majority see it as too goody-good, as being without flavour, not being fun, not an amusement. Such can't resist the ups and downs of the baser levels of life.

Even those who don't live that way still see this as not for them - the best thing Buddhism has to offer doesn't interest them! It's this way with both monks and laypeople: the monks in the monastery, observe them, they aren't really interested, their whole minds aren't focused on the *Dhamma* that could raise them to the highest level, that could put an end to their problems, and although they endure having to listen they sit abstractedly, letting their minds wander, they sit dozing off and nobody much is interested in following and paying attention to the details. There's more interest in playing around. Go and look at the books some of today's monks invest in, go and look at the books they read, they aren't about the quenching of *dukkha*, about ending the defilements at all, there's a lot of fiction, books on general knowledge and such, they want to be sages, philosophers, famous people with special knowledge of this and that sort. Hence the genuine *Dhamma*, the *Dhamma* on the highest level remains sterile and the people who try to teach it become frustrated because what they teach isn't really what the people listening to them want to hear.

These problems are met with all the time, so we intend to create a book designed to solve them, for that reason we'll try to deliver this series of lectures, but, whether we meet with success or not, there'll be more problems. I still don't believe that we'll be successful - wait and see.

Snyway, now we'll look at the ordinary condition of human life, what the points are that we ought to be aware of, in terms that will be, hopefully, easy to grasp and to study.

The first point to grasp is that this life can take many forms depending on the prevalent conditions. Life as we live it certainly has, and we need to see that it has, causes and conditions that make us experience being alive in, for instance, this particular manner at this particular time. Other lifestyles can come about in the same way, and a life, for instance, which is worse than this can easily be had by someone who behaves accordingly. A higher lifestyle, a good, a superb form of life, that of an *Arahant*, can be developed in the same way, and can be had by someone willing to make the necessary effort. We should recognize that, generally, life can take many forms and is more or less different depending on how it's lived, on how it's managed, each lifestyle having its own peculiar conditions to act as its concocting agent.

Normally we won't know this so we just allow life to float along as it will, we let fate take a hand, as it were, and then how our life is at any given time will depend very much on our passing desires.

For instance: the novice monk ordains but doesn't really know what he wants to do so lets things go along as they will. He sees his friend studying for the examinations so he does the same, sees his friend studying *Pali* so does the same, he doesn't really know why he does, but studies in case it's good, or in case it might be the way to something useful. In reality this novice doesn't know why he does what he does. Now someone who doesn't ordain, who stays in the world, also allows things to go along as they will, to go along as defiled desire dictates, and they do that because their knowledge isn't complete too, that is, they don't know how to cut the defilements (*lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*, or greed, aversion, and delusion) and thus bring the best thing they could have into their lives, they don't know that if only they could understand the causes and conditions necessary for that to become a reality then it would happen. If we want to have a certain kind of life then we need to know what sort of causes and conditions will 'concoct' it, will bring it into existence.

Grasp this point: life can take many forms depending on prevalent causes and conditions, hence, instead of just allowing things to drift along as they will, we might have the best kind of life, providing that we know how to make it happen.

To sum up: we don't know why we were born, what we were born to do, we don't have this knowledge so we allow life to go along as it will, we let 'fate,' let 'destiny' choose our life style for us, which is unwise. We sympathize with all those in this plight, hence we try to point out the fact that there are underlying causes and conditions involved which concoct life in a particular way, in such a way that we always get what we deserve. So, take an interest, study what's being said and then choose the most appropriate lifestyle, but choose with knowledge present and not while half-asleep. We might have the best, most pleasant sort of a life, but not if we don't know how to make it happen: we might live a life full of happiness, a life without any *dukkha*, if we know how to manipulate the mind.

There's a *dhmma* in Buddhism which can make the mind smart and clear, make it able to know things as they truly are so that there's none of the clinging which makes life burdensome, which makes life *dukkha*. That *dhmma*(teaching) is the ability to see that whatever is held by people to be *dukkha*, to be unpleasant, is really 'just like that.' For instance: we try to understand the the things that we have to do to make our living as being 'just like that,' if we know how to manage life so that we can be happy in our work then there's no *dukkha* involved in such activities.

If, for instance, we're disappointed on some occasion then, instead of getting upset, we try to see it as being 'just like that,' as being 'just the way it goes.' If we're tired, if life is being difficult then, again, we try to understand it as being 'just like that,' 'just the way it is.' If we can look on the bright side, as it were, there'll always be happiness. Hence we can be happy in our labours and get the result, the benefit in our lives. We need to make enough of a study of the *Dhamma* to be able to improve the mind so that our tasks, our duties, no matter what they are can be properly done. Although something is sweaty, wearisome, troublesome, we can improve the mind so that there's no *dukkha* involved.

For comparison's sake consider the butterfly, which makes its living by taking the nectar from flowers thus spreading the pollen around and helping to make Nature beautiful. The butterfly operates in such a way that it has no *dukkha*. We, too, can operate, can perform our tasks without *dukkha*, but, to do that, we'll need to know how to improve the mind first, we can't just emulate the butterfly and do our duty, we'll need to know how to improve our minds before we can do that. Please, take an interest, because this is important, it's the way to safety. We might be an employee, a washer of clothes, of dishes, and if we don't look on our work as difficult, as troublesome, then we can, just by looking on our tasks in the right way, perform them without having to be the 'me' who's bitter, resentful, disappointed. If we're employed to wash the dishes or the clothes, to clean the house, to cook and prepare the food, then anything that we have to do we can turn into a work of art and make it enjoyable. Even with sweeping the house, sweeping the floor, sweeping the yard, making things clean and tidy, we can try to understand such things anew so that we can sweep with love, we can sweep as if it's an art form, then we'll find satisfaction in such a task. If, every time we have to sweep we remind ourselves of this then there'll be contentment every time, not just once the sweeping is finished with, but while we're actually doing it, because then we'll be able to sweep artistically, as it were.

However, generally speaking, people aren't properly mindful of their work so that their minds wander and they aren't able to give proper attention to the task in hand. And perhaps there's the feeling that the sort of work we've mentioned here is plebeian, slavish, beneath one's dignity, but if we know the truth that there isn't anything which is really common or base, then, if it's work, no matter what kind it is it becomes something that can help to feed, to sustain life. It's all in our minds anyway. If we're smart enough we can find satisfaction in doing any kind of work - which is the right way to look on such things. However, some see certain kinds of work as base and thus for inferior people to do, but if we don't have the knowledge to take us higher in the workaday world then we have to find a way to be happy with what we've got, and we can, gradually, gain knowledge and thus earn our living by performing better, easier, more elevated tasks. But, whatever we do, we need to learn to do it in such a way that it breeds a feeling of satisfaction. If we're willing to approach everything we have to do in that way then, for us, to work will be a kind of paradise.

To sum up a little: life can take many forms, can develop in many ways, some of them quite amazing, involving miraculous powers, the miraculous powers here being the knowledge of how to make the mind experience satisfaction no matter what we happen to be concerned with. However, we're not talking about dishonest activities here, but about decent, law-abiding people being able to derive satisfaction from performing their tasks in the right and proper way so that they produce good results in the here and now, and don't cause any problems later on.

So make a choice: life can take many forms and we can choose, but we shouldn't be dull enough to make the wrong choice, we should always try to choose the form that best suits us. If we can be satisfied with what we are and what we have at any given time then we can be happy.

If we could take that as a basic principle then there wouldn't, for instance, be anybody to do wrong, to be a bad lot, there wouldn't be any unemployment, everybody would have work and would do it with pleasure. People would be happy in their labours, and then the places of entertainment, the liquor shops, cinemas, play houses, and the like would close, would disappear because there wouldn't be anyone to go to them, nobody would want such things, they being happy with their lives, with their work, with their duties, wouldn't feel the need to spend extravagantly, wouldn't feel the need for escape, for excitement, for stimulation. Hence people would be able to dwell in sufficiency, in peace and happiness: when resting, relaxing, there'd be happiness, when working there'd be happiness, so how could there be any foolish desire? That would be finished with if people could find satisfaction in every activity.

Nature gives us the ability to choose our way of life, but mostly people aren't wise and can't choose - in fact they never choose, they don't know how to choose, they can only think in shallow ways. Here's an example: making offerings to spirits and suchlike is believed to bring great rewards and doesn't involve doing anything wearisome. There are those who do that sort of thing in the hope of getting rich - or perhaps they buy a share in a lottery ticket but don't get rich that way either - although in a sense they do get rich, rich in nervous diseases.

This is the first point to take an interest in, that we can choose to live our lives in many different ways, but whatever form we choose if it's going to be sustainable then certain particular conditions will have to be present and correct, and we're going to have to make sure that such is the case.

Now, to continue, we want to look at another aspect of Nature, that is, at the senses. Because we have eyes, ears, a nose, tongue, a body, and a mind there are problems. Don't be careless where the senses are concerned, because that's the prime cause of life's problems. People have the six senses and each of them will produce feelings capable of concocting all manner of problems, if we let them. If we were talking about a stone this wouldn't happen because stones don't have any senses, but people aren't stones and have the six senses complete, each of which has its particular duty to perform. All six senses create their own peculiar problems; if we didn't have any senses there wouldn't be any problems, while if our senses were less effective we'd have less problems to deal with. That's probably the case with trees, for instance, which don't have obvious sense organs, that is, their organs of sense can't be easily determined. Animals have the same sense organs as human beings, but with, in some cases, a lesser functionality, hence their problems are also less. Human senses, however, have wide capabilities which, given ignorance, can be enhanced even more: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind can have their spheres of experience greatly expanded, which is something people the world over like to do, and by so doing increase the problems which can arise during life by creating the 'delicious,' the 'fun,' the 'beautiful,' and so on, objects for the senses to connect with. Hence the senses pull life into problems, into trouble. The Buddha said that our problems begin at sense contact, that is, with contacts at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind.

The senses are the well-spring of all things because they receive the contacts which give rise to feelings.

For example: because we have senses we must naturally acquire more knowledge with each passing day. Once we're born from our mother's womb then the six senses will increasingly perform their duties, hence a child will come to know more and more things as time passes: knowledge will expand because the senses meet daily with new and different things. Correct knowledge, but also incorrect knowledge, *micchaditṭhi*, comes from sense contacts, that happens because, usually, wisdom doesn't get the chance to intervene and force a proper response, so that any contacts are of the sort that necessarily create an increasing fund of wrong understanding, of incorrect knowledge. This happens because people aren't able to control their reactions to sense experience.

When we go wrong, perform bad *kamma*, as they say, there arises a bad result, which is called a *vipāka*. Good *kamma* gives rise to good *vipāka*, bad *kamma* to bad *vipāka*. Both come from contacts with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Hence it's said that heaven and hell arise at the senses, that heaven and hell are results of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind contacts. However, people don't usually think that way and instead give attention to other things, not to the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. We, preferring to look elsewhere, to place our faith in other things, so go further and further from truth and, more and more, have to blindly believe in the opinions of others. Even the study of *nibbāna* requires that attention is given to the contacts taking place at the senses. If we know how to use the eyes, ears, etc. so that benefit arises then we'll know everything, because in reality everything comes from feelings arising from sense contacts.

However, we don't usually possess that sort of knowledge, we study other things. Truth is to be found at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, but if we're not interested then we aren't going to be able to deal with them properly and won't be able to manage them for our benefit. Anyone who wants to know *Dhamma* first of all has to be interested in studying everything concerning the senses. If the question should come up as to what the ABCs of Buddhism are, then the reply should be that the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind are the ABCs. Begin to study at the ABC level, make a study of senses, the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* can keep for later, they aren't the cause of our problems, of our *dukkha*, that lies in wrongdoing where sense contacts are concerned. The Buddha can't physically come and help us to quench *dukkha*, he can only advise us on how to manage our reactions to sense experience. In revealing *dukkha* and its quenching he points to the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, which means that the teaching is really all about getting to know the senses so that we can control our responses to them, then *dukkha* doesn't arise.

Hence the Little Dhamma Book encourages us to be interested in the eyes, ears, etc. as being the most important of matters, one that we have to know about, one that a human being should know about, otherwise our problems can't be solved. The senses are the root of everything that happens in life, are the 'doors' through which the mind contacts the outer and inner worlds. If there wasn't a mind there wouldn't be anything, it's because there is a mind that everything exists: this and that sort of feeling, *sukha* and *dukkha*, death, anything and everything happens because the mind exists. The mind, however, can't do anything if the five physical senses aren't around, so there has to be the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body surface - these five contactors - to allow the mind to know the external world, to know the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. If these things didn't exist there'd be almost nothing, and if there wasn't a mind there would be nothing. But people generally aren't much interested in the mind, being more interested in surface

matters, in the variety of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, an interest which manifests as defiled desire for the fun, for the stimulating, the delightful experiences available by way of these organs. So we go about worshipping, making sacrifices, and aren't interested in the mind and its *sukha* and *dukkha*, only in surface matters, in the deceptive appearance of things which can so easily give rise to infatuation, to love and hate, and can expand into the areas of fear, anxiety, longing after, jealousy, and so on. We don't see what causes these problems, don't know that they come from the ignorant mind whenever it meets with certain forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects.

These are the ABCs; but this, it's said, is *paramatṭa*, ultimate truth, and *paramatṭa* isn't appropriate for people generally, so don't make it available for study. People don't need to study ultimate truth? Children don't need to know this? In truth, if we go and look in the *Pali*, at what the Buddha said, then he pointed out that this was something that needed to be studied at the outset, studied in the guise of '*paṭiccasamupāda*,' or 'dependent origination' (the formula that deals with the arising of *dukkha*), to teach which is frowned upon because it's said to be too elevated.

So be interested in the eyes, the ears, the nose, tongue, body, and mind, as the first things that we need to know about, to understand. When we know all about them we'll know other things too: we'll know how we ought to act as human beings, then it won't be necessary for anyone to tell us how we should behave because we'll know the deep truth of life. At present we don't have this knowledge so we get led astray, and even if someone tells us not to misbehave we don't listen; we act wrongly towards ourselves and others because we don't know how we should operate as human beings. Think again: if we don't fully understand the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind, we won't have any way of understanding the *Dhamma* deeply enough to get the most benefit from it, that is, to become human beings of the best sort, those who can quench *dukkha*.

Now, continuing on: it's quite possible to have a body and mind without there needing to be a 'self.' This will probably sound very strange to people used to the feeling that there is such a thing, that there routinely is a 'me.' This body of ours is a physical system; the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body surfaces represent the physical senses, and there are the various nerve systems which are part of the body too, then there's the mind which feels through the body. We just have these two things, which is enough, they're known as *nāmarūpā*, but can also be called mind and body. In the *Pali* texts they're referred to as *nāmarūpā* and, together, they form a pair, however, *nāmarūpā* isn't separable into two things. So, we have *nāmarūpā*, that is, mind and body, and this is enough, there's no need for a third member, an '*aṭṭā*,' or 'self.' If we feel that there is a 'self' or some other thing which is the owner of the body and mind, which owns the mind and controls the body, then that's really just ignorance. The Buddha taught differently from what had gone before, in that he taught that there wasn't anything that could be called a 'self,' that there were the things called mind and body, *nāma* with *rūpa*, and that was enough. When the 'self' thought arose it was wrong understanding, wrong thinking coming from a mind which had made mistakes following contact with some outside object. This is what has, and will cause big trouble for us right up until we die, it's what will stop us from quenching *dukkha*, stop us from improving, stop us from putting things right.

Get a firm hold on this basic point first of all: we have a body and a mind but there's no need for a 'self,' there are just two components, together they make what we call a 'person.' We suppose that there's 'someone,' but in truth there isn't, there's just the body and the mind pooling their resources to carry out the operations of life in accord with the promptings of Nature. The body

is the physical part, the shell, the thing that serves, that's used, while the mind is that which thinks and feels, rather like the overseer controlling the body. They must dwell together, whenever they don't then both die. There's a body because there's a mind, and there's a mind because there's a body, they perform different functions but they dwell together. Therefore, when we're born from the mother's womb there's both, all set and ready to go.

However, all things are concoctions of nature. One such is called 'body,' another is 'mind,' they aren't permanencies, they don't endure but they can do what they need to do. The bodies and minds of generations of human beings have sensed and experienced different things over many tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of years, so that now mankind can do anything, can do wonderful things, can fly off into space, can create computers, etc. Things the ancients couldn't do. Who taught us? It was the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and, of course, the mind, which, experiencing so much, eventually brings it all together as accumulated knowledge, so that now even flying through the air cannot be seen as supernatural, or miraculous anymore.

There's no need for a 'self,' there's just a body with a mind as Nature intended, combining, concocting, naturally developing, progressing, there's no need to cling to them as something amazing, superb, as being more than they really are, because they're really quite ordinary, they're just what they are, 'just like that' as the Buddhists say. That's why we don't cling to anything, because, whatever it is, it's 'just like that' too.

But usually the mind clings, it's infatuated and led astray into clinging: infatuated with knowledge it clings to knowledge, clings to work, to wealth, to fame, to happiness, to stimulation, to delight, until it becomes extreme. There's no need to look outside at anybody else, because our own problems are so extreme. Consequently our actions disturb others, which is a world problem at present: some, thinking only of what's to their own benefit, and because they have the power, cause trouble for others. Hence this world is divided up between those on the left and those on the right, struggling with each other endlessly, between those in power and those without it, struggling for possession of the various lures and temptations, for possession of what will become the 'bait' by which the human population of this world will be hooked and reeled in.

There's the body and mind, there's no need for a 'self.' The one point, the one fundamental principle to be aware of is that there's only *nāmarūpā*, mind and body: there'll be the many and various experiences of life to deal with, and continually, but whatever happens there won't be any need for a 'self' to be involved, only the body and the mind, and, perhaps, the mind which has been trained, improved so that proper knowledge is around to deal with any experience, so bringing about the arising and development of real intelligence.

At first a person doesn't have any knowledge of *nibbāna*, but when they come to experience a lot of *dukkha* they'll, perhaps, start to move in its direction: they meet, meet, meet with trouble and strife until they reach the limit of their endurance, then, perhaps, they realize that there's trouble and strife, there's *dukkha* because the mind has been poorly maintained, wrongly established, subsequently it gets trained, comes to operate properly, and there's no more *dukkha*.

There's no need for a 'self,' for God, for anything from anywhere to interfere here, because the mind can do wrong or can do right all by itself.

In the body and mind combination it's the mind which is the most important, it's like the heart of the matter. The body is the substantial part, the outer shell, but it's the mind that's the most important component. Hence it's the mind we'll need to really understand, because anything and

everything is experienced by the mind, so we'll need to make a particular study of it. Hence we now come to look in that direction. The succeeding points will let us get to know the mind better.

The natural mind is without *kilesa*, defilement (basically greed, aversion, and delusion), without mental pollution, and is known, or referred to as 'luminous.' Mind is a natural element, the 'mind element,' the '*cittadhātu*,' it could also be called '*manodhātu*,' or even an '*arupadhātu*,' as we prefer - it's a natural element in the same sense that earth, water, fire and air are natural elements. However, this particular element concocts itself and becomes the 'mind' that we're familiar with. The mind, while still on the fundamental level, isn't in a 'good' or 'bad' mood, or state, is without any form of defilement, hence it's described as being 'luminous.' It's the nature of this luminous mind to be undefiled, but it can concoct defilement by way of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. The mind can cause the arising of the *kilesa*, the defilements, which will then temporarily overwhelm it, cover over its luminosity for a time. However, once the conditions supporting the defilements change, come to an end, they then quench away and the luminous mind re-emerges. The mind is like this, this is its true nature, it's naturally luminous until there's the wrong kind of concocting and the defilements come to cover it over and deprive it of its luminosity. While the mind is luminous it's without *dukkha*, it's trouble-free, but in the moment that the luminosity vanishes there's defilement, there's depression, distress, there's *dukkha*, confusion, turbulence. The point to grasp is that the original mind isn't defiled, that the defilements are things that just arise, which means that they can be prevented from arising.

The defilements aren't the mind; mind arises without defilement but gets overwhelmed by it, that is, defilement is able to dominate the mind because experiences coming in via the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind itself are carelessly dealt with. When we really believe and can clearly see that the mind can be kept away from the influence of the defilements, we can then arrange matters so that it stays defilement-free, so that it retains its luminosity. That's the job of *vipassanā*, of mental training.

Training, or cultivating the mind means developing it so that nothing can cause it to be defiled or depressed. Before this it was much too easy for anything to make the mind lose its luminosity and experience *dukkha*, but now we'll cultivate it, and when that's been done its condition will be such that, because it's become smarter, become sharper, the defilements can't re-arise. Once this has been accomplished we should then go about protecting the mind, taking care of, improving it, not allowing it to depress, to become defiled again. Hence if one has knowledge of the nature of the mind, knows it as it is, as it has been described, they'll also know that they can train it, that the mind can be trained, and that they, themselves might be able to do that, then they'll be happy to study for that purpose, and when they're happy to do that, then, for them, there can be successful mental cultivation.

At present we probably don't see this quite clearly enough so we won't be so sure that we can train the mind. Perhaps we try to sit *samādhi* but can't hold the mind still, so we give it up, we accept defeat. Many people who come here (Suan Mokkh) ask how long they'll have to train the mind for? They can't reach mental stillness and when they see that the mind is distracted and doesn't submit they give up, they're defeated. Most are like this, nobody much persists in their struggle to train the mind, to bring it increasingly under control until the task is completed, until the defilements can no longer arise, there's only a too easy submission and acceptance of defeat. So, don't give up, struggle on twenty times, thirty, fifty, an hundred times. But people don't want to do that.

Know that the mind is naturally undefiled, that something enters and causes it to become defiled, depressed. Therefore, we can separate the defilements from the mind by the simple method of learning to behave properly, by doing the right things, which method is known as *cittabhāvanā*, mental cultivation. *Samādhi* and *vipassanā* together are referred to as mental cultivation, mental training. This is something we should know about.

The next thing we need to know is that because the mind is difficult to understand, because we can't understand it properly it gets taken to be, for instance, the 'spirit,' gets described as something strange, wonderful, supernatural - all of which can be filed under 'superstitious beliefs.' Superstition is the incomprehensible, the irrational, that which is blindly believed in, and appears because we don't understand the true nature of the mind. If we were able to know the mind as it really is then superstitious beliefs couldn't arise, nobody would ever think in such a way. At present we don't know the mind as it really is, it's a mystery to us, so we place our faith in superstition-based knowledge, in knowledge which lacks reason, which is based in blind belief, and which has given rise to a profusion of ideologies and religious sects.

Born from a lack of understanding of the mind as it really is superstition has great power over people even to this day. It's been around for ages, since time immemorial, since mankind first began to think about the mind, thought about it wrongly, misunderstood it, and, in that way, gave rise to superstitious belief. Such belief has the advantage of not having to be logical, not needing to be explained, it's all about believing, and because it's usually mysterious in nature then people take to it all the more. If something is open, and frankly, clearly explained it won't be accepted so easily, but if anything smacks of the mysterious, the incomprehensible it will be more willingly received, which is a big advantage of superstition. What's laughable is that practically everybody is fond of it because it's often cheap: superstitious belief can involve just a little investment: a pig's head, a bottle of some liquor, anything offered to the spirits, to the celestial beings. Those are the advantages of superstitious belief which have kept it alive and kicking right down to the present day. When people take to the superstitious path it tends to obstruct truth, yet in this world it's accepted and maintained, it's become firmly established because it's suitable for those with weak knowledge, and in this world there are many such. But don't think that in a developed, prosperous country there isn't any superstitious belief, because it will be there too: God-belief, calling on our God for assistance, this will still be around, because ignorant human beings, no matter where they are, will have an instinctual desire to take the easy way out, to get somebody else to do for them what they should do themselves. In the end it all gets mixed up, confused, and the superstitious beliefs that people create come back to be their lord and master - superstition created by their own ignorance comes back to rule them. How amazing is that?

This is superstition, something we'll need to understand clearly: because we go wrong, misunderstand the mind, that misunderstanding then opens up the way for ignorance, for blind belief, for superstition - for the opposite of truth - to become dominant. Those of a superstitious inclination have insulted and reviled us until they've exhausted their vocabulary, but we remain undaunted and continue to point out the truth. If we can know the mind as it really is then any superstitious beliefs will dissolve away of their own accord.

Now superstitious belief has reached an amazing level, the most astounding, and people 'mark,' that is, they make an auspicious mark on the Buddha image so that it can *be* a Buddha. Buddha images are caste and then brought out of the foundry as such, but a Buddha image can't be used until someone comes along to make an auspicious mark on it, only then can it be a Buddha.

Think about this: people really make an auspicious mark on the Buddha image in order to make it into a Buddha! This can happen when superstition reigns; and that little mark is then good for life: take cement powder, some powder, put a little dab on the forehead, and that's good for life – true or not? Think about it.

Wrong understanding where the mind is concerned gives rise to superstitious belief. If we're still under the power of superstition we won't be able to connect with *Dhamma*, for us the *Dhamma* will be sterile and we won't be able to use it for our benefit. We misunderstand the mind, put our faith in superstition, and that creates a great obstacle, one that stops us from connecting fully with the Buddha's teachings, because superstition inhibits, opposes, it covers over and doesn't allow a true understanding to arise. If mankind doesn't know about this then superstition is going to dominate more and more, and this world will become increasingly peculiar. *Dukkha* won't be quenchable because the true nature of the mind and body won't be understood. So, make enough of a study of the deep and complex mechanisms of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and the mind then we'll know the real, the ultimate *Dhamma*, we'll attain the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*, be able to live above *dukkha*, and the mind won't be defiled, it will be luminous all the time.

We're naturally without knowledge in the womb; we don't have right knowledge, knowledge which accords with nature. The mind only has the knowledge of sense contacts at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind itself, only this sort of knowledge, so doesn't know what truth is, doesn't know about deliverance of the mind through wisdom, doesn't know what *dukkha* is, what the cause of *dukkha* is, what the quenching of *dukkha* is, or what the way to the quenching of *dukkha* is, the mind is without this sort of knowledge from birth. Once born the child is surrounded by a variety of things capable of leading it into understanding in an unreal way, in a way opposite to truth. It thus grows up in the midst of delusion regarding what it experiences through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, it doesn't know the truth of such things, doesn't know the way to safety, doesn't know *nibbāna*. This is our 'original sin.' Other religions have this concept too but talk about it in different ways. We explain it thus: when we come from the mother's womb we're immediately surrounded by many and various sense objects which allow us to forge wrong understanding. Those who raise us bring delicious things for us to eat so that we become infatuated with the delicious, bring the pretty, the beautiful to tempt us into infatuation, we're led astray into clinging to 'me' and to 'mine,' and we, clinging to the 'self' view, then regularly go wrong.

This problem doesn't decrease as we grow into adolescence, and is the kind of wrong view we'll have until we're old and grey. Try to observe, examine yourselves and see whether that wrong understanding decreases or not with the passing of time. Actually it only increases, becomes firm, strong, and very difficult to get rid of. When we can't get rid of it then we have to bear with *dukkha*, and bear with it until we really, really feel the need to be free of it. Once we do feel the need then we can start to try and turn things around, to put the problem right. Hence, if we've been lucky enough to come by the necessary knowledge and we're convinced that we can do this, then we can apply ourselves, make the necessary adjustments, lessen the *dukkha* we have to experience, and, perhaps, come eventually to live without it.

All people, family groups, societies, countries, the whole world living without *dukkha*, that would really be the ultimate. But how could that become a reality? We'd need to let the *Dhamma* help us, let the *Dhamma* become dominant in the world, then it could be *Dukkha*-free.

We don't have knowledge from birth hence we load up with wrong knowledge, right knowledge not being taught. Children aren't taught about the quenching of *dukkha*, there's only indulgence, pampering, and habitual spoiling. This is the way it is. Whose fault is it? We're naturally without any proper knowledge at birth, we emerge from the womb void in that sense, and once in the world load up with wrongs, with selfishness, becoming infatuated with delightful, stimulating sensual experiences until we become worshippers of the 'fun,' the delightful, the stimulating, eventually arriving at the point when we can't earn enough money to sustain the habit. There's this much of a problem because a tendency, or inclination towards this kind of behaviour has developed. This 'tendency' is known as '*anusaya*.' Every time defilement arises the tendencies, the *anusaya*, increase. Defilement arises in dependence on cause and conditions and is a temporary affair: the defilements of *lobha*, greed, *koda*, anger, and *moha*, delusion arise, and when they do then a tendency towards them starts to develop, so allowing them to re-arise more easily in the future. The defilements push, press to arise because there's a tendency towards defiled behaviour which we find difficult to resist.

So, now make the mind into a *Dhamma* fortress, fight the defilements, don't let them arise, combat them with mindfulness and clear comprehension (that is, be aware enough to be able to apply the right kind of response to any potentially meaningful sense contact). If we can prevent their arising once then the familiarity with them will decrease by so much, the power of the defilements will decrease. So, we're careful, we control them, we don't let them arise and their power lessens, the familiarity with them diminishes. This is the way to safety, the better way. So don't give in, don't be discouraged, and we'll be able to control them more and more until, perhaps, we can control them completely, then the tendencies will disappear altogether.

We've taken to worshipping the defiled as something good, something wonderful, which is much the same as worshipping the *kilesa*, the defilements themselves. We worship the *kilesa*, that is, we want what the *kilesa* want, want what the defilements want, we want the 'fun,' the delicious, the stimulating. We worship the *kilesa* as our God. 'God' means the ultimate, that which we have faith in, which we fear, and in accord with whose principles we regulate our behavior. But we put our faith in the defilements, we fear them, we habitually behave in accord with their promptings. We have the *kilesa* as our God. So, now we try to change, we put our faith in the Buddha and try to behave in accord with what he taught, which is difficult because we've been worshipping the God of defilement almost since birth. It will depend on whether the proper causes and conditions exist, on whether the opportunity arises, etc. but if everything comes together in the right way then we can change. It can happen if there's enough of an inclination towards the *Dhamma*, and if there's good instruction available then things can change, we can turn away from the defiled, stop associating with the defilements and join with the *Dhamma*, become interested in practising the *Dhamma* way.

Then the 'light' will have arisen, we'll have seen the light of safety and turned towards it. Then we won't worship the defilements anymore, instead we'll turn our face towards the real, the true, we'll turn towards the *Dhamma*, towards *sacca*, the truth of truths.

This will mark the arising of 'Buddhology.' Before this it was all superstition – 'sleepy' knowledge is called superstition – but now that changes, starts to become the knowledge of one who's awake, whose eyes are wide open, who sleeps no more. Thus we enter into the Buddha's way and, slowly, gradually, we follow the path to its end, to the attainment of path, fruit, and *nibbāna*. We should find it interesting that there is such a way as this.

We'll need to know all this for ourselves, to really know it in our own minds, to just accept what someone tells us wouldn't be right, so follow the advice of the *Kālāma sutta*, don't go against the tenets of the *Kālāma sutta*, that is, don't just believe blindly, have faith in anything only when it's been clearly understood, then we can gradually change and come into the strait way. Respect the *Dhamma*, the ultimate truth, do the right things and attain the highest, *nibbāna*, which is where it ends.

All things felt by the mind are to be *sandiṭṭiko* (personally experientable). *Sandiṭṭiko*; this word is significant, highly significant, because if *Dhamma* isn't *sandiṭṭiko* it won't be properly beneficial. *Dhamma* matters have to be *sandiṭṭiko*. We might go to the trouble of memorizing things like 'svākhato bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭiko akāliko....' (chanted everyday by monks and nuns) and so on, we might mouth this daily but still not get the proper benefit from it because it won't be *sandiṭṭiko*; think about it, if it isn't *sandiṭṭiko* it's just mouthing of words because the mind won't 'see' the truth of it. Thus, anything we say, we recite, let it be *sandiṭṭiko* too. If we talk about *dukkha* let it be felt, let it be known by the mind how *dukkha* actually is; the defilements are the cause of *dukkha* so know the defilements themselves, know how it is that they are the cause of *dukkha*, let everything be *sandiṭṭiko*.

The things that need to be a *sandiṭṭiko* experience before anything else are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, plus their opposite numbers, their helpmates, the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects, then there's the arising of contact, feeling and so on - all of this has to be *sandiṭṭiko*, personally experienced, to be really useful. It's the first thing, what the Buddha described as the starting point of the *Brahmacariya*. In *pariyati* study, the intellectual exploration of the *Dhamma*, the senses have to be tackled first, when practising the sense operations come first, and the result of practice, the penetration into truth must initially concern direct *sandiṭṭiko* experience of the senses and their mode of operation.

Making the refuges, coming to know the as yet misunderstood Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* (something, again, chanted daily by monks and nuns) is hard, so we have to, at least at first, just blindly recite the words and receive the refuges as we would ordinarily do, and although that will be akin to superstitious belief yet we'll have to let that pass for now and continue to accept the still mysterious versions of the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* as our refuge, subsequently we can study and practise to add knowledge until the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* become *sandiṭṭiko* experiences too.

Quench *dukkha* first and we'll know the real Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*. To just read about the qualities of the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* in books isn't *sandiṭṭiko* knowledge; *sandiṭṭiko* on the intellectual level isn't yet the real thing, but we can hold onto it in lieu of the real thing. So, it's *Buddhaṅgachāmi*, *Dhammaṅgachāmi*, *Sanghaṅgachāmi* (I go to the Buddha for refuge, etc.) for now, then we, slowly, gradually ascend; we watch and wait until we know. When the mind quenches suffering, when we first feel that we don't have any *dukkha* then we'll really know the Buddha, we'll really know the Buddha, the *Dhamma*, and the *Sangha*. At that time the *sandiṭṭiko* Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* will appear. We're afraid that for years and years understanding of the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* hasn't been *sandiṭṭiko*, consequently, we'll be, until the day we die, ignorant of the truth. The monastics needn't boast; they don't have *sandiṭṭiko* knowledge of the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* either. So, Buddhists, don't be lazy, don't neglect that which can make the *Dhamma sandiṭṭiko*.

What we're about to say will probably be considered presumptuous, but when we can quench *dukkha*, when we can understand it properly and put an end to it, at that time we are Buddha. Some will see this as an affront to the Buddha, but in truth that's what happens - the mind becomes Buddha, assumes a little of the character of a Buddha. The mind which can quench *dukkha*, can know the quenching of *dukkha*, that mind is Buddha. We can say mind 'attains' Buddhahood, or the mind has Buddha 'nature,' because it comes to the same thing. The mind displays the characteristics peculiar to *Buddhas*, hence we call that attaining, being Buddha.

Make the effort, make the experience of *dukkha* and its quenching *sandiṭṭiko*. All the dhammas connected with the quenching of *dukkha* have to be *sandiṭṭiko* too, that is, they must be seen clearly by oneself, and they must also display the characteristic of being *akālika* - timeless, of being beyond the realm of time; of being *ehi-passiko* – inviting, inviting one to come and see; of being *opanayiko* - leading one ever deeper into truth; and, finally, of being *paccatanveditabbo* – immediately experienciable by the wise.

There are the many things we need to know, some of these, concerning the *Dhamma*, concerning the understanding of Buddhism we've looked at in this first chapter of the '*Little Dhamma Book*.'

LDB.

II. To cultivate the mind is to develop life.

Cultivating, developing the mind is about making the mind progress, which will also cause life to progress. Causing life to progress, developing it, in this case, means making it better and better. If, however, there's increase but it's not for the better, rather it's for the worse, then that really shouldn't be called 'developing' at all. Progress can be right or wrong; if it's wrong it will be progress but without any real direction to it, so that there is, for instance, worldly progress but it brings problems in its train, trouble and strife, oppression, *dukkha*. There is progress in the field of Education, but of the kind that doesn't bring the proper result, so that we still, and increasingly, have wrongdoers all over the place. There's wrongdoing amongst the educated classes too, such people being what they are even though they are educated. Clever people make clever crooks and form a long lasting problem. All of this happens when progress is 'wrong.' If there's to be the right kind of progress then it must always involve a movement in the direction of happiness and fulfillment.

Now 'cultivating' means causing something to advance, to progress, 'developing' has much the same meaning. 'Cultivating' is used in the temples and over time the meaning has hardly changed at all, while 'developing' is used outside of the temples, used in the whole, wide world, where its meaning has changed in accord with worldly trends. Here the term 'mental cultivation' will be used when the mind is being made to progress, to advance, which will necessarily develop life too, cause life to progress, to advance, but why is that so? Well, in reality, everything is mind, everything arises from the mind: the 'self' image, the *sukha* and *dukkha* of life, and so on, the whole experience of being alive is put together by the mind. Suppose that people didn't have minds, would they be able to do anything? We'd be rather like logs of wood, or stones, unable to do

anything at all. It's because there is a mind that things can happen: mind thinks, so things can happen.

The mind is a wonder. If the body is without the mind then there's no life. It's because there is a mind that the body can operate at all. The mind does its duty by way of the senses, the connectors of the inner with the outer worlds, these are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, which are paired with forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects, hence there's meeting together of the inner and outer worlds through the mind performing its duty at the moment of sense contact. If we didn't have eyes, ears, a nose, tongue, and body, then the mind wouldn't have any tools to do its duty with, it couldn't do its work, and then it would be as if there wasn't a mind at all. Hence, grasp the importance of the senses as what make it possible for the mind to operate, to do its duty, to make contact with the outer world, with the forms entering through the eyes, the sounds entering through the ears, the smells, through the nose, the tastes by way of the tongue, touches by way of the body surface, and the sensations occurring in the mind itself.

There's a sense contact and then feeling can arise, feelings of a pleasant or unpleasant kind can happen because the mind is in charge at the moment of sense contact. Now, when feeling arises and the mind is ignorant there'll then, if the feeling is pleasant, be happiness, if the feeling is unpleasant there'll be unhappiness, which will mean that the defilements of *lobha*, greed, of *koda*, anger, and of *moha*, delusion have also arisen, and because this scenario will be repeated over and over again during life it will become habitual, that is, because there's the repeated arising of defilement a familiarity with it - an inclination, or tendency, towards it - will develop. This arising of defilement is called *taṇhā*; *taṇhā* is ignorant desire. There are two kinds of desire, the kind which arises in conjunction with mindfulness and wisdom goes by another name, but if it's ignorant desire it's called *taṇhā*. For example: when something's seen as likeable it will give rise to liking, when unlikeable to disliking, and then to the concomitant desire, so that there'll be desire to get and the desire to be, or desire to get rid of and the desire to not be, and, because it's all happening in ignorance the desire will be *taṇhā*.

It's the mind itself which desires, which feels *taṇhā*. If there wasn't a mind then there wouldn't be anything to do the desiring.

Now, when desire arises into the ignorant mind it naturally concocts thinking of the kind called '*upādāna*,' which is clinging, or attachment, then, because there's attachment, the feeling immediately arises that it's 'me,' who desires, 'me' who gets or doesn't get, 'me' who's affected in some way, and so on. This happens because there's been *taṇha*, ignorant desire, so there can now be *upādāna*, ignorant clinging, or attachment. We subsequently develop a tendency to cling, to attach: to cling to 'me,' to cling to something as 'mine,' to cling to sensuality, to views and opinions, to rites and rituals; clinging fills up, compresses into the mind, into the sub-conscious of each and every person.

Because we live our lives under the power of ignorance we're a problem both for ourselves and for others; because our lives are full of ignorant desire and clinging there's distress, oppression, harmfulness on both sides of the equation.

Anything and everything arises in the mind, comes together in the mind, is connected with the mind. Whatever state the mind is in will dictate how events are understood and dealt with, so it's our duty to train the mind, to make it advance, to grow in the right way, to stop it from being foolish, from making mistakes, from doing wrong and causing problems - to prevent it from spreading *dukkha* around.

Any study of the Buddhist system starts with the senses. These are the ABCs of Buddhism, the things that need to be understood first of all. The Buddha taught that feelings of *sukha*, *dukkha*, and the defiled desire of *taṇhā* are concocted via the six senses, hence we should find out how it is that the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind, along with their counterparts, the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects, give rise to feeling, to craving and clinging, thus to defilement and its fruit - *dukkha*. If we don't have clear knowledge of how this happens then our understanding will be second-hand and it will be difficult for us to understand Buddhism properly. When there's no real understanding there's no clear seeing and no real benefit to be got. Therefore, get to know the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind first of all.

In *Pali*, the language of the *Buddhadhamma*, they have odd words which some of us won't as yet grasp the significance of: 'arising' and 'quenching.' The eye 'arises' and 'quenches,' as does the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind. Perhaps we won't understand this, but in the language of *Dhamma* it's said that the eye 'arises' only when it does the work of seeing, the ear when it does its duty and hears, the nose when it does the duty of smelling, and so on, and that when the senses don't or aren't doing their respective duties they're said to have 'quenched.' In everyday language we wouldn't put it in quite the same way, rather we'd think that we always have eyes, ears, and so on, that the sense are always around, which, unfortunately, is understanding of a still too superficial sort.

In *Dhamma* language when the senses do their duties they're said to 'arise,' when their duties are over and done with they're said to 'quench.' Going further into this: the body 'arises' and quenches, that is, when the body does its duty it's said to have 'arisen,' when it's finished doing its duty it's said to have 'quenched.' The eye 'arises' when it does its duty, 'quenches' when its duty is done. Further: the elements of earth, water, fire, and air 'arise' and 'quench' : when the elements mingle together as the body and that body then does something, at that time, at that moment they're described as having 'arisen' - the earth, water, fire, and air elements have 'arisen' as the body which is performing its function, which is doing something. The elements 'arise' and 'quench' in the guise of the body, while the mind dwelling in the body also 'arises' and 'quenches.' There's 'arising' and 'quenching' of everything without exception. When anything does its duty, performs its function, it's called 'arising,' when its duty is done, is finished, it's called 'quenching.'

If this is grasped properly it's going to be very beneficial because the *Dhamma* is this way, that is, there isn't anything that won't 'arise' and 'quench' because all things are *sankhāras* (conditioned things - things arisen in dependence on conditions), and to 'arise' and 'quench' is the nature of such things, hence, the six senses 'arise' but they also 'quench.' Grasp this well, try to experience it, don't let it be just memorization of something heard or read about. The senses and their mode of operation are the ABCs, the starting point for the study of Buddhism, just as the alphabet is the starting point for the study of a language, hence we'll need to give attention to the senses first of all. Now, the 'eyeball' is essentially the earth element, there's some heat, or temperature involved, which is the fire element, there's some liquid, which is the water element, and there's movement involved, which is the air element. Then there's the eye's nervous system situated in the eyeball, which is the 'seat' of eye consciousness, it's the conduit through which the mind performs its duty at the eye. Now, next is the duty involved in the seeing of a form: when a form meets the eye, when a form meets the nervous system at the eye, then 'seeing' occurs, that is, eye consciousness arises and does its duty. The arising of eye consciousness to do its duty represents the eye seeing: there's a form, there's the eye, and there's the seeing (eye-consciousness), these three things taken together

are ‘*phassa*,’ contact. When there’s a contact then there must be feeling, ‘*vedanā*,’ which will be pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-nor. Pleasant feeling will give rise to desire to get, unpleasant feeling to desire to get rid of. The feelings allow desire, ‘*tanhā*,’ to arise, and then the sense that there’s a ‘me,’ a ‘desirer’ - a ‘me’ who’s happy, who’s unhappy, who’ll get, who won’t get, who’ll win, who’ll lose, or whatever – will appear right there and then.

The world, in the Buddhist understanding, arises at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. That ‘world’ as it’s studied in schools is the planet earth, the earth which is divided up into continents, into countries, into various parts - the physical world. If we’re aware of the word then we can use ‘globe’ instead, which has a different meaning to ‘world,’ ‘globe’ implying the body of the earth, while ‘world’ implies the earth as well as all the creatures on and in it which have life, have mind, have feelings. However, the ‘world’ in *Dhamma* language, in the language of the religion, is said to ‘arise’ when the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind connect with forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects. Going further, the Buddha said that ‘Hell’ arose at the senses, in that whenever the mind was ‘hot’ as a result of experiencing contacts between the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or the mind itself, and their respective objects, that was ‘Hell,’ and that whenever there was mental ease, satisfaction coming from the same source, that was ‘Heaven.’ The Buddha didn’t talk about Heaven and Hell in the old way. Before the Buddha appeared it was said that Heaven was somewhere above the sky and that Hell was under the ground, and that when we died then we’d go to one or the other. He didn’t object to that explanation but declared it differently, more interestingly, pointing out that Heaven and Hell, and that all the realms, or worlds are accessible to us because of the way the mind responds to particular sense experiences. So, be interested, the entrances to all the worlds are at the sense doors, even *nibbāna* is accessed in this way, if we want to attain *nibbāna* then we’ll have to act correctly where the senses are concerned, because it’s then that there can be quenching, coolness, *nibbāna*.

Hence these senses are the whole matter. There’ll be *sukha*, happiness, or *dukkha*, its opposite, or no *sukha* or *dukkha* depending on how we behave towards the things we see, hear, etc. behave correctly and there’s no *dukkha*, behave incorrectly and there immediately is.

Now, of the six senses the most important is the mind. The mind has the duty of thinking, hence it can create; if we couldn’t think then the mind wouldn’t create anything and nothing would happen. When mind does the duty of thinking it’s called ‘*citta*,’ when it knows or feels it’s ‘*mano*,’ when it does the knowing at the senses it’s called ‘*viññāna*.’ ‘*Citta*,’ ‘*mano*,’ ‘*viññāna*’ - there are more words we could use but we don’t want to get too complicated, so just take it that when mind does one duty it’s ‘*citta*,’ when it does another it’s ‘*mano*,’ and when it does another it’s ‘*viññāna*.’ Don’t let this be mere bookish knowledge, get to know ‘*citta*,’ ‘*mano*,’ ‘*viññāna*’ as they are through observing the mind’s operations. Unwise people study the *Dhamma* from notes, smart people will study it within themselves. If we write down ‘*citta*,’ ‘*mano*,’ ‘*viññāna*,’ record them on paper, we can memorize them, but if we’re smart we’ll actually know when it’s a matter of one or the other.

We believe that *Dhamma* study must be done from experience, from actual things and events, as with scientific studies. If we study philosophy or logic then our studies won’t be based on actual experience, they’ll be based in hypotheses, but if we study scientifically then we take real things and observe, research, experiment with them. If we study the *Dhamma* from books, through intellection, it won’t be Buddhism, if it’s to be Buddhism then it’s necessary that we be scientific. So, if we consider the eye then it’s the actual eye as it operates being considered, if the ear it’s the

actual ear, or the actual nose, or whatever, and then the forms, sounds, smells tastes, etc. which impact the senses are actual experiences too. When there's a sense impact and consciousness arises at the eyes, ears, etc. then that it has to be known as it happens, not just remembered as a series of names. Then there's the arising of *phassa*, contact, which, although it happens very quickly, still needs to be known as it actually is. When there's *phassa* there'll be *vedanā*, feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. When *vedanā* arises then ignorant desire, *taṇhā* arises too, desire in accord with the arisen feelings; from this comes the ignorant idea of 'me,' the 'desirer.' It's the ignorant mind causing the feelings of 'me' and 'mine' to arise, that's the problem, the 'me' and 'mine' which let *dukkha* in. All defilement rests on the 'self.' The defilements arise progressively, originating from the 'self' illusion which has its basis in the ignorant mind.

We could say a lot more, but we'll sum the matter up in just six words: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind. We leave it with everyone: remember, look out for the chance to study and understand the senses and their operations, because this is a big thing, it's the 'all,' the beginning and the end of our problems.

Wrongdoers commit crimes because they don't understand sense contacts and the feelings arising from them, they give too much meaning to such things, hence they spend their money and then, being without, and because they're foolish, more foolish than is usually the case, they rob, and perhaps even kill. If they could see contact and feeling as they are then they wouldn't be provoked into acting in the ways that they do. Defilement, foolish desire, all the bad in this world happens because the senses and their objects aren't properly understood. Be aware that, in this day and age, people are often short of money because they use what they have buying 'bait,' buying what attracts, what lures sensually. Merely mentioning this will make it hard for some to take, and they'll cut it short to go and indulge their desires, to buy more bait, to indulge in the sensually stimulating, but no matter how much they buy it won't be enough, they consume and consume but it's never enough, hence their salaries aren't sufficient to satisfy their needs.

If we're to be able to control the senses then we'll need to know their master well enough, so we'll need to know how to control the mind. The mind is the overseer, doing the duty of interpreting and responding to the promptings of the five physical senses as well as to its own operations. Talking about controlling the senses is alright but somewhat indirect, but if we talk about controlling the mind then we'll be spot on. Hence, we get to know the mind well, so that, when it does its duty at the eyes, ears, etc. we're aware and can exercise control. We don't let the mind go wrong, don't let it act ignorantly, stop it from being foolish, from being infatuated, from misunderstanding things. When the mind goes wrong there's *dukkha*, so we control it, keep it correct, then there doesn't need to be any *dukkha*.

Now, we want to make the point that efforts to study Buddhism aren't successful, aren't beneficial because of being wrongly directed. Success lies in understanding the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, how they operate, how the defilements arise (from their operations), how *dukkha* arises, but people prefer to regard Buddhism as a form of general knowledge, as a subject for debate, or as a philosophy. If we study Buddhism as a philosophy there'll never be a day when we'll actually come to know it – so, stop it, stop treating Buddhism as a philosophy. We need to take our truth from actual experience of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind as they function, from experience of contact, of feeling, of craving, from the experience of *dukkha*. That would be *sandittiko* (personally experienced), would be *Dhamma* knowledge of the *sandittiko* sort and not philosophy, or anything arrived at through logic.

This is all about the mind, about controlling, cultivating, developing the mind properly, it isn't a matter of reasoning, of philosophizing. Bear this in mind while studying the Buddhist system: everything comes together at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, when we go away from this base there's no point to our studies because there won't be any benefit. Be it Heaven, Hell, or *nibbāna*, or anything at all, it will always be connected with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, but if we don't look in the right places then we won't understand this.

We've talked for a long time to let you see just one thing, one point – that it all comes together in the one word: 'mind,' everything comes together in the mind, the mind which performs its function at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and, at the mind itself.

Now, if we can control the mind we can control the senses, so, we'll develop the mind, that is, we'll cause it to operate properly by not allowing it to just deal with sense experience in its naturally ignorant way. If we just allow the mind to operate naturally it will do so under the power of ignorance. We'll say that again: if we just let things take their natural course then whatever happens will happen in ignorance. Now, we have eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and there are the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects paired with them; for example: the first pair is the eye and a form. The eye: the eyeball, the nerve of the eye which will arise to let the mind do its duty, this is called the 'eye,' and then there's a form outside which comes to impact the eye. The form and the eye come together to do their duties and when they do that they're then said to have 'arisen.' When the form has still to impact the eye the two aren't yet doing their duties, haven't yet arisen, but then the eye arises, the form arises, they meet and the eye then sees, that is, *caksuviññāna*, eye consciousness arises. With the appearance of *caksuviññāna* there's a triple arising: the eye arises, a form arises, eye consciousness arises, these three coming together are called *phassa*, contact. *Phassa* is the most formidable of occurrences. Everything and anything is a consequence of *phassa*, of contact. On the arising of *phassa*, feeling, *vedanā*, will very quickly appear. If the feeling is of satisfaction it's a *sukhavedanā*, if of dissatisfaction it's a *dukkhavedanā*, if indeterminate, neither, then it's called *adukkhamasukhavedanā*. These feelings play a dominant part in the drama of life, that is, they dominate the mind in a way which is naturally unwise. As was previously mentioned, children don't have knowledge when they're born, they don't know about the quenching of *dukkha*, about *cetovimutti* or *paññāvimutti* (liberation of the mind from *dukkha* through wisdom) and so on, they don't have this sort of knowledge, and won't, in the normal course of events, acquire it during life either. Hence, when feelings of satisfaction occur there'll be liking, when feelings of dissatisfaction arise there'll be disliking, when the indeterminate variety arise there'll be doubt, confusion.

Remember this word 'vedanā,' the *vedanā* are almost as formidable as *phassa*. *Phassa* is the villain, but it's when there's *vedanā*, feeling, that trouble arises. When *phassa* is allowed to happen naturally it happens in ignorance, thus giving rise to ignorant feeling, which means that any feelings won't be understood as they really are. The ignorant mind naturally feels liking towards *sukhavedana*, disliking towards *dukkhavedana*, and must naturally experience doubt and confusion when faced with the *adukkhamasukha* variety. Then, because of ignorance, there's the sort of desire that shouldn't happen, followed by infatuation, anxiety, anger and so on. This will be the natural result of just letting things follow their course. It will be like this for us, for everyone.

Hence we should get to know ourselves well, study every point of the *Dhamma* from the realities within our own being, not just from books, from notes we've made of things we've listened to.

Don't rely on such things as anything more than aids to memory. We learn from the actual, from the reality within.

Do we understand yet that if we allow things to follow their natural course it will amount to ignorance? This is why we have to train the mind - to give it knowledge. Hence we practise *vipassanā* of the various kinds so that the mind can be aware when it experiences *phassa* and *vedanā*, otherwise ignorance will be in control. So we train the mind to have knowledge then it won't fall into liking the agreeable, disliking the disagreeable, or into being confused by the confusing. It's then out of danger, uninfatuated, it's not prone to anger, to fear, anxiety, to longing after, to jealousy, envy, etc.

So, how should we train the mind? And do we see training the mind as important? If the mind isn't trained the mental flow, the mental concocting will naturally follow the path of ignorance. We train the mind, give it knowledge, control the mental flow, the mental concocting by letting knowledge take control of all sense contacts so that *dukkha* doesn't happen. When anything comes to cause contact, *phassa*, and *vedanā*, feeling of any sort arises, we'll have to be aware of it as being 'just like that,' then we won't fall into infatuation, into liking, no matter how enticing the experience may be, or, we won't fall into anger, into aversion, into fear, even though we're experiencing something apparently hateful, fearsome. Then we'll be safe, out of danger.

Do we see how important cultivating the mind is yet? If it wasn't really important we wouldn't spend time on it. Mental cultivation, mental training is important hence we talk about it to encourage the understanding that it's something we should do, because cultivating, training the mind is about developing life too.

Now, training the mind, mental cultivation, mental development, can it be done? You'll probably give the wrong answer. People generally won't know whether it can or can't be done, so they'll go along with those who say that it can. On this point the Buddha lets us know that we 'can do' by saying something very significant: he says that the mind is naturally 'luminous,' that is, it's naturally without defilement, but that this luminous mind becomes a defiled mind, a dark, gloomy mind because the defilements, the *upakilesa* (visiting defilements) enter and dominate it. When does this happen? It happens at *phassa*, contact, with the arising of contact and feeling ignorance also enters to dominate the mind so that greed, *lobha*, anger, *koda*, and so on, arise, and the mind that would have been luminous, without defilement, now arises as a defiled, a dark and gloomy mind. The nature of the mind is to be luminous, that is, radiant, light, it's only depressed and dark because the defilements come to dominate it, when they leave it's luminous as before. Thus the mind is bright, luminous until the defilements interfere, when they've finished their defiling the mind's luminous nature re-appears, and that state of affairs will persist only until the defilements interfere again, and so on.

This is the true nature of the mind: to be luminous; when it's not it's because the defilements have entered. The Buddha also said that anyone who clearly sees that the mind is essentially luminous, that it's darkened and depressed by visiting defilements, but that it's luminosity can reappear once the defilements, along with their supporting causes and conditions, are gone, for someone who knows this truth then mental cultivation is appropriate, is a possibility. Hence, we can look forward to making the mind luminous, without defilement. As for those who don't see things in this way, who don't believe that the mind is essentially luminous, who believe that it's always going to be defiled, that it's the nature of the mind to be so, then there's no way for them to successfully cultivate it. When we know the reality of this we can then see for ourselves that mental cultivation,

developing the mind, is something that can be done: we know that the developed mind can control the flow of *phassa*, *vedanā*, *taṇhā*, and so on, so that there's no *dukkha*, hence we have the interest and the motivation to do the job.

Now, mental cultivation, training the mind: we want to impart understanding of something that's never been understood, never heard: people divide the development process into *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*, and usually it's said that the *sīla* part doesn't directly concern the mind, while *samādhi* and *paññā* do. We say that's not right, that it's a superficial understanding. We're going to cultivate the mind in all three areas, in *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. The task of not violating the five *sīlas*: not killing, stealing, etc. requires that the mind be already elevated to the point where it inclines towards not killing, not stealing, not committing adultery, not lying, not imbibing intoxicants - the mind must be on that level if it's to be able to abstain from such, if it isn't then abstinence won't be possible. The mind has to be controlled, to be trained so that it comes to abhor and fear, for instance, the drinking of liquor. Once it reacts in this way towards alcohol, when it no longer compasses the drinking of liquor, nor of killing, stealing, adultery, or lying in the many and various ways, the mind is then elevated enough. Hence the mind has to be trained even on the *sīla* level. Train the *sīla* mind well, then we can keep the *sīlas*, keep from breaking them in any way. This is mental cultivation on the *sīla* level.

Now, cultivating the mind in the way of *samādhi*: the mind that's weak, not under control, is full of the *nīvarana*, of those things that disturb, so retrain it, simply put, make it fit enough to be able to dwell above its enemies, let it be *samādhi*. Then, going higher, to the development of wisdom, of knowledge, it's necessary to train the mind so that it becomes expert in all the things it should be expert in.

There are these three different levels, the *sīla* level - training the mind so that it can keep the *sīlas*; the mental level - training the mind to be *samādhi*, to be stable, steady so it can function most efficiently; and the level of wisdom, *paññā* - training the mind so that it knows what it should know, what a human being should know - how to quench *dukkha*. This is mental cultivation, training the mind in *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. In other places other teachers teach in other ways, but we're not responsible for any of that and don't need to make any comment, however, we would say that mental cultivation must involve training in *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. So, let there be mental cultivation, mental growth, development.

On the original level the mind will be animal-like, will have primary knowledge of the kind an animal does - the untrained mind has a natural level of knowledge, the knowledge it comes equipped with, thus it knows what an animal would know, which amounts to a very low level of understanding. We call that the 'animalistic' level. The second level would be equivalent to the mental level of those forest people who believed in external effects as being ghosts, spirits, or gods, and who didn't comprehend the *Dhamma* at all. This is a higher mental level than the animal, but only just, we refer to it as the 'superstitious' level. It isn't the highest human level, it's a 'still-asleep' level, so to say, although it's better, more elevated than the animal. The superstitious isn't a total write-off, such people having reached the point where there's belief in ghosts and spirits, in gods or whatever, in things that can't be explained, things which have to be believed in unquestioningly. The Buddha wasn't interested in that, he discovered the truths of nature: *dukkha*, its cause, its quenching, and the way to its quenching, hence he taught a new understanding, which we call 'Buddhology.' Actually 'Buddhology' isn't quite right but there isn't any better, more appropriate word. Anyway, just remember three things: the mind on the animalistic level, that is,

on the general animal level, then the mind on the superstitious level, that is, the ignorant, blind, credulous, asleep level, which is somewhat better than the animal level, and mind on the final level, the ‘Buddhology’ level, the level of a Buddha fully awakened to natural truth, to the quenching of *dukkha*.

A moment ago we talked about the three levels of *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*, now we’d like to say a little more about these three. We want to make the point that they can’t be separated, can’t be apart from each other: we can’t live without attending to *sīla*, because then there’d be crime, trouble and strife everywhere, wayward behaviour in the home, and so on, so there has to be *sīla* in human life, whether we live alone or with others it must be that way. Then there must be mental correctness; if there’s already *sīla* it will be quite easy for the mind to be *samādhi*, to be correct, and when the mind’s correct then *paññā*, wisdom will arise all by itself.

The development of the mind must happen in this way: from the animalistic through the superstitious to Buddhology, there has to be development of all three components, there can’t be any shortfall where *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* are concerned.

Now, on developing true *samādhi* then wisdom, *paññā* will emerge: because developing *samādhi* improves the mind then knowledge, things that we don’t know, that we want to know, things that remain unrealized will gradually come to be realized. To paraphrase the Buddha: the one with a *samādhi* mind can see all things as they really are. There’s the desire to know which can’t be fulfilled because the mind isn’t *samādhi*, because the mind indulges, gets involved, gets defiled, but on the mind being made smooth, clear, then true knowledge simply emerges. The mind being *samādhi* many kinds of knowledge can emerge, when the mind is comfortable it’s well-suited to knowing. Hence, when we make the mind *samādhi* then *sīla* will be there too, and when the mind is *samādhi*, *paññā*, knowledge will arise of itself. We appeal to you to take an interest and make the mind *samādhi*; *samādhi* is the core experience, the mainstay of the mind. Make *samādhi* and *sīla* will be present and complete for the time that the mind is *samādhi*, however, if there should be a shortage of *sīla* to begin with we’ll have to do something about that first, then we can immerse ourselves in *samādhi* so that knowledge, *paññā*, can gradually arise.

Sīla, *samādhi*, and *paññā* work together quite naturally. In doing any kind of work the three can’t be apart. There’s no need to even talk about *Dhamma* matters because in the carrying through of ordinary household tasks there has to be control, physical control, control of the work to be done, and mental control so that we have the knowledge necessary to do the job in hand properly. As with splitting wood for a fire: in simply chopping up some wood for the fire there has to be physical control, control of the hands, which is *sīla*, control of the mind, which is *samādhi*, and there has to be enough knowledge of how to split wood into firewood, which is *paññā*. Hence, in any activity which is going to be beneficial there can’t be any shortage of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, if there is then we won’t be able to perform the task properly: try cutting firewood, try splitting wood without being in physical control of the situation and we’ll probably split our foot instead. No matter what we do, arithmetical study, book studies of whatever sort, there must be some level of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* operating together.

This is the most important principle in Buddhism: that there must be *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* in tandem, combining together harmoniously, operating as one. If we expand those three into the eight factors of the path, then the eightfold path (*Magga*, the fourth ‘Noble Truth’) must also operate as one in order to do the duty of cutting the *kilesa*. The eightfold path is *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* expressed as eight instead of three components.

Now, *samādhi*, what is it like? Students may think that being *samādhi* means sitting somewhere stiff as a board, locked in some absorption, but that isn't right. *Samadhi* is the mind trained to be just so whether we're walking, sitting, standing, or lying down, it's not just about sitting. In the *Pali* several words are used to define *samādhi*, but these three are the important ones: *parisuddho*, which refers to the pure mind minus the *nīvarana*, untroubled by defilement; *samāhito*, the stable, steady mind; *kammaniyo*, the agile mind. There can't be any shortage in these three if the mind is to be *samādhi*. First must be purity of mind, or *parisuddho*, which means mental cleanliness, then there's *samāhito*, firmness, stability - mind with its energies gathered together so that it's strong, secure - and *kammaniyo* which is the agile, nimble mind. Whether we walk, sit, stand, lie down, think, or whatever, these three factors should be fully present. This is the *samādhi* mind. It's not about sitting in absorption, in some meditative attainment, that's too much concentration - in fact the time that we spend doing that is time that we don't put to good use: to go and practise, to sit in *jhāna*(absorption, full concentration) is also *samādhi* but not of the sort which is going to be useful in any task we undertake.

We begin by making a little *samādhi*, that known as *parikammasamādhi*. We start off by, for instance, fixing on the breathing so that there begins to be a little *samādhi*, which we then increase until 'access' concentration, *upacārasamādhi* - the gateway to the higher forms of the genre - is reached. Continuing on from there, *appanāsamādhi*, or *jhāna*, is attained, which represents the still, silent mind, from where we can go on to the highest possible level, at which point even breathing will be absent. However, all that's impractical, can't really be used, so the idea is to reach the *jhāna* level of attainment and then to come back out, to come back out into 'access' concentration, into *upacārasamādhi*, in which we can walk, sit, we can think, and the mind will still be *samādhi* - even when walking, thinking, or whatever, the mind will still retain its *parisuddho*, its purity, its *samāhito*, firmness, stability, and its *kammaniyo*, its quickness, its agility, its active quality. This will be enough *samādhi*, the sort that can be used in the task of investigating the quenching of *dukkha*, any more than that - as with *jhāna* - and it can't be used for that purpose. We can do a lot of practise and reach the highest *jhānic* level, but that's not the way to really use our time, we need to achieve, and then to come out from absorption, from *appanāsamādhi*, and dwell in the more ordinary levels, in *upacāra samādhi*.

The mind mingled with the factors of *samādhi*, the mind which is pure, stable, ready to do its duty, is a necessity even for children, for students, undergraduates, or whatever. If we want to cultivate the mind in a useful way we should aim to make this kind of *samādhi* and then put it to use, because it's able to free the mind from the defilements, from the *nīvarana* that disturb, it's able to make the mind pure, undistracted, sensitive, quick to do its duties. This kind of *samādhi* is practical, the sort that can be used for our benefit, it's not too much, nor is it too little.

Now, to continue, we'll look at the factors coming together as *samādhi*, the elements of *samādhi*. There are many types and forms of *samādhi*. The Buddha talked about lots of forms, but teachers coming after him increased them until they can't be held in the memory, and it's laughable that now there's this style from this temple, this from that temple, this teacher's *samādhi*, that teacher's *samādhi*. It's madness: *samādhi* of this, of that temple, of this or that teacher - it's lunatic. Suan Mokkh doesn't have a style, there's no Suan Mokkh-style *samādhi*, there's the Buddha's form which we've studied, investigated, chosen, and used. Although we allow that it is the Buddha's form it's actually - and no disparagement is intended - Nature's form, because the Buddha couldn't

invent the natural law that causes the arising of *samādhi*, rather it was something he discovered. He awoke, discovered the way to *samādhi*, and later taught it in several forms.

Among the several forms that the Buddha revealed we like the one called ‘*ānāpānasatibhavanā*’ (‘mindfulness with breathing’). This one is smooth and even, quiet, cool and peaceful, it’s not disturbing or frightening like some forms, such as the death meditations, or loathsomeness contemplations, which can be disturbing. The form involving the fixing of attention on the breathing is always quiet, peaceful and cool. We like the *ānāpānasati* the Buddha praised; he counselled *ānāpānasati* as being the best, the most peaceful, the quietest, the coolest, and even he dwelt in *ānāpānasatibhavanā* during his awakening.

We can have as many forms as we like, but the essentials of making the mind *samādhi* will be the same, that is: in the first place our surroundings must be suitable. We can make *samādhi* once we’ve found an appropriate enough place. And our body must be fit, without pain, without disturbance. The object of *samādhi* needs to be suitable too, such as the breathing used in *ānāpānasati*. Then there’s the ‘*kalyānamitta*,’ the ‘good friend’ who’ll give us assistance.

Regarding this word ‘*kalyānamitta*,’ the teacher of a practice wasn’t originally referred to as ‘*achariya*,’ or even ‘teacher,’ the word used was ‘*kalyānamitta*.’ The Buddha is recorded as having said that all beings subject to birth, ageing, sickness, and death, if they dwelt with the *Tathāgata* (the Buddha) as their *kalyānamitta* then they could escape from birth, ageing, etc. He used the word ‘*kalyānamitta*,’ he didn’t say dwell with us as your teacher, he never used that word, he used the word *kalyānamitta*, ‘good friend.’ In the old books, in the *Visudhimagga* this word is used. Even here, in the Chaiya area, (Suan Mokkh is near the southern Thai town of Chaiya) they, at one time, referred to the meditation teacher as *kalyānamitta*. It was once a catchword amongst those who meditated regularly, something quite normally used. Hence, we need to have a *kalyānamitta*: in developing *samādhi* we should have someone who can give knowledge, who’s ready to give advice, ready to give the appropriate assistance. Have a *kalyānamitta* who’s pure, who’s able to give the proper advice but doesn’t come and exercise control day and night. In the Buddha’s time pupils got their meditation objects from the Buddha and then went to practise, they struggled, struggled, struggled until the end in view was reached, and, during the course of their struggles, occasionally came to ask about solving this or that problem. But they weren’t encouraged to come every day, they didn’t need to ask about every small thing. Hence it’s not necessary to have a *kalyānamitta* come and sit together with us keeping an eye on things all the time, that we meet together once in a while will be good enough. But we will need a *kalyānamitta*, a good friend, an advisor. Then, we can try to fix on our meditation object in the beginning stages, which is called ‘*parikammabhāvanā*.’

OK. We’ve had enough of an explanation on how to go about this, so now we try: we try to do it, and we fail, so we try again, and we fail again, we try, we fail, we try, we fail, and so on. It’s much the same as learning to ride a bicycle: nobody can instantly ride a bicycle, and although we see how it’s done, when we get on and try to ride we fall off, so we have to get back on again, but we fall off again, and so on, until finally we succeed in riding the thing. Hence, letting the task be the teacher is good here, don’t let anyone give out too much information, that’s unwise, let the activity do the teaching and there’ll be a better result. Hence, we practise *parikammabhāvanā*, we practise, practise, practise. At first we can’t do it, but we gradually improve every time that we try. It’s rather like children learning to walk: at first babies can only sit or lie down, then they learn to crawl, and then to walk, and, of course, while getting used to walking they fall down a lot, but the child

continues to try and walk and eventually succeeds. That's an instance of Nature doing the teaching. Even rowing a boat needs to be practised, and be practised many tens of times before the boat can be kept straight, it can't immediately be done. Therefore let the repeated attempts be the teacher and our efforts will slowly, slowly come to fruition, just as in attempting to row a boat, or in trying to walk, or in trying to ride a bicycle. This is *parikammabhavanā* - we try, try, and try again, until we succeed.

Now, to continue: the second step occurs when we arrive at 'access' concentration. 'Access' concentration, '*upacārabhāvanā*.' This is where the mind starts to become peaceful. When this happens mind's in a different condition, no longer the same as it was at the beginning, so now make it to go further, let it increase, increase, increase until it reaches absorption and becomes stable, one-pointed. At first we're beginners, then we enter the 'access' level of concentration, then we attain to the level of stability, of one-pointedness.

These three levels are associated with every form of practise no matter what form it is. In the initial stages there's usually turbulence and confusion, but there's no need to be afraid, then, little by little we'll calm down as we enter into 'access,' into *upacāra*, then, proceeding onwards, there'll be *apanā*, stability, as *jhāna* is attained. On entering *jhāna* the mind will be firm and stable but we'll be unable to do anything much with it, the mind can't, for instance, do any discursive thinking, neither can we walk or stand up - when in the *jhāna* one has to be in a stable pose, that is, in a sitting posture. If the *jhāna* persists it's referred to as '*samābati*.' There's no need for us to bother too much with this because it isn't for everyone, entering and dwelling in the *jhāna* - *sammābati* - isn't for everyone, Nature didn't intend it for all people. Even the Buddha didn't teach it for everyone. But anyone can make the mind *samādhi* on the level of *parisuddho*, *samāhito*, and *kammaniyo*, everybody can do this through attaining access concentration - *upacāra*. If we can reach the *jhāna* there'll be a lot of *samādhi*, at such times the mind is said to be composed of *samādhi*, and we can use that *samādhi*, but to do that we'll need to come out from the *jhāna* first. When exiting *jhāna*, when coming out from the *samābati* there's alertness and enough of the power of *samādhi* remaining to enable us to do anything we care to take on in a much better way than would normally be the case. So the power of *samādhi* that we, all of us, can take and make real use of is that peculiar to *upacārasamādhi*, to access concentration, because then we can walk, sit, lie down, think, we can do anything - within reason - while this kind of *samādhi* mind persists, most especially the studying of difficult books.

So, the correct elements must be present: suitable surroundings, a suitable meditation object, and appropriate counsel, then we can develop through the levels of *parikamma*, *upacāra*, to, if we wish, *appanā*.

Two words that tend to get confused are *samatha* and *vipassanā*. *Samatha* means 'calmed,' or 'stilled,' *vipassanā* means 'clear seeing.' Making the mind *samādhi*, peaceful and calm, represents the first stage, *samatha*. The ensuing stage is *vipassanā*: seeing clearly. The meaning is clear: *samatha* brings calm and peace and isn't concerned with thinking, isn't concerned with thought, with intellection, it makes the mind peaceful, makes it *samādhi*. When mind is thus knowledge can emerge. *Vipassanā* means 'seeing clearly,' it's not thinking or consideration. At present it's almost unanimously understood as thought and consideration, of reasoning. I myself used to have this understanding because it was taught like that in schools, but, in truth, it isn't like that. *Samatha*, we could say, is about 'looking,' while *vipassanā* is about 'seeing.' We have to look first, then we'll see. While we're looking that's *samatha*, the resultant 'seeing' is *vipassanā*. So it starts with

‘looking,’ but as yet there can’t be any looking because the mind’s eye is too dim, too blurry, so it first of all has to be made clear and bright, hence *samādhī* is developed in order to remove the five *nīvarana*, the ‘obstacles.’

The five *nīvarana* can be compared to the dust and dirt which accumulates on the surface of the lenses of a pair of eye glasses rendering them unable to provide a clear image. By wiping the lenses clean the eyes can then look at whatever and see it clearly. The *nīvarana* incline the mind towards certain forms of behaviour: *kāmachanda*, sensual desire; *bhīyapāda*, ill will, crankiness; *thinamida*, mental sloth and torpor; *udaccakukucca*, mental distraction; *vicikiccā*, doubt, confusion, uncertainty. These are the five *nīvarana*, which, naturally arisen, are always ready to disturb the mind. There are yet other connected *dhammas* supporting them, but mentioning these five is enough. It’s necessary to wipe the mental eye clean of these problems, to clean our mental eyeglasses - just as we might use a medicinal concoction to make our physical eyes clean. This is *samādhī*, or *samatha*: making the mind peaceful, that is, making the mental eyes fit so that they can ‘look,’ then *vipassanā* can ‘see.’ *Samatha* is ‘looking,’ *vipassanā* is ‘seeing,’ hence the two forms can’t be separated. In a sense practising the development of *samādhī* is like wiping a pair of eyeglasses clean, then, once they’ve been cleaned, we can look and be able to see clearly. Sometimes both of these forms are referred to as *vipassanā*, but in reality they’re different, *samatha* being like the preparation for *vipassanā*. The morality part is included in the *samatha* section.

Therefore, understand this word ‘*samatha*’ well, it’s a matter of looking, not of thinking: if it were about thinking, reasoning, then our prior knowledge would lead thought in a wrong direction and we’d think in line with what we’ve come to know through study, so that any *vipassanā* wouldn’t be successful. Hence, not developing *samatha*, not wiping the mental eye-glasses clean, would mean that neither the requisite looking in a free and unbiased manner, nor the clear seeing of truth dependent on that, could happen. This is *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

On looking - once we’ve wiped away the *nīvarana* - we ‘see’ *aniccaṇ*, impermanence, *dukkhaṇ*, unsatisfactoriness, and *anattā*, ‘not-self,’ we ‘see’ the ‘three characteristics,’ or, we could say that we ‘see’ *dhammatitthatā*, or even *dhammaniyāmatā*, which is the same as ‘seeing’ *aniccaṇ*, *dukkhaṇ*, and *anattā* - or, we could gather it all together in one word and say that we ‘see’ *suññatā*. Those three characteristics add up to knowledge of *suññatā*, voidness, that, whatever it is, it’s void of any meaning of ‘self.’ Or, we could - to use a nice-sounding word - say that we ‘see’ ‘*tathatā*,’ that is, we realize that everything is really ‘just like that,’ which leads to the realization that there’s nothing worth clinging to, nothing worthy of love, of anger, of hatred, of fear, of longing after, of jealousy, of whatever. To put it in a still better way: we ‘see’ the ‘*tathāgata*,’ the Buddha - in fact when seeing *tathatā* the mind is at that time a ‘Buddha’ mind. *Tathāgata* refers to someone who’s attained *tathatā*, who experiences *aniccaṇ*, *dukkhaṇ*, *anattā*, and *suññatā*.

Hence, someone who’s successful with *vipassanā* sees *tathatā* etc. and also sees the Buddha, sees the *tathāgata*, sees the *Arahant*. All *Arahants* are also *tathāgata*, that is, they all experience *tathatā*, experience the truth that all things are ‘just like that.’ The Buddha is the supreme *Arahant* but can be called *tathāgata* just the same, in fact he referred to himself as *tathāgata*, as one attained to *tathā*(thusness).

Vipassanā isn’t playing around, it’s about coming to see all *dhammas* as they are, about seeing the *tathāgata*.

This, then, is 'seeing' - 'look,' then 'see' and reap the benefit, get all that one ought to get. That there's birth, ageing, sickness, and death is because there's the ignorant view of 'self,' while the end of those problems occurs because of 'seeing' clearly that there really isn't any such thing.

Now, even though we live in the world and have to work, so that, in some cases, the sweat drips from us, if we can see *Dhamma*, see *tathatā*, then there won't be *dukkha*, there'll be happiness in work because we'll see it as being 'just like that.' Cultivating the fields, engaging in trade, whatever, it's 'just like that.' Students studying anything difficult know it as being 'just like that' so that it isn't *dukkha*. We can work and be happy while we do. Someone without the *Dhamma*, someone who doesn't 'see,' works and swears and curses, they have *dukkha*, so they curse the spirits and gods. Someone who has the *Dhamma* sees everything as 'just like that,' so works and is happy to do so - which I say is the butterfly life-style: a butterfly going about seeking food sucks nectar from pretty flowers in the wood thus earning it's living and is, in a sense, happy in its life-sustaining work, it has no *dukkha* at all. If we humans were able to use the knowledge of *tathatā* in the doing of our duties then any work that we had to do would be a satisfying and happy experience too, as with the butterfly. We would then, because of having this kind of a mind, work, study, teach, etc. experiencing happiness and contentment. And then, on the communal level, socially, people wouldn't be selfish so there wouldn't be any social problems, people would be friendly, and, because of that, wouldn't kill, wouldn't do harm, wouldn't steal from, or sexually abuse each other, wouldn't lie, wouldn't need intoxicants, and there'd be social decency. When people have *Dhamma* minds there'll be social decency, happiness for all, and the end of the cycling around in the mass of *dukkha*. We can sum it up like that.

So, develop the mind, train it to the full in all three ways, in *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*. Leave the basest mental level behind and climb higher, go from the animalistic to the superstitious, rest there awhile, then leave superstition behind and reach the ideal - 'Buddhology.' This will be real mental development.

How will we do it? When we're born from the mother's womb there's no knowledge, there's ignorance, and once born ignorance adds up, increases, so that there's *dukkha*, and more *dukkha*. On coming to know that situation then, little by little, we realize the need to turn things around, to go in another direction so that we don't have the same problems. Thus we start to develop the mind so that we can overcome *dukkha*.

Mental cultivation is something we can do, it's not an impossibility, it can still be done in this day and age, it's not limited to any period, to any epoch. If people have enough knowledge and can see the *dukkha* that arises in life then they must do something because they realize that there's something they can do. Everything is in the mind: the causes, the results, the stream of concocting - everything is in the mind. So, we manage the mind, which is 'mental cultivation,' or, the 'cultivation of life,' the 'development of life.'

The word 'development' is much used these days, but any development tends to be wrong development, so that the more there is of it the more craziness there is - the more prosperity there is, the more problems there are, the more *dukkha* there is, all of which adds up to wrong development. We want the right sort of development, the root of which lies inside, lies with the development of the mind. Developing the mind means developing life in the right way, not developing a bigger mess and increasing the problems, as is happening now. In this era there's increasing worldly development and prosperity, but increasing problems and *dukkha* too. There has to be a turning away towards a deeper form of development, towards mental development: if we put the mind right

first, so allowing human beings be human first and foremost, then we'll naturally live in the way that doesn't allow any form of *dukkha* to arise.

LDB

III. The result of mental development is the attainment of the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*.

Today, we'll look at the result of mental development, at path, fruit, and *nibbāna*. Some of you might shake your heads, thinking that mental development is something you already know all about, and 'path,' 'fruit,' and '*nibbāna*' are words you've listened to until you're fed up with hearing them, so why do we have to talk about them again? Even children know about the path, its fruit, and *nibbāna*, so why bring them out again? If anybody does feel this way then, please, be patient, concentrate, and listen especially well because this isn't going to be anything you already know about, it's something you as yet don't know about, something profound that you need to know about. So, bear with us, give attention while we enlarge on the subject of mental cultivation, mental training and its result, the path, its fruit, and *nibbāna*, but this time exhaustively, comprehensively, in every way one could want. This won't just be repetition, if you listen well you'll realise that.

We probably have heard about the path and fruit already, but only as a very elevated matter, as the province, for instance, of those who dwell in seclusion and strive to attain them in order to be *Arahant*, so we perhaps won't realise that they can also be a quite ordinary affair, and that even in the home there can be the attainment of path and fruit, although it's not then about becoming *Arahant*, rather it's about accomplishing anything we take on successfully.

A similar thing happens with *nibbāna*, in that people hear the word and immediately think of the *nibbāna* of the *Arahant* – or think of it as a place - the whereabouts of which I've no idea of, perhaps it's in some other world - that we go to when we die, either way they won't be aware of the more down-to-earth form of *nibbāna* that we must have in our everyday lives. If we didn't have this ordinary, homely level of *nibbāna*, then, as a rule, there's no way that we'd be able to understand the *Arahant* version. Hence the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* have more down-to-earth meanings that we should be aware of.

Regarding path and fruit, anything we do should be capable of generating them on some level. Hence it might be said that because this year the cultivation of the fields hasn't been fully successful then the appropriate level of the path and fruit won't have been fully realized either. *Nibbāna* can be looked on in a similar way. '*Nibbāna*' means 'cool,' and can be used to describe the ordinary household life when it is cool, without trouble and strife, and when people are happy. In ancient times the term was commonly used with regard to this, that, and the other household matter if it involved something being cooled down. For instance, putting out a fire was referred to as making the fire *nibbāna*, and even when waiting for rice and curry to become cool enough to eat the word *nibbāna* was used. The everyday, ordinary meaning of *nibbāna* was 'cool,' or made 'cool.' Grasp the meanings of these words as used in both worldly and *Dhamma* language then we'll be able to understand *Dhamma* in a really beneficial way.

Remember the more worldly forms of path, fruit, and *nibbāna*, and then, when we do anything try to do it as well as possible, because anything, if done properly, with care and attention, will result in

some level of mental coolness: even cooking food can involve development of the path and fruit, and the experience of some form of *nibbāna*.

All *Dhamma* language is borrowed from ordinary, everyday speech. There's a lot of *Dhamma* language in the *Pali* texts but each and every word of it was borrowed from the language already in use. Grasp this point and we'll have more understanding of what follows.

Those who sought and found the *Dhamma* couldn't create a new language to explain it with because then nobody else would understand, but if they made use of the language already in use then people would be able to comprehend. As mentioned, the word '*nibbāna*' meant 'cool' - now, some people went and dwelt in the forest for long periods, discovered the mental coolness of *Dhamma*, and then, on returning to civilization, told the laypeople about their discovery, told them about a new, another kind of coolness, one that the householder had yet to meet with. Those forest-dwellers discovered something greater but they still used the word 'coolness' when describing it.

One can move up through the levels of *nibbāna*, through the 'cool,' the 'cooler,' the 'cooler still,' until the 'coolest of the cool' appears, that associated with the complete quenching, complete ending of the defilements. Until any of that is experienced some might understand the satisfaction, the coolness of mind arising from the acquisition of a desired object as being *nibbāna*. That, for them, would be their '*nibbāna*.' However, there wouldn't be any 'safety' in that because such coolness would only be a brief and ultimately deceptive experience. But that would be their *nibbāna*, at least until such time as they were able to develop *samādhi*, develop the *jhānas*, the meditative attainments which are a taste of the real thing. The Buddha's teacher was a 'cool' individual, was someone with experience of coolness on the later *jhānic* levels. The Buddha-to-be, however, couldn't accept that that sort of thing was all there was, and continued to seek until he realized the ending of the 'self' attachment, of the defilements, and of *kamma* (if the 'self' attachment is done away with then the defilements dry up and disappear along with all *kamma*, both old and new.) Hence, the Buddha finally discovered the true *nibbāna*, the ultimate 'coolness,' and then went about teaching it.

Anyway, the term '*nibbāna*' was first used in the home where it had a down-to-earth meaning, and only later came to be understood in a more elevated manner.

Grasp this and then we can discover the sort of *nibbāna* we should have, the kind that we should want, the accessible level of *nibbāna* that we could have all the time. Get to know this form of *nibbāna*, bring it into life, and even though it's not the highest form, still not that arising from the complete ending of the defilements and inflows, yet we can have a contented, 'cooled' life here and now. Don't just go on living with the heat and continual disturbance of the defilements. The path, fruit, and *nibbāna* have levels, so live a life accompanied by some level of *nibbāna*, at the least be someone who's contented. Don't worry about putting an end to the defilements and being *arahant*, just live life but be smarter, be more careful than other people, and dwell with a contented mind - and, perhaps, with genuine *nibbāna* as our final destination.

That was, more or less, what the Buddha said to a group of householders who went to wait on him and asked him to explain the *dhamma* that would be most useful for such as they. The Buddha explained a *sutta* concerned with *suññatā*, that is, he told them about voidness - said he: dwell with knowledge of *suññatā*, of voidness, and there'll be no need for agitation, no trouble and affliction, no *dukkha* arising because of family affairs, possessions, etc. Things follow their nature, are just what they are, if anything happens connected with them there's no need for agitation, adjust responses so that sort of thing doesn't happen.

This knowledge of *suññatā*, which is the highest, on the level of *nibbāna*, he taught to people from the more ordinary stages of life to let them now that all things are Nature and go along according to Nature, all are ‘just like that,’ just what they are. Hence, don’t cling, don’t attach, don’t take anything to be ‘me’ or ‘mine’ and there won’t be any heat, any *dukkha* of any kind.

When we say these sort of things some claim that we aren’t being truthful, that we’re deceiving people when we talk about that form of *nibbāna* available to those living the ordinary, everyday life. Anyone can say what they like, but we’ll always tell people to dwell with knowledge of *suññatā*, the knowledge that anything and everything is void of any meaning of ‘self,’ then, when things change, as indeed they must, we won’t be happy or sad as a result. That would add up to a ‘cooled’ life: don’t do anything with expectation, with foolish desire, with hunger, with defilement, and then, for instance, the Farmer will work his fields properly, in the best manner, and be contented when doing his work, contented while waiting for the crop to sprout, contented when harvesting the crop. Such an one wouldn’t harbour any hopes or expectations that the crop will sprout today or tomorrow, or hope that it would be a full crop, or hope in any way, because it would be foolish to live that way. Consider the story of the hen. The Buddha related this one himself: the hen incubates her eggs and the chicks hatch at a certain time, if that hen were to be disturbed by expectations concerning the chicks she’d be a crazy hen. So, take heed, don’t be like a crazy hen, or a crazy Farmer, rather be ‘cool’ from dawn to dusk, be ‘cool’ throughout the year, ‘cool’ because of having working knowledge of *suññatā*.

Such knowledge allows us to understand that anything and everything is really free from the meanings of ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ and, further, that we can actually control the arising of those illusions. When we live with that sort of knowledge why does there have to be *dukkha*?

Hence, we do the best we can. If we make a mistake we let it pass, we forget it - we slip up once, twice, three times, four times, but we simply forget it, we learn to ‘let go.’ We live bearing in mind that whether something comes our way or doesn’t come our way, it will be ‘just like that,’ if we get what we expect or if we don’t it will be ‘just like that.’ We don’t dwell in hope and expectation. If we must hope for something then we do it with mindfulness and wisdom in attendance so that it isn’t ignorantly guided, not done with hunger, not mixed up with the defilements. With mindfulness and wisdom in the ascendant we’ll want what we ought to want and go about getting it without harbouring any hope or expectation for a particular result. Living in such a way doesn’t involve *taṇhā*, ignorant desire; what it does involve is *sankappo*, right desire. If there’s expectation then there must be *dukkha*, because the expectation will be mixed up with the defilements and ignorance; if our desire is wisely guided there won’t be any foolish expectation, and then if something doesn’t turn out right we’ll be able to accept it with a smile, thus without any *dukkha*. Perhaps we should also mention that we could try to observe any feelings of disappointment as they arise into the mind, and, through observation, be able to let them pass away, to let them go - if there is some expectation and we’re disappointed, then, if we don’t let it grow up to bite us the feeling of disappointment will disappear. Life can be cool if we manage it properly. We can live contentedly, as we should, live without any instance of nervous disease or insanity, unlike those who live the hot, tortured life, and who must at least suffer from nervous disease, from some degree of mental imbalance.

Hence, widen the understanding of ‘path,’ ‘fruit,’ and ‘*nibbāna*’ so that they can become part of the everyday, home life. When raising chickens or pigs let it be a matter of the path and fruit. Listen, raising chickens and pigs as a path and fruit matter just means doing the job properly, in the most

complete and correct manner. Perhaps we work the fields, then let that be a path and fruit matter, that is, do the necessary work properly.

Now, we need to explore the meaning of mental cultivation, of meditation, because most of us will have heard of meditation as something practised by people who stay in forests and jungles developing *samādhi* and *vipassanā*, but that's a narrow understanding, too narrow to be of much benefit.

Mental cultivation must ultimately mean making the mind completely clear, unblemished, but that we just make the mind better, improve the mind to whatever extent, is also mental cultivation. Even though we might make it just a little better it will still be mental cultivation, and even if we don't do it the same way as others, if we follow a method of our own, so that, should anyone see it, they wouldn't believe, wouldn't admit to it being capable of developing the mind, yet if we're able to use it to improve the mind, to make today's mind better than it was yesterday, make it clearer, restrain it, 'still' it so that it can solve problems better than yesterday's mind did, then just this is mental cultivation - providing, that is, the development is the result of our own activities. If the mind just naturally develops then it's not called mental cultivation, because we won't have done anything, but if it's better because of our activities, our studies and our training, then it has to be. Any kind of work, no matter what, if it causes the mind to become more properly mindful, smarter than it was before then it can be called mental cultivation too. Hence, an artist doing skilful work and having to think about the various things involved will automatically be cultivating the mind. People who use mindfulness and wisdom in their activities know that mental cultivation improves the mind, makes it better. A farmer, a businessman, a doctor, or whatever, if they do the kind of things that cause their minds to improve, to be sharper, cleverer, then that is mental cultivation, mental development.

We've been looking at 'path,' 'fruit,' '*nibbāna*,' and at 'mental cultivation' to generate a broader understanding of their meanings. So, try to see those few important words and phrases, which have always been too narrowly interpreted, in a new light, in a new, more correct way, make a fuller, broader understanding of their meanings – like 'mental cultivation,' which isn't about going to sit and grumble in the forest, it's about making the mind better no matter where or when it's done. Hence, someone who always does things in a careful, well-balanced manner by day and night, cultivates the mind, has a well cultivated mind. But someone who always does things heedlessly, carelessly, doesn't. As for the more formal approach to meditation, to *vipassanā*, like finding a peaceful place to practise, etc., that's correct, but perhaps too specialised, on a level that non-monastics can't easily manage. We need to include a level that people generally can manage, which will allow them more opportunities to improve the mind, so, being a little vulgar here, we might say that it's possible to cultivate the mind while sitting on the toilet. If you don't believe this go and try it, we guarantee that it's something that can be done, and can be done perhaps better, more easily than at other times, because when one is thus engaged fear and anxiety are absent. Perhaps at such a time we can allow the emerging stool to become the sole sign, the focus of attention, then one can contemplate well because the mind will have just one object. So, practise mental cultivation at every opportunity, even when sitting on the toilet.

Now, the mind, we need to continue talking about mind-related matters, which is something we've already talked a great deal about so that now some people are bored, they shake their heads, they don't want to listen, it's monotonous, saying over and over again that the mind can be improved, the mind can be improved, can be trained. But there are a great number of ignorant people, almost all

of whom would say that it can't be trained. We, however, say that it can, that habits, traits of mind are things that can be rectified, can be put an end to, don't be deceived into thinking that they can't - the mind can change, if we use the right method. Habits can be rectified, cancelled out. Only foolish people would insist otherwise. There's a basic *Dhamma* principle, the law of *idappaccayatā*, the law of Nature, according to which there isn't anything that doesn't change, so it follows that habits, traits of mind can change too. There's often clinging to the view that such things can't be changed, but if someone thinks that they can then that's in line with the *Dhamma* and that person can benefit. Habits are really repeating patterns of behaviour which, through useage, increase in strength over time. If we control their increase then they weaken. As when we're greedy, if we repeat that sort of behaviour then we'll create a habit pattern through repetition. In the same way some people continually increase the habit of being angry. We can dismantle, extract these habit patterns if we know how, which amounts to controlling our responses when we meet with anything that can lure us into, for instance, anger – simply not allowing anger to happen will decrease the strength of that habit pattern. We repeatedly control ourselves and it decreases the habit, until it disappears altogether, which would mean that the '*anusaya*,' the underlying tendency towards anger had disappeared.

The *anusaya* are 'underlying' tendencies or inclinations towards certain behaviours: the underlying tendency towards greed (*lobha*) is called *rāganusaya*, the underlying tendency towards anger (*koda*) is *patighanusaya*, the underlying tendency towards ignorance (*avijja*) is *avijjanusaya*. The Buddha talked about these as things that can be decreased, can be removed little by little through not allowing them to become active. Hence, something happens that could cause greed to promote liking and the associated desire to appear, but we don't allow that to happen, so the greedy tendency decreases a little; something else of the same kind comes along, we produce the same response, and the tendency decreases a little more. We extract the greedy tendency like this. We deal with habitual traits like anger and hatred in the same way, and each time we do it decreases their strength. Something comes along which would normally cause fear, or any of the various ignorance related problems, to arise, but if we aren't ignorant, if we're mindful enough at that time, then fear won't arise, hence whenever anything comes along capable of causing fear we don't allow it to do that and the habit decreases thereby, decreases until we're no longer foolishly afraid of anything. Know that the mind can be improved, adjusted so that it operates differently: the mind was prone to greed, to liking, to foolish desire, but not anymore; the mind used to be angry, to hate, but not now; it used to fear, to be ignorant, to be led astray, to be negligent, careless, but not now. The mind can be improved until the problems of greed, anger, hate, and foolish fear are no longer problems. Even children can manage this level of practice.

So, parents, don't be foolish, don't force your children into liking, disliking, and fearing things they don't need to be afraid of, so that they develop habits, unhealthy traits of mind, don't deceive children into becoming infatuated with the pretty, the stimulating, or into being afraid of natural things, like spiders, lizards. Don't teach children wrong ways so that they fall into the thicket of loving, hating, and foolish fear that it's so hard to escape from, and which makes cultivating the mind so much more difficult to achieve. Parents themselves are the ones who damage their children, cause problems which are difficult for them to correct; if today's parents had been educated, taught correctly in the first place then these kind of problems wouldn't exist. This is parental ignorance - because parents make mistakes from the very beginning there are problems for their children, and, because of that, problems for us all later on.

So, know clearly that the mind can be improved, can be developed. When there is this knowledge then there can be mental development too. If anyone doesn't agree with this and they take their stand on the ground that the mind can't be changed, can't be improved, there can be no mental cultivation for them. Hence, for anyone to cultivate the mind they must first have this basic understanding.

To sum it up: it's a truth of Nature that the mind can be improved, can be developed. It's quite possible to completely remove the undesirable elements, the unfortunate habits of mind which have been developing since early in our lives and which cause us to repeatedly go wrong can be got rid of. Even attachments coming over from previous lives can be removed. However, for now, we don't want to talk about previous lives because that sort of thing can't be experienced directly, can't be known with certainty, and being co-erced into believing what others say isn't any part of the Buddhist system, so we don't talk about things that can't be personally experienced, we don't want to make anyone believe anything. Others can do what they please, we'll just talk about things that can be experienced. Any habits that have been built up since childhood, since the beginning of life can be put right, can be adjusted, can be abandoned, then there's no more *dukkha*.

Now, let's look in detail at the 'mind.' The mind is strange, marvelous. Its reality is that it's an element, but it's not like the earth, water, fire, and air elements, it's an element of another kind called, variously, the *manodhātu*, the *cittadhātu*, or the *arupadhātu*, it's an element similar to the others although its properties make it different. The mind element, or *manodhātu* has the duty of knowing, of feeling, and it will know everything if it's properly trained. At present it can only know some things, only operate in a limited way, but if we train it properly it can become fully operational.

The baby, once it emerges from the womb begins to learn from its experiences. For instance: it takes hold of something and gets bitten by it, after which it doesn't take hold of it again; it touches fire, but afterwards doesn't do it again. This is a property of the mind element: it can know, can learn things for itself, hence it, while the child is growing up, gradually learns, learns to discriminate, to make choices, to reckon, to think. The mind knows sense contacts and their results, it feels the pleasant and the unpleasant, and feeling an unpleasant feeling from a sense contact it's then unwilling to repeat the experience. If a child takes hold of, for instance, fire, it's hot, it's unpleasant and the child is then afraid to touch fire again. The child knows this for itself, there's no need for its parents to teach it, and if they did the child wouldn't just believe them: it sticks its hand into the fire, then it believes, because it knows for itself. Hence the child won't want any contact with stinging insects because it knows from experience what the result will be. But at first it doesn't have that knowledge, so it grabs after an insect, gets hurt, and then it knows, it then knows fear and is unwilling to do the same thing again.

Hence be interested in the fact that the mind can learn from its experiences, so can gradually develop. Thus mind learns to be cautious, as with the child being careful around fire, not forgetting and putting its hand into it again, not coming too close to it, so the mind learns to be cautious and improves of its own accord. Small children learn gradually, increase their general understanding by themselves. Parents and teachers really can't teach them these sort of things, and don't get the opportunity since children do the necessary themselves, all of which amounts to an amazing quality of the mind. Self-restraint, physical control increases because the bourgening variety of sense experience chastens and teaches. When faced with dangerous experiences the mind learns from them and comes to know what response will be best in any situation, it increasingly comes to know

the better option. This is an amazing quality of the mind. There are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the skin, the body surface, which contact the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, which then come to connect with the mind, and through being concerned with these mind grows ever more knowledgeable, hence there's increasing development in every way. The body always follows the mind, when the mind inclines in whatever way the body will follow its lead. Recognize the qualities of the mind. We can derive much benefit from its prodigious capabilities.

Mental cultivation is something we hope will be done for the reasons mentioned. So, let's take advantage of this, get the benefit of developing the mind, either directly in our own case, or indirectly where others are concerned, particularly where it concerns those yet to be born, give them the opportunity of getting the sort of mental development which will be useful, otherwise it will be aimless, unplanned, and confused development, the mind will go wrong, will develop wrong understanding and be a danger to itself and to everyone else.

This is something we need to know, need to understand: that it's necessary to develop the mind in the right way, so that it will be able to attain all the levels of path, fruit, and *nibbāna*.

Observe that if mental development had been correct from the time of the ancients, the forest dwellers, up until the present time then the human world would be a very much better place than it is, would be a fine place. At present it's full of treachery because development has for the most part been allowed to follow its naturally ignorant course. There's been little development guided by mindfulness and wisdom. And we're still going in the wrong direction, which is sad, disappointing. When mankind arose into the world they knew how to survive as human beings, they then knew material advancement and became attached to that, not to mental development. Mankind developed in the material way through simple unawareness, we quite unconsciously fell into the worship of materialism, the more stimulating the thing being experienced the more desire we felt towards it. Hence there was much development in the material way so that people became infatuated, and although there was some little mental development, although there were those who sought mental cultivation, they couldn't challenge the materialists. Hence materialism comes out on top, is the more powerful, and is very attractive, enticing people into the materialist path with its many forms of stimulation. So material development has been quick, it's prospered greatly since the time of the buffalo riding forest dwellers, until we have people in this age flying in aeroplanes, in jets, and so on.

This happens because there's really only the ever-increasing development of materialism, mental development, because it's not stimulating, simply can't compete. Even so, there were people in former times who felt that the contentment derived from the materialistic path was a deception, and who sought to cultivate their minds. They were the sages, the *munis*, some of whom did meet with spiritual contentment. But there was no real competition for materialism and it's been allowed to lead the way right up until the present time, so that there's hardly anyone now who - because it doesn't excite and stimulate the nervous system, doesn't arouse defiled feelings and desires - prefers the quiet and peace of mental contentment.

Mental development can't compete with the development of materialism – materialism, a mistake we've been making since the very beginning. We calculate that if mankind had gone the way of mental cultivation from the start, since the original forest dwelling times, the human world would be full of it now, and would, as a result, be without decadence and free from any evil, it would be a world worth the name. But how can this come to be while the whole human world is in the grip of rampant consumerism.

Take a good look and you'll see that we're living in the mess that we've created. Humankind prefers material progress to the point where the whole human world is intoxicated with it. The *Dhamma* can't compete, can't catch up because the thirst for stimulation is very strong: we worship the materialism that requites our defiled desires and then have to deal with the results. In this world, beset by ignorance and the worship of materialism, there's increasing selfishness so that wrongdoing, violence, and oppression have become the norm, because the world doesn't know the value of mental development then the majority of the human race lives in this way, while a small minority of seekers continue to fare along with difficulty.

But we mustn't just trail along with the majority, hence we need to have some method, some way of keeping our minds away from the temptations, and then, although everybody else may be insane we won't be, we'll still be doing the right things.

It's a necessity that we know the *Dhamma* well enough so that, although everyone else may be crazy about materialism, we won't be. Right now there's the problem of a world worshipping materialism, spinning around in it, so how can we live with that? If there's enough *Dhamma* it can be done, the *Dhamma* can solve all problems. If there isn't enough then we'll end up jumping on the consumer band wagon too.

This is the problem, is the obstacle confronting mental cultivation. We'll need to resist, we can't just give in: Buddhists, followers of the Buddha, can't just give up, we need to maintain the teachings of the one who knows. There must always be the option of mental cultivation available for Buddhists, because once it's gone then the Buddhists will be gone too, so, especially now, in this time, we need to combat the burgeoning misunderstanding prevalent in the world, which is going to be difficult, but it must be done, because it's better not to die. If we fail then we must die, that is, the mind must degenerate, become base, so it's a form of mental death we're talking about here, not what waits at the end of life.

We'll say this again, although it's already been said: genuine mental cultivation is the development of fully integrated *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, so that the three elements support each other and work together harmoniously. We can study, commit the three to memory separately, but where practice is concerned they can't be apart, can't be separated, if they are then practise will fail completely.

In everyday life we need to live each day with a combination of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. Thus the ordinary, everyday household life needs to be ordered, carefully arranged, correct in *sīla*, that is, on the physical side of things behaviour and speech need to be correct, properly governed - but *sīla* is correctness where everything bodily, or physical is concerned: possessions, property, things we have in the home, all these should be dealt with properly. We need to apply ourselves so that we do just what's right without being too tense or too slack about it, then we don't go crazy.

People need this 'hands-on' level of *sīla* present in their day-to-day lives, the true *sīla*, not the formulaic version we've repeated a hundred, a thousand times and still not got the point of: how many times do people take the *sīlas* (the five, eight, or ten 'trainings,' which point out the way a human life is to be lived if it's to be correct), how many hundreds of times, and yet still don't display any rightness as regards the material things of life: house, belongings, and behaviour physical and verbal?

We need to be mentally normal, mentally correct, need to have enough mental steadiness, to have enough *samādhi* to use in any activity, no matter what it is. Correct *sīla* and correct *samādhi* must work in tandem.

Now, as regards wisdom: we need to attend and study properly so that we know how to operate as human beings, don't develop wrong understanding and then go and do things we shouldn't do, go and accumulate the things we shouldn't accumulate because of lacking that knowledge which would be able to direct and control our activities properly. We'll need to have and be able to apply wisdom, proper understanding, in the home where our family is concerned, and where our own lives are concerned too.

This will be *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* of the genuine kind, much better than the merely chanted variety usually indulged in, which is essentially a matter of memory and repetition, and which it's hard to think of as ever being of much benefit to anyone. That which could be of real benefit during the course of each and every day is the kind that doesn't usually get developed. Hence, Buddhists, try and apply true *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* in the day-to-day living of life. Some, as they please, won't want to do this, so, we control ourselves, they don't, so they aren't Buddhist, they might talk like Buddhists, but they aren't really, if they were then they'd maintain the *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* we've mentioned, the integrated *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, the kind that can't be split up.

And we should hurry and train our children so that they're aware of these three things, so that they understand the necessity of the three being mutually supportive, because if one or the other is deficient they all fall down - as with three sticks, which, when they lean one against the other can form a tripod and can stand up, but take one stick away and the others will fall down, so, in a similar way, life must have *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* together and present every day. Daily life must have *sīla* where material things and their use are concerned: the home, the body, everything connected with the body, including speech, must be attended by *sīla*. It can't be ignored, can't be deficient even for a moment. And there must be *samādhi*, must be a mind which is right, normal, sane, so that there's steadiness, stability, absence of distraction, and there has to be *paññā*, real knowledge, at the base of it all.

This kind of life is a life with full and genuine *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, this itself is mental cultivation. We've talked about all this before, but brought it out again to remind everyone of the genuine *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, not the kind taught in the schools, and offered in the temples, give that up because it can't be used. Now we can have the true, the natural kind, the kind we should have, because if we don't have it then we're deficient as human beings, we're ruined, bankrupt. Even animals maintain certain standards, otherwise they die; even animals must have what we call *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, but on the appropriate level. We're much better than the animals so we need to have much more of what should be had. Therefore, please, make sure that we have the three components and that they're integrated, supporting each other, we have *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* functioning together and forming the foundation of our life, if they should be split up then we might just as well not have anything.

This is the developed life. Developing life involves developing the mind, and developing the mind means developing life, causing life to mingle with the right sort of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, so that we can live properly. We might call that a new life, a 'new life' because replete with proper *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, the sort of life we didn't have before.

Try to practise properly and there actually will be a new life. Formerly, life will have been dark, hot, a life without freedom. Now we'll get a life which is cool, light, and which is free. It's easy to see why that will be: formerly the defilements had power over life, and how can there be freedom if life is dominated by defilement, dominated by greed, by anger? When it's under the power of the defilements that's the way it is. We say that kind of life isn't free. When under the spell of

defilement life is hot, uncomfortable, heavy. Now we offer you the new life; you don't have to have the old kind anymore. The new life's cool, without the weight, the sort of life that the defilements, the *nīvarana* can't affect. Formerly the defilements came and laid claim to life, took it over and made us do whatever they wanted. Even the hindrances, the *nīvarana* - not to mention greed, anger, and delusion, the full versions - even the *nīvarana* could dominate and disturb life. The *nīvarana* came to trouble the mind with sensual desire, took possession of the mind and got it involved with sexual desire, with ill-will, with hatred, with depression, with distraction, with confusion so that we didn't know what was going on. Once, even the minor forms of defilement, the *nīvarana*, could still lay claim to life, nudge us this and that way, lead us around. That wasn't freedom. Now we can dwell above the power of those things.

LDB

IV. The fruit, or result of mental development is the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* (II.)

Now, continuing on from the previous chapter when we were looking at the new way of life, the 'new life' we'd have - once it had been developed properly. Other systems make this point too, especially the Christian, where Jesus talks about giving people a 'new life.' Buddhists say the same, and more, but nobody is much interested in this as it occurs in the *Pali* texts, because we hold the Buddha word as sacred this particular passage is rarely translated in an understandable or particularly accurate way. Anyway, having developed life, or having developed the mind, the result is a new kind of life.

Now, as to what constitutes this 'new life' there are many questions that could be asked, too many to deal with here, but we can say that, essentially, the new life would be defilement-free, free from the *kilesa* and *nīvarana*.

The normal lifestyle of the worldly individual, what we could call 'old life,' is just the sort that the *kilesa* and *nīvarana* can make demands on, that they can dominate and pull around. The *kilesa* are *lobha*, greed, *dosa*, aversion, and *moha*, delusion - we can substitute '*rāga*' for '*lobha*,' *rāga* also meaning 'greed.' These come and dominate the mind, pull it around, make it think in defiled ways. *Rāga* pulls the mind into lustful thinking, and even more so in this era when the human world is full of the sort of things that encourage that: there's a worldwide, ever increasing production of the goods and services that people can buy and enjoy, can be stimulated by, all of which encourage *rāga*, hence it's said to 'lay claim to' the minds of people, to make them lust after the stimulating more and more. People are routinely under the power of the defilement of greed. Now, *dosa*, also, and as a matter of course, takes possession of the human mind, as when someone feels ill-will towards someone else, then that displeasure, that malice represents *dosa* dominating, taking possession of that person's mind. To feel aversion for someone, to not like anything is basically *dosa* influencing the mind. *Moha*, delusion, allows ignorance, wrong understanding to regularly dominate, hence the world we experience is full of things we don't understand, don't know as they really are. *Moha*, is always arising, bringing with it uncertainty, making us wary, on edge, afraid to some degree - *moha* in the guise of uncertainty, of foolish fear, is a regular problem. These are the defilements on the *kilesa* level: *lobha*, or *rāga*, greed, *dosa*, aversion, and *moha*, delusion.

Then there are the *nīvarana* (the hindrances). The *nīvarana* have the same lineage as the *kilesa* but aren't strong enough to be called *kilesa*. The *nīvarana* are a lighter form of defilement which arises often and easily, that is, they don't need any strong stimulus or object to concoct them into arising. We should have a clear and sufficient understanding of the *nīvarana*, if not, if we don't know about them and how they influence the mind by day and night, then we aren't really Buddhist.

The first of the *nīvarana* is *kāmachanda*, the inclination towards, or desire for sexual stimulation, aimed specifically, but not always, at the opposite sex. This is very troublesome because it's basically instinctual. The Nature that created us gave us the sexual urge, and gave us a sexual organ for the use of. A child is born into the world equipped with its sexual apparatus and when the time arrives for this to fulfill its function there arises(*sic*) the desire for sexual satisfaction, as, for instance, when adolescents have feelings of this kind dominating, disturbing their minds, which is quite the normal state of affairs for people at that stage of life, and represents a *nīvarana* arising, it would seem, without a prior cause, although there actually is one. However, the *nīvarana* are a very common occurrence and do arise easily. How much mental disturbance do they cause? Ask anyone who's been through adolescence how much and how often the *nīvarana* of *kamachanda* comes to disturb the mind. If, however, life is of the special sort, that is, if it's directed towards the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*, then this sort of thing is absent, or it's present but not in any very strong way. If we understand *kāmachanda* as basically natural, as (a perverted) instinct, then we can, perhaps, see the value of the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*, of the mental cultivation which can result in a 'new life,' in the sort of life in which this problem doesn't exist, or if it does then only to a small extent so that it's controllable, within our power to restrain. The first of the *nīvarana* is *kāmachanda*, the sensual or sexual desire aimed, usually, at the opposite sex, something which is always ready to disturb the mind.

The second example is *bhāpāda*, which is akin to *dosa*, hatred, or *koda*, anger, but isn't so intense, although it is similarly negative. Generally translated as 'ill-will' it's feeling displeasure, dislike for anything; it's a sort of mental turbidity, a mental state the keynote of which is dissatisfaction, something which is mostly present in life. People who have a particular problem with this *nīvarana* are the sort who can always find fault with something or other. Because of this they're continually stressed, tense both day and night, their minds are always hot. If, however, such had developed minds, had the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*, if they had a 'new life,' then these sort of problems couldn't happen, and how much better, how much more comfortable, how much cooler would that be?

The third *nīvarana*, which is *thīnamida*, represents dullness and drowsiness of mind, a mind lacking energy, a mind which is tired, slow, sluggish. Sometimes we're weary, bored with life, fed up so that we don't want to do anything, at times like that even if we do something it will get done badly. This sort of thing disturbs the mind often. However, if the mind is fully developed that can't happen. There's also its opposite, *udaccakkukucca*, the wandering, unfocused mind, a problem which arises easily. Observe just how often there is distraction, how much and how often. The new life doesn't have this problem either. The last hindrance is called '*viccīkicā*,' which is the mind uncertain as to just what is what, a mind which has insufficient knowledge, has dull knowledge, so that, until we can cut out doubt and confusion concerning what's true, what's correct, then there'll always be something in life to inspire mistrust, suspicion, and doubt, particularly where life itself is concerned. This is the *nīvarana* of doubt, of uncertainty concerning ourselves, concerning our personal safety and the safety of the things connected with us.

The *nīvarana* are a large matter, but one that people aren't much interested in doing anything about because they don't know how harmful, how dangerous they are, how they disturb life, how they disturb the mind.

If it's asked which of the two forms, the *kilesa* or the *nīvarana*, is more difficult to get rid of, perhaps we might choose the *nīvarana*. If we compare the two then the *kilesa* are like the bite of a tiger, something which can be fatal, while the *nīvarana* are akin to the gnats that swarm around the ears, eyes, and nose, which are annoying but not usually a danger to life, although they are difficult to tolerate and create a lot of disturbance. Perhaps we'd rather have the annoyance of the gnats than the bite of a tiger, even though the 'gnats' are regular, everyday visitors.

Think about it: life without the *kilesa* and *nīvarana*, just how much of a new life would that be? When the defilements aren't active we can act without the usual disturbances, it's then that they don't lead us by the nose into, for instance, sexual desire. We can rest easy, relax when we don't let them dominate us. Being forced into seeking sensual stimulation brings sleeplessness, and even if we don't actually go and seek for it and we might lie down to sleep yet the mind will still be tormented by the desire itself. There's an example in the texts concerning a warrior king, with all the accoutrements of such an one, who could hardly sleep because his mind was plagued by the *nīvarana*, especially that of sexual desire, so that he was always being forced into seeking satisfaction; he'd go off and satisfy his desires but the problem would always return and once again he'd be unable to sleep because of the *nīvarana* of *kāmachanda*. If the *kilesa* wake up it's like having a blazing fire in the mind, but if it's like a smouldering, a tiring kind of disturbance then it's the *nīvarana* doing their thing.

The new, the 'cool' life, undisturbed by the *kilesa* and *nīvarana*, would be the result of developing the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* - the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* that we Buddhists already have but which we usually keep stored away on a shelf somewhere. We have them, but in name only, we keep them safely stored away and don't get any real benefit from them. If we could make proper use of them we'd have a life without the *kilesa* and *nīvarana*, we'd be free from the influence of those things. We might talk a lot about escaping, about deliverance, but usually we won't really know what it is we're escaping from, because we won't know what it is that pressures and binds us, which makes us ignorant Buddhists, ignorant of the *kilesa* and *nīvarana*, the very problems we should make into the starting point for some serious and progressive study.

We've already spoken about mental development through *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. We've explained in some detail that there must be an harmonious mix of the three for development to be successful: having *sīla* means living correctly, means correct conduct by way of the body and speech, and having *samādhi* means the mind gathered together, pure, strong, fit and ready to do its work, while *paññā*, is wisdom, right knowledge, enough right knowledge. *Sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā* working together and doing their duty as one represents the fruit of true mental development. If the body and speech aren't developed then the mind can't be developed either, because *sīla* forms the root, the basis on which mental development depends. Hence, we have proper *sīla*, then there can be proper *samādhi* and proper *paññā*. If these three components are correct then there's the development of life and the development of the mind expressed as the path, fruit and *nibbāna*. Remember this: developing life, or developing the mind, results in the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*.

Why must we talk about this so much? Because it's necessary - but we don't waste time on unimportant details, we talk about the things we do to help people make the most complete understanding of what should be understood.

When the mind is well developed, well cultivated it can experience happiness here and now, in this life, without having to wait for death and whatever follows it, after all, we can't be sure that there'll be a knower, or anyone, to experience anything at all after death has taken place, whereas we can know and experience this happiness here and now, in this life. The first benefit, then, is that when the mind has been well cultivated the result will be happiness and contentment here and now, in this life.

Anyone who can develop the mind properly will be in a position to experience this whenever they want: there's the desire for peace and quiet, and, in a moment, the mind can be made to escape from those things that disturb and distress, then, whether sitting, walking, standing, no matter what's happening, it will be at peace. If we can train the mind well enough we'll be able to experience this at any time. As of now we have only love, anger, hatred, fear, anxiety, longing after the past, jealousy and envy, boredom, depression, etc. and no real happiness, no real contentment, but if we can develop the mind we'll possess the ability to chase those states away and live with a peaceful, healthy, stable, and contented mind, a mind which, depending on our level of attainment, can enjoy some spiritual freedom, some joy and equanimity, some real happiness, not the defiled, deceptive version, and we might have it in this life whenever we wish.

However, it's usually the defiled and deceptive version of happiness that people, those who have the money, want, so they climb into their cars and go to seek out some place of entertainment, of sensual stimulation. But is that happiness? Or is it ignorance, infatuation, and, as a consequence, the experience of some level of insanity sooner or later? On the other hand, whenever there's the desire for happiness it would simply be a matter of adjusting the mind, and then, without having to get into a car to go anywhere, or spend any money, there could be some level of *nibbāna*, that is, there could be some real happiness, peace and coolness, right there and then. It's the peacefulness of *samādhi* which puts an immediate end to the heat of the defilements and gives rise to real happiness right here and now, in this very life. This will be the first flowering of mental development.

The second point the Buddha mentioned concerned supernormal powers, the more than normal abilities, the 'miraculous' abilities, like the 'divine' ear, the 'divine' eye, and so on, which appear because the mind's been properly developed. But this is something we don't need to talk about because it's not the direct aim of the practice, although it's something that we can have; it's mentioned in the *Pali* texts that it's possible to develop 'supernormal' abilities. This, then is the second point, but there's no real need for us to talk about it.

Now, the third point: *Sati-sampajañña* is important in that it allows us to avoid making mistakes, it's what denies the defilements the opportunity of becoming active and causing *dukkha*. If we could develop full and complete *sati-sampajañña* that would be guaranteed, and would represent mindfulness and clear comprehension operating on the *Dhamma* level. Right now, however, we can't have that guarantee, we're short on *satisampajañña* so we're always giving the defilements the opportunity to arise and bring *dukkha*.

Worldly people have the 'worldly' level of *sati-sampajañña*; worldly people, those short on mindfulness and clear comprehension who think and act under the power of the defilements so that everything gets done carelessly, sloppily.

Having cultivated the mind we'll have full *satisampajañña* to use in both worldly and *Dhamma* affairs. We can fight the defilements and quench *dukkha* if we can cultivate the mind. We can have the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* emerge from our efforts, be someone with full *satisampajañña*,

someone who doesn't make mistakes, who doesn't go astray in either the worldly or the *Dhammic* sense. The path, fruit, and *nibbāna*, the result of mental cultivation, brings full mindfulness and clear comprehension.

At present there are problems for everyone, everyday. We have eyes, ears, nose, a tongue, body, and a mind, which meet with the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects, and, when they meet, when there's contact, *phassa*, and we don't have full *sati-sampajañña* then arise the defilements, there's liking or disliking, followed by the craving, clinging, becoming, and birth scenario. But if we have full mindfulness and clear comprehension when sense contact occurs then the defilements won't arise. *Sati*, mindfulness, is the bringer of knowledge, *sampajañña* is the sort of knowledge it brings, the knowledge that whatever we meet with at the senses it's really 'just like that,' then we don't fall into liking or disliking, aren't pleased or displeased, and the defilements aren't born. The regular arising of the defilements happens because there's a lack of mindfulness and clear comprehension, if we could have that always to hand we could cut the problems, put an end to them. This would bring the highest benefit, so, please, be interested.

A further point, the fourth point is that, if the fruit of mental development - the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* - is attained, the mind will be free of *āsava*: because it's been well trained, well controlled, well maintained and protected, mind changes completely, and the mind that would have done wrong now doesn't do wrong, it has *sati-sampajañña* so the *anusaya* aren't activated and the *āsava* don't inflow - if the *anusaya*, the underlying tendencies of the mind, are absent so are the inflows. The *āsava* are the 'inflows' (into experience), or 'outflows' (from the 'sub-conscious') of the *anusaya*, the underlying tendencies towards, or the familiarity with, defilement and defiled ways which have built up over the years. If they flow there'll be *dukkha*. But now we'll know the end of the *āsava*, so no more inflows of defilement. Because the mind's been cultivated there aren't any *upakilesa* (visiting defilements) to pollute the mind, hence it's 'luminous,' that is, it dwells in its original condition. Having been well-trained nothing can defile it ever again. Ending the inflows, causing the *āsava* to 'dry up,' would make us *Arahant* - however, we, as we are right now, will have to be happy with limiting them, so causing the *anusaya* and the defilements to decrease, which would, eventually, put an end to the *āsava* problem too.

A human being who's put an end to the *āsava* has attained the peak, the true human state; worldly people who haven't put an end to them continue to dwell in *les bas fonds*, the baser human levels of existence.

The would-be noble human being begins by making the *kilesa* and the *āsava* subside until the end of the inflows is achieved and there's no more arising of the *kilesa*. For someone who's put an end to the inflows there's really no need to mention the *nīvarana* again - the *nīvarana* we likened to gnats swarming around - because now they swarm no more, there's no possibility of them arising again, the roots of those defiled instinctual reactions having been removed, cut off. The 'tiger' has met with the same fate. This life is then free from the things that disturb; there's nothing that can pull it around anymore.

The highest fruit of mental development lies in the ending of the *āsava*. If we could get these four fruits, or results, then all problems would come to an end, and how satisfying, how desirable would that be?

Because of developing *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* so that they harmonize, so that they operate as one, we get both the worldly and the unworldly results: there'll be happiness here and now, for one, and we might even have 'miraculous' powers, however, both will have a worldly character, won't yet be

transcendental. *Sati-sampajañña* can be both worldly and unworldly, it's the complete ending of the *āsava* that makes it exclusively unworldly.

Now, don't keep the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* on a shelf, as it were, but make use of them to get rid of the things that disturb, that are *dukkha* - the *nīvarana*, the *kilesa*, the *anusaya*, and the *āsava*. The five *nīvarana* are commonly present, when they're strong, intense, on fire, they're called *kilesa*, or defilement, and with the repeated arising of the *kilesa* there comes to be a build-up of the tendency towards, or familiarity with, defilement known as '*anusaya*,' which *anusaya*, once accumulated to a certain level, then flow out as the *āsava*. Now we've cleaned all of that out of the mind, we've cleaned out the *nīvarana*, the *kilesa*, the *anusaya*, and the *āsava*.

As Buddhists have we reached this level? If we have then we're safe, we can't find fault with ourselves, neither can anybody else, we know that inside we're good, we're right, we know that we've put an end to our problems, that there's nothing to find fault with - that's the best thing, to know what sort of Buddhists we are.

To most people path, fruit, *nibbāna* are just words, just names, the sort of sacred things that we don't do anything with, just keep on a shelf somewhere gathering dust and becoming moth-eaten when they really ought to be in daily use - just like the knives, axes, machetes, spades, cups, plates, bowls and so on that we use every day of our lives. We should make everyday use of the *Dhamma*, not let it be something kept on display. At present that's what we do, and we forget about it, we forget that we have the *Dhamma*, then it doesn't have any real use because it can't show us how to quench *dukkha*. The path, fruit, and *nibbāna* have the power to do this so mustn't be kept on a shelf somewhere, or locked away in the scriptures.

We shouldn't inflate ourselves, get ahead of ourselves, pretend to be something that we aren't, but we can try; we can't be one hundred percent correct, but we can still manage five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty percent - alright, we aren't *Arahant*, but we can try to follow in their footsteps.

Now, we're going to look at the actual meanings of path, fruit, *nibbāna* to make their import clear and easier to grasp, because we've said enough about connected matters.

It will be easier to look at the meanings of those difficult to understand words if we do it from two standpoints, one of which expresses itself in ordinary, everyday, worldly language, the other in *Dhamma* language.

In the first case and in keeping with the usual, everyday understanding, the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* are things to be kept on display, kept on a shelf somewhere. People might know about them, that is, they might know the names, the designations, and they might talk about them, but that's all they'll do, for such people no real benefit comes from the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*, they're left on a shelf, as it were, along with the Buddhist scriptures.

How can the path, fruit, *nibbāna* be involved in the lives and the acts of people generally? If we understand their meanings properly then we'll know that they're intertwined with the behaviour, the actions, the everyday lives of anyone who has some degree of right understanding (*sammādiṭṭhi*), anyone who isn't ignorant, isn't worldly in the usual sense.

Magga, the path, is the *paññā*, the knowledge, that can cut the defilements, so that, whenever greed, aversion, or delusion start to arise then *satisampajañña*, mindfulness and clear understanding, comes to cut them off - it's as if we take a brush and sweep them out of the mind. Someone with *paññā*, with knowledge, someone capable of doing this, someone who isn't yet *Arahant* and who would still refer to themselves as 'ordinary,' has this kind of knowledge because they've listened and practised as they should. Hence, whenever greed arises there's *sati* and *sampajāñña* too,

there's *paññā*, knowledge, present to sweep greed out. That's the path itself, *magga*. We don't call it the path of 'stream entry,' the '*sotāpattimagga*,' or the path of the 'once-returner,' the '*sakidagāmmimagga*,' we call it simply '*magga*,' path, or, we might say, 'path knowledge' - we might even refer to it as a 'weapon' - knowledge manifesting as a weapon capable of killing, of cutting the defilements down - that's *magga*, the path.

Then there's the wisdom or knowledge which arises when the *kilesa* are cut, which knows that the *kilesa* have been cut - this is 'fruit-knowledge.' The knowledge which arises to cut the *kilesa* is 'path-knowledge,' the knowledge which arises when the *kilesa* are cut is 'fruit-knowledge,' and when the *kilesa* have been cut and there's the experience of coolness, of comfort, that's '*nibbānayaṇa*,' or knowledge of *nibbāna*. The cool peacefulness of mind which arises because the *kilesa* and *nīvarana* are gone is *nibbāna*. For instance: in the final tetrad of *ānāpānasati* - '*dhammānupassanāsati*pathāna,' when *aniccānupassī* is developed, that is, when the 'clear seeing' of impermanence in all conditioned things, in all *sankhāras*, is accomplished and *virāganupassī*, the 'fading away' of clinging, of foolish desire occurs (steps 13 and 14), then the wisdom, the knowledge present because of the realization of impermanence, is called 'path knowledge,' *maggayāna*. When there's the quenching of the *kilesa*, or the quenching of attachment to the *sankhāras* referred to as *nirodhānupassī*, that's called 'fruit-knowledge' (step 15), when there's the knowledge that these things have quenched completely, that the problems have ceased, that's *paṭinissagānupassī*, add the subsequent confirmatory reviewing of the situation, '*paccavekanayaṇa*,' and there's then *nibbānayaṇa*, knowledge of *nibbāna*. In the practice of *ānāpānasati*, sixteen steps spread over four tetrads, the final tetrad, *dhammānupassanāsati*pathāna, consists in *aniccānupassī*, *virāganupassī*, *nirodhānupassī*, and *paṭinissagānupassī*, if anyone can really grasp the significance of these four *Pali* words they'll realize that the knowledges of path, fruit, and *nibbāna* are there too.

On a more mundane level then the knowledge that would allow us to do anything better than usual is the sort which cuts foolishness out, that rids the mind of ignorance, which destroys the sort of ignorance that limits our abilities; that's the path, *magga* - then, how things are once the cutting has been done - that's the fruit, and, when all's finished and there's the benefit, the comfort and satisfaction, that's *nibbāna*. Hence, even housework can come under the umbrella of the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*. First there must be the necessary knowledge, which is the path, *magga*, the cutting of ignorance is the fruit, and, once the cutting has taken place, the ensuing feeling of satisfaction and comfort is *nibbāna*. Usually people can't, for instance, farm in the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* way, so they don't get the fruit. However, once they cut their ignorance then they can: the cutting of ignorance is the path, *magga*, farming the rice properly is the fruit, getting the rice to eat is *nibbāna*. In this way the essential meaning of the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* can insert itself into any and all kinds of activities.

I (*Buddhadāsa*) see things this way; it's basic *Dhamma*, the *Dhamma* truth that to do anything really successfully and beneficially it needs to be done in accord with the path, fruit and *nibbāna* principle. Hence, we'll need to know how to cut out ignorance, which here represents the path, then the cutting can take place, which is the fruit, then there's *nibbāna*, the comfort and satisfaction arising. Take a look, is there anything that this principle, this course of action, can't be applied to? Therefore, make use of path, fruit, and *nibbāna*, and, whether we be children, grown men or women, whether farmers, market gardeners, merchants, government officials or whatever, bring them to each and every experience, be someone who, whenever we have to do anything, uses the

path, fruit, and *nibbāna* approach- that's mental cultivation, developing the mind. Otherwise we'll stay ignorant and the path, fruit and *nibbāna* will be confined to a shelf, will be kept in the scriptures on a shelf somewhere, just like any other book.

Let something which is usually just words become something we can actually use in our everyday life, and which can be developed until we're able to put an end to the *kilesa* and be *Arahant*. To be *Arahant* we need the knowledge that will cut the defilements, then we have to use it to do the cutting, from that will come the full result, that would be path, fruit, and *nibbāna* on the *Arahant* level. Right now we're ordinary Buddhists, we're 'worldlings,' worldly people but dwelling on a decent level, not too foolish, not too inflated, just people trying to maintain the proper meaning of path, fruit, and *nibbāna*. We seek the knowledge that will cut ignorance, which is path knowledge, then we use it to cut ignorance, which is the fruit, getting the fruit of the cutting of ignorance is *nibbāna*, 'coolness.' *Nibbāna* means 'cool' - without the defilements life is 'cooled.'

There's one more matter to talk about: 'refuge.' When 'refuge' is mentioned everyone assumes that it's a simple business, the simplest of all things to acquire. But be careful, because the fact is that if we don't have any proper mental development then we can't hope to have a genuine refuge from the problems of life either. We can have a refuge (something which can protect, a safe place from the dangers of life) but it will probably just be words, a refuge in name only, as with the chanting of '*Buddhaṃsaraṇaṃgachāmi*,' which means 'I go to the Buddha for refuge,' but how many thousands of times have people mouthed this line, and does any one of them really have the Buddha as their refuge? They don't, and they don't because they're unable to see, because the mind doesn't 'see' the Buddha, so, for them, chanting '*Buddhaṃsaraṇaṃgachāmi*' is just lip vibration, just words. When the mind's been appropriately developed and can see the *kilesa*, can see how to cut the *kilesa*, and can know the end of the *kilesa*, it can then know the true *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* too. The undeveloped mind however, can only see and parrot the formula: '*Buddhaṃsaraṇaṃgachāmi*, *Dhammaṃsaraṇaṃgachāmi*, *Sanghaṃsaraṇaṃgachāmi*,' and how many thousand times is that repeated without any real result, without ever bringing anyone into contact with the true *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*.

Custom decrees that people will usually develop a facile understanding of the refuges, they follow custom, but then it's just words.

Now, higher than that refuge is the one based in superstitious belief, which involves repeating, or chanting, in order to receive protection, to make merit, and to escape from *dukkha*. Those who don't have knowledge of how to really escape *dukkha* will tend to rely on the opinions of others, which is take refuge in superstition, in blind belief, blind faith. If this is what we want that's fine, we can do as wish, but we say develop the mind, if we want to get the best result then we need to develop the mind. However, living under the umbrella of superstitious belief can cause people to develop the mind in the way of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, if they're told to do that.

The third refuge isn't about mere words: we practise developing the mind until the *kilesa* and *nīvaraṇa* are understood, until it's seen how they can be cut, then they can be removed. The mind, being then clear of obstruction, comes to realize the true *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*, the genuine *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* arise, that is, they're no longer just words. Then, when someone takes refuge in the *Buddha* they mean the true *Buddha*, that one with such a mind, when they take refuge in the *Dhamma*, they mean the true *Dhamma*, that which has those defilement-destroying attributes, and when they take refuge in the *Sangha* it means the true *Sangha*, those people with *Buddha*-like minds. Thus the third level, the genuine Buddhist refuge is attained, after

which there's increasing knowledge of the flavour of path, fruit and *nibbāna*, which, although it won't yet be complete, will still be real, be knowledge of the proper meaning of those concepts, and, with this knowledge, we have a true, a genuine refuge.

Therefore, let's consider the three levels of refuge in detail: the lowest is that based on custom and tradition which children, and people still with a child-like understanding of Buddhism, meet with first of all. Then comes the superstitious level which involves dependence on something other, something outside of us, some ultimate, most sacred thing, something that will give us assistance, something we have to submit to, which is based more or less in blind faith, at least at first. We continue on in that way until we arrive at a truer form of belief, at which time, perhaps, we might start to practise, and through practising arrive at the true refuge, at the final level: when we develop the mind until seeing of the true *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* is attained and there's actual knowledge of the end of the *kilesa*, of the *nivarana*, of the ceasing of the *āsava*, that's the final level. Hence there these three levels of refuge.

We have to decide for ourselves which level of refuge we want, to let others decide for us will mean only trouble. I don't want to decide for anyone else, but just want to make it known that there are these three levels available. People can decide for themselves. There's the refuge which is just words; the refuge which is a product of faith, of blind belief, not yet of wisdom, but which can lead to some form of practice, and then there's the refuge based in clear seeing as to just what the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* are really about.

Now, have we arrived at the third level yet? We've talked about this subject many tens of times, so, have we arrived at real knowledge of the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* yet? If we have then we're safe and at least *sotapanna*, 'stream enterer,' we know the genuine *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* so we know the true and genuine refuge. If we're less elevated then we'll find our refuge in customs, or in superstitious beliefs. It's this way in all religions no matter what their basis, people can't immediately gain final knowledge, they all have to make their way gradually - to reach the highest understanding of their particular system they have to gradually come to it in this same manner.

As of now we Buddhists have been horsing around for many tens of years, we've been crawling along, but to where? We ought to know.

We reveal the destination as being the fruit of mental development, of the mental cultivation that develops life. So, what level has our development of life reached? Do we know the meaning of path, fruit, and *nibbāna* yet, or not? Do we know the real meaning of the words *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* yet, or not? If we do, if we've arrived at this level of understanding then we've attained safety. Even though our understanding isn't of the highest, still, seeing the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha* clearly enough so that there's no more uncertainty gives us a true refuge, and we'll at least be *sotapanna*, at least a 'stream winner.' If we find our refuge in customs and superstitious beliefs then we're still hopeless, we're still an all-around worldling, yet to break away and become a noble member of our religion.

The result of developing the mind is the path, fruit and *nibbāna*. This is something that we need to clearly comprehend, otherwise those three concepts will become obstacles and the cultivation process will be blocked because of a lack of clear understanding, the mind won't prosper, won't thrive in the *Dhamma* way. We have to have clear knowledge of path, fruit, and *nibbāna* then the mind can flourish. Hence, we come and spend time trying to give a clear understanding of these things so that they'll be properly understood, so that that which was dark and indistinct will become

bright and clear, that which was just words will become truth, and that which has been kept on a shelf will now be brought down, dusted off and put to good use, and then the opportunity of being Buddhist, of having been born human and having met with the Buddha's teaching won't have been wasted.

LDB

V. Mental development as superstitious belief.

We'll review some of what we said in the previous chapter to make sure that our understanding of it is correct.

Dhamma is especially a matter of the mental, of the mind more than of the physical, of the body; it's a matter of correctness, of truth. Mental development consists in practising, in training the mind to the highest level, which has to be done properly in accord with the principles laid down in the texts. However, there's always the possibility of one wandering into off into superstitious belief, into incorrect, inaccurate thinking if neither the mind itself nor the path, fruit, and *nibbāna* have been fully and properly comprehended, and then, from being a matter of 'Buddhology,' it can become a matter of superstition, a matter of wrong view, of wrong understanding.

The many and various forms of *micchaditṭhi*, or wrong view, emanate from a faulty understanding of the mind occurring because mental development hasn't been correct, hasn't gone along as it should and has diverged into blind belief, into the superstitious. Hence we'll talk about right mental development, which is 'Buddhology,' and wrong development, the sort that slips off the straight way and brings problems in its train.

The mind grasping things wrongly is the reason why superstitious belief outweighs Buddhology('Buddhism'). Consider superstitious fear for instance, fear of the unseen, of the unknown, such things are much feared, while, on the other hand, how much fear is there of wrongdoing? People can be frightened by the hidden, the mysterious, the superstitious, while fear of doing obviously bad things, of doing bad *kamma*, is very small, and the *Dhamma* is made fun of. This is the problem preventing any mental development: superstition intervenes, takes over the mind and then there isn't too much careful consideration underpinning beliefs and comprehension.

Those of us who call ourselves Buddhist, do we have this problem? If we do then our understanding is still uneven, rough, and we're Buddhist in name only. Here's an example of what we mean: the jingjok (small house-lizard) sounds its greeting and some Buddhists, believing that to be an evil portent, will feel anxiety, and then, perhaps, on that particular day they won't do anything because they believe something bad is going to happen to them if they do. Further, if someone happens to be going down the stairs and a jingjok greets them then they might believe that if they go back upstairs again they'll die, or that some bad thing will happen to them. Sometimes things fall down that shouldn't fall down, and some take that sort of thing to be an omen, a sign that on that day something bad is on the way, and so on and so forth. Buddhists who still think this way can't be thorough-going Buddhists, yet there are many such. Test it out: because a lot of Buddhists are still prone to this kind of thing we should be aware of it as a problem that ought to be addressed, ought to be got rid of.

Superstition is very strong because it comes from a deeply ingrained and habitual ignorance. *Satipaṇṇā*, mindfulness and wisdom, needless to say, doesn't get built up to quite the same extent. However, having said that, it is necessary that there be some superstitious belief around in this world to act as the springboard from which people can, if they feel the need, begin to practise what ought to be practised.

For most people, if something isn't couched in superstitious terms it won't catch attention in the way it would if set out in a form capable of inspiring fear - for instance, if we tell children not to place a bowl to collect the water which comes down the gutter pipe in such and such a place because lightning will strike it there, they'll probably believe what we say and not do it, whereas if we were to simply tell them not to put the bowl in that place then they wouldn't be so obedient.

Superstitious belief can be useful in this way and still, therefore, has a place in this world. There are things that need to be couched in superstitious terms, in a way capable of provoking a certain fear, because something which can't be explained, or revealed, is more capable of inspiring awe and, by extension, of encouraging more useful, more acceptable forms of behaviour, from which real mental development could grow. So maintaining something as holy, as sacred, has use.

Superstition suits those still prone to blind belief and foolish fear, because there must be foolish fear for there to be any superstitious belief, particularly fear of death, so that, if anyone should come along and say that they can protect us from it, save us from death, then we'll be happy to grab at that without bothering to consider too much, the fear of death being so great. Some believe the iron-wood tree to be a haunted tree, that is, it, according to superstitious belief, has a ghost or a god living in it, so to cut it down would mean having to die, which is why there are still a great many iron-wood trees in existence. If the time should ever arrive when people were no longer superstitious then, because the wood is so useful, the iron-wood would be the first tree to disappear. Hence we fall easily into superstitious belief.

It's difficult to accept that superstition, that blind belief, can be both a good and a bad thing, but if we know how to make use of it then it can be useful. Hence, it doesn't need to disappear altogether, rather it has to be improved, developed. If we think about children, or those who as yet don't have enough *Dhamma* knowledge, then superstition is still a necessity, something that can be used to pull them into the right path through taking their basic blind belief and making it into a tool, not one that will always be needed but one necessary in the beginning as they strive to put things right, afterwards they can continue on unaided. Compare that to a pain relieving medicine: when there's a headache, a toothache or whatever, which is hard to bear with, then we need to take medicine, however, the medicine can't cure the disease, to do that it's necessary that we go to the source of the pain - stomach pain, head pain, or whatever - we take medicine to first relieve the pain, then, once the pain is gone we can deal with the disease itself. We can compare superstition with medicine, it being useful in a similar way. Unfortunately people tend to get stuck on the medicine of superstition, and stay stuck throughout their lives, so never meet with the truth of *Dhamma*.

Because the two concepts, 'Buddhology' and 'superstition,' are intertwined we need to study them both so that we can grasp them properly.

Now, if it's still necessary for some people to be superstitious then that's better than nothing, because the *Pali* word for 'superstition' can also mean 'better than.' Go and ask a student of *Pali*, apparently the word can be translated as meaning not only 'better than,' but also as 'asleep.' If we take the meaning to be 'better than,' then superstitious knowledge can be considered to be 'better than' knowing nothing at all. It all starts at the time of the forest-dwellers, some of whom had

knowledge, knew of matters that ordinary people didn't, hence they became those who advised and taught the rest to know what they themselves already knew, so creating feelings of satisfaction amongst the recipients. Thus came the recognition that to know something was better than knowing nothing at all. 'Superstition' here has the meaning of 'better than,' hence: 'better than' knowing nothing, even if such knowledge didn't represent the ultimate.

Now, the root of the *Pali* word for superstition can also mean 'asleep,' while the word '*Buddha*' can mean 'awake' - 'asleep,' in this instance, being an oblique reference to the sort of knowledge which is good enough for the solving of small problems while indicating that its possessor has yet to 'awaken,' has yet to open their eyes to the truth that solves all problems. As with taking medicine to get rid of pain: having enough knowledge to take the medicine is 'better than' not having enough and not taking the relieving balm, but because that sort of knowledge wouldn't be enough to remove the disease that was causing the pain then it's still what might be called 'sleepy' knowledge. 'Sleepy' knowledge can be developed until one knows 'what is what,' which is the same as being 'awake.' Awakening from the sleep of ignorance is referred to here as 'Buddhology.'

Our problems arise from prior causes in accord with the basic law of Nature, *idappaccayatā*. Once we see this clearly enough then we can solve our problems, at which time 'Buddhology,' another level of knowledge, will have arisen. One kind of knowledge, the superstitious kind, is 'sleepy' knowledge, the other kind, 'Buddhology,' is the awakened sort, the 'open-eyed' sort. In this way the two concepts representing the two levels of knowledge are intertwined.

Now, people who come to 'Buddhology' need to have done enough practice first. However, at present there's not much practise being done because from childhood people are taught to be superstitiously inclined. Children, once born from the mother's womb, receive superstition-based instruction, hence they're afraid of things that they don't need to be afraid of, for instance, children are told that if they don't stop crying a *tokay* (larger species of house lizard) will come and eat their liver! That sort of thing is akin to the ABCs of superstitious belief, and children get it in abundance. Childish thought up until adolescence will be unreasoning, they'll be inclined to believe just what they've been told, hence blind belief can spread out in ever-widening circles. When something goes along with one's desires then it's eagerly seized upon, as with washing one's face with holy water, or reciting some incantation so that someone will fall in love with us, so that we'll win somebody's heart; charms, love-potions, and so on and so forth are much in evidence amongst those people who don't receive a proper *Dhamma* education, and even people living in developed countries, if they don't have the opportunity to study and practise the *Dhamma* properly, they, even though they live in a developed country, will still be dominated by superstitious belief. In Bangkok where there's little or no opportunity to study the *Dhamma* (this was said in 1982) superstitious belief has taken over, hence there's more superstition than Buddhology there - and it's easily detected too: those 'guardian spirit houses,' which, once, were hard to find even in the countryside, now Bangkok is full of them; at one time there weren't so many of those things left in the sticks but now they've been brought into Bangkok in great numbers, and they've reappeared in the countryside too.

So it isn't that there's no superstitious belief in a modern city, in such places people will, if anything, be more superstitiously inclined, because development, for them, will consist in getting more and more: they have desires, desires, and when someone tells them that if they act in such and such a way they'll have their desires fulfilled then they'll seize on that with alacrity. Hence such

tend to fall easily into superstitious belief. As for those who don't want, want, want, they won't be superstitious – like the *arahant*, who never wants anything more than is necessary.

We Buddhists are still divided into two kinds, those of the fully superstitious sort, and those who are gradually coming away from it. Hence it's a problem we need to look at, because if superstitious belief isn't destroyed there's no way for one to reach human perfection, being 'noble' on the first level requiring that superstitious beliefs are left behind. *Dhamma* scholars know that for the first level of safety to arise *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* (variously: 'personality view,' the 'existing body view'), *vicikicca* (doubts), and *sīlabbatāparamāsa* (attachment to rights and rituals) have to be given up, then there's the attainment of *sotāpanna*, 'stream entry.' One at the first level of 'nobility' has to give up superstitious beliefs before anything else, then, gradually releasing *kamarāga* (sensual lust), and *paṭigha* (aversion), leaving sexual desire and anger behind to some extent there is *sakidagāmī*, the second level, while giving those problems up completely means the attainment of the third level, *anagāmī*. To be *sotāpanna* or *sakidagāmī* then superstition in the forms of personality view, the misunderstanding of the true use of rights and rituals, and doubts which stand between one and the *Dhamma* have to be dropped.

Sakkāyadiṭṭhi is ignorance on a large scale, the initial ignorance that's stuck to us since we were children, the ignorant understanding that this body is 'me,' is '*attā*.' This is a base and very big affair which has to be abandoned first of all. Then there's *vicikiccā*, doubt, not knowing how to react when faced with an experience, that's based in superstitious belief too. And there's *sīlabbatāparāmaṣa*, superstitious understanding of the use of rites and rituals, as manifests when there's practising of the observances for reasons opposite to, or not in line with, the original intention, practising them wrongly, not maintaining *sīla* for the purpose of eliminating the defilements but to get some result, some profit, or whatever, or else to combat evil rather in the same way one combats dirt when taking a bath. That kind of thinking, of belief, that going to the temple is the same as bathing, is odd but still somewhat of a good thing, because even though one would go to the place for superstitious reasons, under the power of blind belief, at least one would go, which would be better than not going at all, and, through going many, many times, then, slowly, slowly, one might come to knowledge, then, gradually, enter into, and continue along the straight way.

Be aware that almost every matter in the life of an ordinary worldly person will be interfered with in some way by the superstitious beliefs buried deep in the mind - making merit, making donations, any skilful act - there's much that can fall under the umbrella of superstitious belief, because such activities are like conduits that lead easily into it.

Now, we want to be better, meaning that we want to know more, and having more knowledge must have a cleansing effect, if it was otherwise human beings would never progress and we'd still be on the same level as those ancient forest-dwellers. The forest people ordered their lives in superstitious ways, hundreds, thousands of examples of which remain with us to this day. There is, for instance, the belief that one shouldn't, for some unknown reason, pass under a clothes line; the reason, whatever it was, was powerful enough to frighten people so that they wouldn't dare go against it, especially if the line bore the clothes of a menstruating woman. Such things are called 'taboo,' things that the forest-people invented and then passed on to others. With such beliefs there's no need to explain anything and questioning isn't encouraged, all that's required is belief, hence people believed, and still believe, so that even now there's a lot of this stuff about.

If, at this time, anyone thinks this way the implication is that they've reverted to the level of the forest-dweller, so how can they truly be called Buddhist? Think about that: how can we be Buddhists; how can we respect the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*, how can we put our faith in *kamma*, in *idappaccayatā*, if we're still superstitiously inclined? Hence, recognize this as an important problem, one we need to think about if we're to have a cleaner, purer Buddhist community, if we're to be genuine Buddhists.

Mental development carried out wrongly will encourage superstitious belief, even supernatural, miraculous powers take one away from the path, as when one displays such as an attraction; putting it bluntly: if such things produced real results then there'd be no need for their possessor to beg, and simply by performing some miracle they would have food to eat everyday without having to work or do anything of the sort. If one had miraculous abilities one would be able to conjure up a house, an *uposatha* hall, a temple, a *sālā* without having to cadge contributions from householders. These powers aren't real; although the Buddha sometimes had to eat horse food he didn't solve the problem by using supernatural power.

Anyway, we see to what extent superstitious belief - since it's better than nothing - can be useful, also how we'll have to act in future to curb its power so that the solving of the various problems associated with it can be accomplished. Thus superstitious belief is better than nothing, but it's still 'sleepy' knowledge; we need to wake up, open our eyes to *Buddhology* and put an end to superstition once and for all. Those noble people, the *ariya*, are without even a speck of superstitious belief, but the worldly are ignorant, have ignorant desires, and that combination is enough to draw them in, those two, *avijjā*, ignorance, and *taṇhā*, ignorant desire, are what tether us to the stake of superstitious belief. The problem with superstition is that it brings blind belief, and blind belief means no mental elevation, and such will remain the case for so long as there's no arising of *Buddhology*.

'*Buddha*' means the one who knows, who's awakened, who's joyful - this is the interpretation of choice, the most correct, the fullest interpretation. Looking at the characteristics of the one who knows, well, they're awakened from the sleep of ignorance, and they're joyful, and they're without a trace of superstitious belief. This is how Buddhists should be, not like some superstitious crowd. If the world is full of superstitious belief then it's a world asleep, a world sleeping the sleep of superstition. Hence, when superstition slowly fades out and *Buddhology* gradually comes in to take its place one awakens from sleep, gradually opens one's eyes, which represents the advance, the development of the human mind. If that doesn't happen then the mind stays asleep, without any advancement at all.

Consider this, analyze it in detail, consider the difference between *Buddhology* and superstitious belief. We could say consider the difference between '*sleepology*' and '*awake-ology*,' between one still asleep and one who's awake. How do they differ? Well, with superstition there's no need for wisdom, while *Buddhology* must use wisdom. How much difference is there between the two? *Buddhology* starts from some real knowledge; *Buddhology* must use wisdom, must make use of *Dhamma* knowledge, while superstition isn't concerned with such, neither does it need to be, it's all about blind belief. Compare the two. One way starts with belief, the other with wisdom. If it's superstition it must start with blind belief, which doesn't require knowledge, and is without the desire to question, or the desire for any reasoned explanation, simple belief being enough. *Buddhology* must start from a base of knowledge, if there's to be any belief it will come later, come from understanding such as gives rise to confidence, then there can be belief. There's belief

involved in both cases but in the superstitious form it's a subjective belief born of blind faith, as when something is said to be like this or like that and that is then simply believed in. Belief backed up by knowledge of the causes and conditions involved represents right understanding, *sammādiṭṭhi*, while the other kind represents wrong understanding, *micchadiṭṭhi*. Consider the difference.

Now, we come to look at the difficulty involved in clearing up this problem. Why is it easy to be superstitious, superstition brings problems so why is it easy to be superstitious, and why are we full of it? There are deep, hidden causes we need to consider in suitable detail in order to understand.

The first point to consider is that superstition can enter the mind on the back of the ignorant instinctual responses that any being still lacking knowledge will be prone to. It fits well with congenital ignorance, in that, at birth one doesn't know anything, doesn't know about *paññāvimutti*, about *cetovimutti*, while in the womb one will be minus any knowledge of deliverance, of liberation of the mind from its problems through real knowledge, hence, at the start of its life any child will be primed and ready for the fall into superstitious belief. The second point is that superstition goes well with the instinctual inclination we feel towards letting others do things for us: children, once born into the world will have someone to help them out at all times so that ignorantly guided instincts won't develop in the direction of self-help but towards relying on others instead, which suits the growth of superstition very well. It's superstition that lets us turn to other people, or to some sacred object, or to some unknowable whatever-it-is for help. Superstition fits well with the original instincts of one lacking knowledge, who hopes for assistance from some source other than themselves. Hence we're born from the mother's womb just right to receive superstition - which isn't a matter of us being damaged, or deficient in some way, it's naturally, ordinarily like that. It's perfect: when we're born and we meet with suitable experiences then we get superstition too. Hence, we continuously gather knowledge, beliefs, and clinging of the superstitious type. The people close to us surround us with it, especially through the use of the sort of language meant to awe children into doing this and not doing that. It's all superstition-based. The third point is that the superstitious requires less of an investment, is less tiring, and is a much simpler proposition. Superstitious ceremonials require little input: offering an oyster shell to enlist the aid of some god represents a very small investment; any small investment in superstition is less wearisome to make because it's easier to make: chant an incantation of just a few lines and there might be riches, or perhaps the opposite sex will come trooping after us, and so on. Children thus pick up many spells and formulas. This is easy for us because there's only a small investment of time and effort required, it's less tiring, and more straightforward for people who don't know anything.

Superstition is appropriate for people with weak knowledge. Someone with weak knowledge is one who doesn't know things as they really are. This, however, isn't the weak knowledge of a small child, that's of another kind. The majority of the human population of this world has weak knowledge because they don't understand anything properly. It doesn't matter from where they come, easterners, westerners - the majority of people are naturally weak in knowledge. Now, superstitious beliefs can easily get into a mind with weak knowledge, whereas *Buddhology*, given its profundity, will have great difficulty getting through the front door, as it were, people tending towards taking the easy way out seize onto superstition because it goes nicely with their already weak understanding. We need to find out for ourselves how much real knowledge the superstitious have, and how easy superstitious beliefs are to acquire.

Superstition also enjoys the great advantage of questioning being forbidden, not allowed: something is raised up to sacred status and questioning or criticizing such things isn't allowed. With this for a basis superstition is at an advantage. *Buddhology* allows questioning based in mindfulness and clear understanding; with superstition there's unquestioning acceptance of the sacred, of something being sacrosanct, being a mystery for lay people, for worldlings. People then don't question, don't criticize so that the more mysterious becomes the more sacred, and something that can't be understood at all becomes the most sacred, the most holy. Superstition always has this advantage. Also, people don't discriminate, they'll make auspicious marks on a Buddha *rūpā*, or on the images of *devas*, gods, or whatever, people will make their marks on different images without really comprehending just what the individual images actually represent. Now, wrapped up in blind belief, people flip back and forth between one and the other without recognizing any individual significance, and because of that superstition becomes ever more firm, stronger and difficult to extract. This is a natural advantage superstition continues to enjoy over *Buddhology*, so that now this world is full of it.

And superstition is firm and has taken over a lot of space in the human mind so that there's a mingling together of two things, rather like two rivers meeting and coming together with the result that whichever is the bigger dominates. At present it's superstition which influences the minds of the masses. 'Masses,' here, means all people. Problems then arise and the scoundrel side of things has the advantage, the unprincipled and their superstitious beliefs having the advantage, take that superstition and use it as a device to encourage and promote evil activities. Buddhism mixed up with superstition, we can say, is what most people believe to be the truest form of the genre. Superstition has the advantage because it gets planted in the mind at birth and then thrives throughout life. Once born from the mother's womb and experiencing the beautiful, the melodious etc. then the seed of superstitious belief gets planted and develops in a child's mind, develops into a thriving plant, and, later on, if and when *Buddhology* is encountered, it will get mixed up with that superstition. Hence *Buddhology* doesn't weaken superstition, rather there occurs a mixing together of the two. It's like the two rivers analogy: one river is clean and pure, one is cloudy and murky, and on meeting together they mix, but in such a way that the clean and pure no longer is quite so clean and pure. In the same way there's a mixing up in the human mind of *Buddhology* and superstitious belief. If we look at history and at the religions which came to Thailand in days gone by, superstition came first, came from India in the form of the *Brahman* ideology, the Buddhists came afterwards, hence the roots of the Buddha's teaching aren't so deeply planted as those of superstition. In this town (Chaiya) a little investigation would reveal that in front of Buddhist temples there were once *Brahman* temples which, if they hadn't been pulled down, would probably still be found in all such places. Ancient Wats (temples) over a thousand years old had in front of them a *Brahman* temple where *Nārāyan*, *Shiva*, or whatever, were worshipped, which indicates that people then followed both Buddhism and Brahmanism at the same time. The head-man of a place wouldn't say anything against that, he'd just let it go on, because it allowed people to practise their belief, gave them a way to develop mental restraint, and it promoted communal harmony, hence sometimes the *Brahman* could be found in a Buddhist temple. When the big *jedi* was dug out at the Emerald wat in Bangkok, in the central aperture there was, along with a Buddha image, a *Shiva lingam* and an image of *Ganesha*, both of which come from the *Brahman*, the Hindu tradition, meaning that in that place they're accustomed to making *pūja* to a mixture of Buddhism and

Brahmanism, they can *puja* the Buddha, or a *devata*, or a god - the implication being that Buddhists followed and still do follow a mixed up form of their religion.

It has to be said that the majority of Buddhists still hold mixed up beliefs, mixed up until we don't know what's what. We take the gods of other religions and mix them up with the Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*. Be aware of how the 'water-pouring' ceremony arose and of how it's become completely mixed up. This ceremony as it is today is something which didn't exist at the time of Buddha. Although it probably didn't happen at first, as time went on the adulteration of the rituals and ceremonials occurred. Reciting the virtues of the Buddha, for instance, became a superstitious petitioning.

To sum up: we hold to mixed-up, adulterated beliefs, we follow an adulterated, a polluted religion so that we don't, to turn a phrase, know what's gold, what's copper, or what's brass, we mix things together, as it were, so don't get any real benefit from the best thing of all, because, to continue with the analogy, when we bring gold and mix it with copper, brass, and tin, etc. then we devalue it. And so it is with the very best of things, with the *Dhamma*. Trying to prevent this from happening would be good, that is, attempting to separate the gold from the base metals so that what remains is good, true, and genuine would bring us much more benefit.

Now, how do we go about separating ourselves from superstitious beliefs, how do we combat superstition? We want to mention something that might give us an indication: when *Asoka* (the 3rd Century A.D. Indian Emperor, whose empire was based on Buddhist ideals, at least on the practise of *sīla*, of proper human behaviour) sent the *Arahant* monks *Sona* and *Uttara* to promulgate the Buddhist system in this country(Siam), they had to do battle with and overcome the incumbent hosts of demons, evil spirits etc., and it was only when such had been defeated that the Buddhist religion could take root here. There was strong belief in the superstitious so that the new Buddhist religion wasn't at first accepted, in fact it was resisted, hence the two monks had to be very skilful to overcome the host of ghosts, demons, etc. and get the people of this country to accept and respect the Buddhist way. It's on record that they used the *Brahmajāla sutta* as their means to achieving this end.

Most people probably won't know what the *Brahmajālasutta* is. The *Brahmajāla* sets out the list of sixty-two wrong views people can hold. The monks used the *sutta* to overcome belief in demons and so on, that is, they taught people so that they could see that their beliefs were wrong, so that they could change, come to respect the Buddhist Religion. Hence they used the deepest, the most difficult to study text in the Buddhist canon, the *Brahmajālasutta*, as their means of driving out the hosts of superstition from this country and establishing Buddhism.

However, now we can see that superstition wasn't utterly defeated, that it still exists - and flourishes; even though this country changed to become Buddhist superstition didn't disappear, instead it mixed with the Buddhist system, and we now pursue what is essentially a mixture of Buddhology and superstition. Hence we'll need to know how to remove the superstitious part.

What will eliminate superstitious belief is properly understood Buddhology, the basis of which is the *dhamma* that enlightened the Buddha-to-be and which he afterwards revered, so, do you know what it is? We've talked about this many, many times and in many ways, but some people are still mystified, having forgotten what it was that enlightened the Buddha-to-be, and what it was, therefore, that he afterwards revered - it was the law *idappaccayatāpaṭiccasamupādo*, that which describes the arising and quenching of *dukkha*, the true heart of the Buddhist system. That's the *dhamma* that will eliminate superstition. If we understand *idappaccayatā* there's no way that

superstitious belief can persist. If the mind is filled with the knowledge of *idappaccayatā* there's nothing for superstitious belief to build on. Therefore, be interested in *idappaccayatāpaṭiccasamupādo*, once knowledge of this sort really enters the mind superstition is put an end to.

Study *idappaccayatā*, let understanding become clear, and Buddhology will then do its duty and superstition will flee: just cause the *dhamma* of *idappaccayatā* to arise in the mind, that's all, then there won't be any need to do violence to superstition to get rid of it, because it will leave of its own accord.

Hence we invite you to study *idappaccayatā*, to let knowledge of it become clearer as the years go by, thus: *because there's this as condition, this arises; because there isn't this to act as condition, then this doesn't arise*. Hence: because there's ignorance as condition, superstitious beliefs arise - come to this knowledge: because there's *avijjā*, ignorance, there's also *taṇhā*, foolish desire in the mind, it's *avijjā* that allows superstition to enter and grow. Come to know this, there's then right understanding, and the wrong kind disappears of its own accord.

The highest *dhamma*, like the highest god, is the law *idappaccayatā*, bring knowledge of it into the mind and the ghosts, ghouls, and demons will be finished, will flee, superstition will run away. If we really know that what's living life is only *idappaccayatā*, just a stream of conditionality, that there's no 'self' involved, then such knowledge can extract, can put an end to 'self' belief, and then where will superstition be? Taking out 'self' belief leaves superstition with nowhere to go, with nothing to base itself on, because knowledge of *aniccaṇ*, *dukkhaṇ*, and *anattā* will have been attained there'll be no room for superstitious beliefs.

Knowing *idappaccayatā* we know the reality, that there's nobody, no person, and if there isn't anybody living life then there's no *kamma* being performed either, that is, *kamma* is transcended. It's said that one goes along according to one's *kamma* (intentional and ignorantly guided activities of body, speech, and mind) but this is still partly a superstitious belief, it's still connected to the 'self' idea. Teachings from outside the Buddhist religion explain *kamma* in this way: that there is a 'self' which cycles around being born and dying, being born and then dying. But this isn't part of the Buddhist system. If it's to be Buddhism then there can't be a 'self' involved, there's just the mind, which is either ignorant or smart, dwelling along with the body, there's no need for any third component. If we understand *idappaccayatā* well enough it puts an end to the 'self' idea, puts an end to the attachment to 'self,' then superstition is finished, gone without remainder.

On coming to real knowledge of *idappaccayatā* we can then dwell above *kamma*. 'Dwelling above' *kamma* refers to the sort of lifestyle which puts an end to *kamma*, which terminates 'self' belief so that old *kamma* becomes sterile (previous *kammic* activities can no longer produce any 'fruit,' that is, they can't give rise to any results,) and there's no new *kamma* being performed because there isn't a 'self' to perform it. When there's knowledge of *idappaccayatā* then superstition gets torn out by the roots, leaving nothing behind. Then there's no more defilement, no more *kilesa* because we know how to control the stream of conditions. Defilement arises because the conditions supporting it are present, that is, there's ignorance. When we eject ignorance we in that moment control the stream of conditions so that the defilements can't arise, hence there's no occurrence of greed, *loba*, of aversion, *dosa*, or of delusion, *moha*, and superstition then has nothing to base itself upon because we have the ultimate, the highest god, we have *idappaccayatā* come to dwell in the mind.

Now, looking at a related matter, which is that education isn't complete. An incomplete, incorrect form of education is one designed to allow people to make a living, worldly education is aimed at just that much, and doesn't bother with knowledge of the mind, of the defilements, the *saṃsāra*, or of *nibbāna*, all of which makes it incomplete. When education is of this kind it leaves the door open for superstition to come in and take over. Hence we need to arrange matters so that education is complete, and if the government won't do that for us then we'll have to do it ourselves. We believe that the students who come to Suan Mokkh have an education which is deficient, hence they may well be coming to seek one that will be fulfilling, that will show them how to be complete human beings. Produce a form of education which is complete and there won't be any room for superstition, then we'd be proper, better and better human beings until, perhaps, becoming ennobled in the Buddhist sense.

In the final count we'll have to be brave, courageous. At present we're still timid, in that we don't dare touch superstition, we're afraid of ghosts and goblins, afraid of anything we don't understand, we're not brave, we don't dare challenge superstition, there isn't anyone with the courage to go up against it. This is the way things are; if, however, we can have a little courage, can put our faith in the true Buddhist system then superstitious belief can be put an end to. At present we're timorous, we might even say cowardly, in that we don't dare give up what we should give up, aren't willing to do what we should do. Hence, to fix this problem we're going to have to be courageous. When we go downstairs and a *jingjok* makes its characteristic sound, then so what! Don't be afraid of a *jingjok*, because if we are, then we won't have the backbone to do anything worthwhile.

For superstition to be overcome there must be proper education, so knowledge is a necessity, and courage too, then blind belief, superstition, can be changed into Buddhology. That's what will develop the mind until superstitious belief is gone: having courage, having faith awaken and arise, having a proper and sufficient education so that we can recognize the primacy of *idappaccayatā*, the law of Nature. We should always bear *idappaccayatā* in mind, then we'll be able to behave properly, in accord with Buddhist tenets.

The instinctual desires of human beings encourage superstition, we need to know this and to make some changes. Human beings and animals, what do they want most of all, have we ever thought about it? If we know then it's easy to see why superstition thrives so. In the first place we want to feel safe. Things that have life, people, animals, the first thing they want is to feel safe, safe from death, from danger, so, when the superstitious is proposed in the form of do this, do that - mouth this incantation, chant this and you'll be safe, you'll be prosperous, then people will be quick to accept it because it's more convenient than the, for instance, Buddhist approach, which has people, if they want to feel safe and secure, learning to behave properly, practising to control speech, physical activities, thought and imagination. Hence people go the way of superstition.

Secondly, people generally, as with the monastics, need the four requisites of life to sustain themselves comfortably. We require food, clothing, shelter, and medicines in order to live reasonably. Everybody wants to eat, so, when someone comes along and says: chant this, or perform the appropriate ceremony, and you'll get lots of rice, there won't be any problem with the rice crop, then, given ignorance, the various superstitious ceremonies concerned with rice-growing, with working the fields, with transplanting, or whatever, are going to get quickly and easily accepted. But be aware that just chanting or performing some ceremonial isn't going to be enough to achieve the required result, just try it and see. It needs to be understood that something has to be done to prevent damage to the rice crop, and that it will need diligence and control if it's to be a

good crop. But if it's said that this way is good, is easy, requires just a little investment, just make a small offering, an oblation, and the rice crop will be good and plentiful, then it's going to be accepted because it is easy, convenient, requires just a little time and effort, and, of course, we want the rice. It's the same with clothing, just do this, do that, chant some incantation, make some magical marks, or whatever. Where housing, shelter is concerned then some superstitious ceremonials will be involved. We're afraid, so we fall under the power of superstitious belief. It's the same with medicines: we're unable to do things scientifically because we lack the knowledge, and because we're too afraid, in too much of a hurry, so we take the easy way out and give in to the superstitious, hence there's still a lot of superstitious treatment of disease around.

The pursuit of the four requisites of life is bound up with superstitious belief, which would decrease if we were inclined to follow the correct way, the way of Buddhology, or if there was proper education and the appropriate change.

However, superstition, if it's useful for children, should be retained. I say, without fear of criticism, that superstition is necessary for people with weak knowledge, when there are still so many people with weak understanding in this world, then, for their sake, superstitious beliefs should be retained, maintained. Weak wisdom causes us to be gullible, that's a condition for superstitious belief, our lack of knowledge and our gullibility provides a secure citadel for superstition to dwell in. However, superstition, as long as it's going to be useful, as long as it can provide a conduit to something more elevated, will be of some benefit, therefore it should be tolerated, should be retained.

Now, the third point is that everybody wants to have some power over, to be better than others. This is an instinctual feeling: cats and dogs, crows, chickens, anything at all, will have this sort of desire. I've raised many, many chickens, dogs, and cats and I've seen this kind of behaviour very clearly, it's basically instinctual. Hence people, who are essentially the same, display the same sort of desire. So, when someone comes along and tells us that if we recite this *mantra* we'll get what we want, then, given ignorance, we'll be inclined to accept that. We can be smarter, better than others, we can have power, authority or whatever, just believe in and recite this *mantra* and we can become more elevated, better than the rest. People try to concentrate the mind, do a whole variety of things to raise, to elevate themselves, to gain power, authority over others. Superstitious belief promotes that sort of thing.

The fourth point is, sort of, the opposite of all that, in that everybody wants to be loved. Particularly is this the case when it concerns someone that we love, then we'll want them to love us too, of course. So, when someone comes along and tells us that if we recite this or that verse, use this charm, or take this potion we'll get what we want, we'll be inclined to grab that straightway.

The fifth point is that superstition has the advantage because, as already mentioned, it goes well with our ignorant instinctual desires, with the desire for security, for safety, the desire for plenty as regards the four necessities of life, the desire for power over others, the desire to be liked, to be loved. There's no understanding of *idappaccayatā*, no trace of it in any of that, and we live that way, so how can that be Buddhist?

We take refuge in superstition; we allow the Buddha to become a wonder-worker, something sacred, and the *Sangha* to be people who help us - then there's no self-help, no practising of *Dhamma* to help ourselves. Our refuge is deviant, a superstitious refuge - even if our Buddhism might amount to more than that, if we're still inclined to believe what's always been taught, what's always been said, then our refuge is parrot-like, and is really more of the same, and will stay that

way until such time as we come to really know the *Dhamma*, especially the *dhamma* of *idappaccayatā*, only then will we have a true, a genuine Buddhist refuge.

We have this problem, in that Buddhology cedes the advantage to superstition simply because it doesn't square with our original instincts, with our original ignorance. Hence, if we don't change our ignorance into knowledge we'll just go on worshipping the superstitious. If the population of a country worships the superstitious will that nation prosper, or not? Think about it: if the population still worships at the altar of superstition will that make a country prosper? We can create a nation, but if there's still worship of the superstitious it will be a nation stuck on ceremonials. I say that if we create anything under the power of superstitious belief there'll increasingly be problems; if we do anything under the power of Buddhology any problems will cease. Hence we should put our trust in Buddhology.

So, let's help each other, in the home, in the temples, let such places be full of Buddhology, don't let superstition take over.

To sum up: we'll have to cultivate the mind, train it, lead it, improve it, make it thrive in the right way. We know about proper Buddhist mental cultivation so we should be able to do the job properly. The problem is that the mind can be developed in a Buddhist or in a superstitious way, it depends. Hence, those of us who are sincere Buddhists need to take responsibility, to help others and not be indifferent. We, collectively, need to make adjustments, to improve ourselves, to improve our understanding of Buddhism, we need to improve in everything that we do. Don't worship superstition, don't mistake superstitious beliefs for *Dhamma* truths. Let's be properly Buddhist and then we won't have wasted the human opportunity and of having met with the Buddha's teachings.

LDB

VI. The general form of development - a brief outline.

Now, we'll look at mental development and at the development of life, which, like working in the fields or whatever needs be carried out properly. Development here has the particular meaning of being correct, or right development, because there's still the sort which is wrong, which is insane, even though it's still called development. Any true development has to involve the sort of progress which is right and proper, which isn't in any way dangerous. Having said that, the most easily acquired sort is the wrong sort, and the more of that there is the more disorder there is, until there's insanity, or worse.

We'll separate this into two levels, one of which can be expressed in worldly language, one in the language of *Dhamma*. When using worldly language we'll be describing the development of life, of an individual, on the external, or more obvious level, when using *Dhamma* language we'll be describing the less obvious and internal process of mental development. It's really the same matter, but we're going to split it up into two and observe development as it takes place on both levels, the obvious, and the not so obvious.

Regarding the obvious level of development, we need to take a comprehensive look at just how this takes place. Up to now we perhaps haven't taken an interest in this, we haven't observed, haven't

noticed how we, since birth, have been developing. So, be interested, look at this as an investment which will lead on to something greater on quite another level.

On the obvious level the individual develops automatically, our interactions with nature, with our surroundings obliging us to acquire knowledge, as a result of which we gradually come to know more and more. For instance: when we're small children, we, while growing up, and without being taught or by speaking with anyone in particular, will gradually come to know more and more from our contacts with Nature, and from our own observations and experience - we come to know things as hot or cold, soft or hard, painful or pleasant through experience, and then knowing that we know to avoid certain things, to be more careful next time we meet with them.

Don't imagine that this applies just to people, because animals can come to know through experience that something is, for instance, dangerous, recognizing that there are snares, traps, devices made especially to catch them, hence they learn through being observant, which is a form of education, so that they aren't caught in the same way again. Even puppy dogs and kittens if they're in a cold place will move off to find a warmer spot.

This is really learning - learning from experience, thus learning how to protect oneself, how to put things right by oneself. This sort of education is much better, much more effective than the sort which has to be acquired from others and which doesn't involve much personal experience. Being observant encourages development, so let's be thorough, let's be observant, let's be the sort of people who are careful, who take pains.

This is the way living beings acquire knowledge for themselves, and quite naturally, their surroundings doing the teaching. There's a great deal of this kind of knowledge to be had.

As for the sort of education received from others, well, since birth and all through the growing-up period of life there'll be the customary, the traditional transmission of knowledge taking place.

Children learn from their parents, from the people who raise them, from friends, or whatever, and, eventually, they'll also be compelled to learn, they'll reach the stage where development is acquired through study done in various ways, in schools, from books, etc. Whatever way it takes place they'll learn, because in children the curiosity, the desire to know, to understand is strong.

Children, when they see anything which is outside of their experience will ask about it, they'll experience wonder and they'll want to know what it is, so they'll ask. They'll have to exert themselves to acquire the satisfaction of knowing, and in such a way they'll gradually increase their stock of knowledge.

There's yet another method of acquiring knowledge which we could call customary, or traditional. When people ordain as monks, they do it in the traditional or customary manner. Ordination involves encountering a traditional form of education in Thailand, so someone who doesn't ordain isn't going to have this and, because of that, won't be so pleasing to society generally, people won't have the same confidence in them that they otherwise would. If someone is properly ordained, however, and remains so for a long enough time, then they'll be recognized as someone worthwhile, someone it's desirable to associate with. It's not so much the ordination as a monk or novice that makes them so, it's that, once ordained, they then follow the traditions, the conventions, and learn what such people ought to learn. This has social and personal benefits, in that it brings with it a general, basic knowledge of that which should be known, and provides a sound basis from which it will be easier for one to progress, to go higher, to develop further.

At present we're still constrained by situations, by occurrences, such as *dukkha*, trouble and strife: bad things happen and cause people to struggle against them, depending on what they are, wars,

epidemics, etc. or the more everyday things that can arise, all require that we have the sort of knowledge, of understanding able to solve any problems arising out of such events. People who live long and have a lot of experience accumulate a lot of that sort of knowledge, and, for this reason, ought to make good leaders. Such people have gone a long way, as it were. However, it's natural that everyone as they age will experience a greater variety of situations so that they come to know more than, to have a deeper store of knowledge than, for instance, children. Hence, in certain societies, they teach children to respect the aged: ageing and the associated experience, this too is learning, is a form of education, of development arising from contact with external sources. Now, each and every person differs both externally and internally, we have minds with habits, with defilements, we have abilities, and so on, but we won't know whence these came. In reality there'll be various causes and conditions underlying the individual differences. We differ from each other in many ways and we'll probably say that the reason for that is to do with *kamma* (deliberated actions performed in ignorance; in this instance actions performed in previous lives bringing results in this life is meant). But that wouldn't be right, we should blame causes and conditions. If we're true Buddhists then we'll see that it's all about cause and condition, about *idappaccayatā*, and that *kamma* can't exert a fixed and rigid control over our lives, because we have a means - knowledge of conditionality, knowledge of *idappaccayatā* - by which we can effect adjustments, can make modifications. If we have good parents, a good teacher we'll have a good chance of meeting with this sort of knowledge, and then we'll be able to adjust the various conditions controlling our behaviour, eventually, perhaps, becoming the sort of person able to completely solve the problems of life.

Parents and teachers should take an interest in *idappaccayatā*, in the law of conditionality, so that they can help children to deal with their problems, while children should be interested in the advice of their parents and teachers concerning how to correct their deficiencies, so coming into line with the Buddha's words on the subject - that amongst children those obedient to their parents are the best, because then they get the benefit of being helped from the start.

We come now to consider the different mental qualities of people as set out in the texts, and, although the texts in question are actually commentary they do contain useful information and can help us with our studies and development.

People are here divided into four basic categories. The first is that of the very clever, very smart sort, who when just told something understand completely, understand even more than has been explained to them. There are some children like this, although not many, who when told something can understand without the need for further explanation, and, perhaps, understand even better than their teacher does. The first type of person is one who clearly and immediately understands without expanded explanations being necessary.

The second category includes those who need to have things explained in detail. We can see for ourselves that with children, with some people one word is enough, and they can fill in the gaps for themselves, but for some that won't be enough, and they'll do only what they've been told to do and won't be able to make the necessary connections, so that a lot of what should get done won't get done.

The third category is that of those who can be led but have to be dragged along, the sort who don't have fast mindfulness and comprehension, who are dense, slow-witted, but who can be sharpened up mentally and can understand, who can be led, but with difficulty. If these people don't have the sort of parents and teachers who have a lot of patience they'll be going nowhere, if their luck isn't

good and they don't meet with a suitable teacher equipped with real love and compassion willing to sit patiently by sharpening their intellect for them, they won't be able to progress. Many of our children who are considered worthless, good for nothing, and who don't seem to want to help themselves, are like that because they haven't been in contact with clever, patient parents and teachers. The parents are very important, we've seen some people who, when there's a little trouble, just leave their children to their fate, just let them go on as they want, and then they're really ruined. The teachers, then, must be very patient because they aren't dealing with their own children, and if they don't really like their duties as teachers then they won't have the patience to struggle and strive to turn their charges' ignorance into intelligence.

Who can help such to develop? The real, true teacher can help them, the like of which, in this world, is hard to find. We can sum up the important qualities of a teacher as being wisdom and love. I used to say this: the true teacher, if we open them up we'll find wisdom and love side by side inside them. The teacher just with wisdom but without love, without *metta* cannot really be a teacher. It's difficult to train ignorant children, to turn them into something better, hence, a teacher with *metta* who sacrifices their own happiness for the good of their pupils is hard to find, and a teacher with wisdom, with intelligence too, is still harder to come by.

This world of ours remains short of true, genuine teachers, what it does have is a lot of people who aren't properly developed, which, for so long as such a state of affairs persists, is a dangerous thing for society.

The fourth and final category is of those whom it's beyond anybody's ability to guide, at least at this particular time. Such people represent an extreme case, that is, being extremely slow mentally it's beyond anyone's ability to lead, to show them the way - at this time: we have to add 'at this time' because it's at this time that they're beyond help, being ignorant and stubborn in a wide variety of ways. But don't think that such people can't be helped at all, because according to the highest *Dhamma* all things are subject to causes and conditions. These people happen to need the necessary causes and conditions more than anyone, it's difficult for them to get the opportunity to improve, to meet with someone patient and willing enough to make the sacrifices necessary to help them improve. There are lots of such people, they're still clever enough to work, so in that area they can be helped, but as far as the *Dhamma* is concerned it's beyond anyone to lead them.

Notwithstanding that, we don't believe that they're absolutely beyond help, because there isn't any conditioned thing that won't undergo change, they just need the right causes and conditions to intervene in their lives. If we have enough love and enough sympathy we can seek out the cause and surround them with the necessary conditions, although it will be hard work.

So, there are four groups or categories of people: for one category a single word is all that's necessary, one need things explained to some extent, one category needs to be dragged along, but can be led, but the fourth category cannot, at this time, be shown the way. These people, as they are at present, can be said to be the produce, the fruit of Nature - Nature produces these four categories, and all four are subject to the law of cause and effect. Hence there can be development or there can be deterioration: deterioration, non-development, or generation, development, both will be the result of a certain set of conditions being dominant.

Please, don't consider this to be a small matter, if we do we'll just let it go, let it drop. But if we don't just let it go, if we strive to help people to improve, even though it seems like trying to grind an anvil into a needle, or polishing a brick until it becomes a mirror, then it's still better than doing nothing.

This is the development of life, development of people on the more obvious level. Get to know the categories and the levels so that, through our own efforts and those of parents, of teachers, of compassionate and loving people, there can be progress and love can come to rule this world - that's a duty human beings must undertake.

Now, we'll look at the second phase, that is, at the development of the mind. The heart of the matter is the development of the mind.

Mental development is a delicate and troublesome, because profound, affair, but it's something that must be done because true accomplishment rests with it. The true accomplishment, the successful development of life is in the mental development we're going to conduct. Observe particularly how the mind undergoes change quite naturally, as in the case of the child, which, once born, knows more and more as it increasingly experiences its world. There are obvious signs that the child is developing, is growing more knowledgeable, however, on a deeper level, it's actually the child's mind which is acquiring knowledge, which is being increasingly developed.

There's natural change and development both physical and mental taking place, the two forms being connected. Hence, anything making contact with the body will also affect the mind, will cause the mind to feel, to react, to change accordingly. Thus the mind develops, gets smarter, and even though it meets with some form of *dukkha*, of trouble and strife, it will be sharper, smarter as a result of having had to deal with that. In truth, troublesome forms of experience are more useful for mental development, because the fun, the delicious, the pleasurable hardly causes any useful thinking at all, the mind being so busy being infatuated, stimulated, so busy jumping about that it becomes more ignorant rather than smarter. But we like the beautiful, the fun, the delicious, the pleasurable even though they only increase our ignorance, while *dukkha*, the difficulties and problems which really make us smarter we hardly consider at all, most people seeing them as being bad things, as bad luck and calling them '*māras*,' difficulties. We think we're made smarter by experiencing the things we think of as *māras*, as obstructions, it's because we don't look at them in this way that we're unable to solve our problems. If we can see the good in them, make them our partners in the struggle, they become things that make us smarter, that make us develop. Hence, a person happy to meet the problems of life is one who'll develop, is one with the good luck to be able to make lessons out of life's troubles which they can study and, by studying, develop themselves.

So be content to meet with life's downside, with *dukkha*, see *dukkha* as the friend of development. Consider experience as being the very thing that teaches us, that makes us learn - as when we step on something hot, that teaches us how fire is, for instance, or a sharp knife cuts our hand, or a thorn pierces our skin, or we fall down, or whatever, these things teach us.

It's beyond doubt that we develop, get to know more, become, in a sense, smarter, every time the mind receives a contact. But some people won't be able to make use of this information, only the clever will be able to take it in and use it to become cleverer still. This is the starting point, the root of mental development.

Now, there's more, something else that will cause more mental development and make it happen more quickly, that is, to have the development process continue from life to life. When we say this, then, to people who've already studied the subject, it will mean this present life and the next, it will mean the sort of life that begins with birth from the womb and ends with death and entry into a coffin, the development achieved in this life thus carrying over into the next, and from that to a third, a fourth, and so on. But we don't like to explain things in that way, however, we don't say

that it's wrong for anyone to explain it like that. The word 'life' as far as we're concerned refers to mental life, refers to the clinging that brings the feeling of 'me' and 'mine' into the mind on any one occasion – that's called a 'life.' We've talked about this many, many times and feel that almost everyone here(Suan Mokkh) can remember that life in this second sense means one instance of clinging to being the 'me' who gets something, loses something, or is anything - that's called a 'life.' So, during the course of one day there can arise many lives, in just one day there can be many lives, many tens of lives, depending on how many times the feelings of 'me' and 'mine' arise. Further, we hold that a child born from the womb that doesn't yet know thinking of the 'me' and 'mine' sort is really still to be 'born,' that is, it still doesn't have life in the sense we're concerned with here - it's alive in the ordinary sense, in that it's been born from the womb, it has life in that sense: it's born but if it doesn't know itself as 'me,' how, then, can it be the 'me' who's alive? Hence, the child born from the womb won't have life in the true sense until it grows enough to experience the feeling of being 'me' for the first time, of being the 'me' who's like this, who's like that, and, it might be many days or months before this happens, even though the child's already been physically born from the womb.

Think about it; which understanding is a serious problem; which kind life is it where every time there's birth there's *dukkha* too? Birth from the womb doesn't bring *dukkha* with it, but if it's birth from clinging, *upādāna*, to being 'me' or 'mine' it's immediately *dukkha*, and every time.

Whenever we think this is 'me' or this is 'mine' we've been born in the real sense. Therefore, in the moment the eye sees a provocative form and desire, affection, arises, there also arises the feelings of 'me' and 'mine,' immediately the ear hears a sweet sound, the nose smells a fragrance, the tongue tastes anything delicious there arises the sense that it's 'me,' 'me' who's got something good, something delicious, beautiful, sweet-sounding, or whatever. It's the clinging involved in this that represents 'birth' here, and this 'birth' bites every time it manifests. Hence, every time there's 'birth' of this kind there's also *dukkha*, there's a life which is *dukkha*.

Now, let it all connect up: ignorance on one occasion produces *dukkha*, now let it connect up with later experience so that either there's ignorance and *dukkha* again, or no ignorance - let there be a connection, let knowledge be transmitted from one experience to the other. Let the first mistake be beneficial so that a second mistake doesn't happen, and so on. In this way we make the mind smarter with every passing 'life,' with every passing experience. Take *dukkha* as the basis, the *dukkha* arising from the mistakes we make, let it be our teacher when the next meaningful experience arrives; let every event, every experience, connect together during the course of life, let each experience be of benefit to the next, whether big or small, let them connect and thus develop wisdom. Simply put, if something hurts then remember it; if something painful happens but it's forgotten about then there's been no connection between lives, whereas if it's remembered then we become smarter, then we know to protect against it should it happen again.

This is the sort of development which continues from life to life, direct mental development between lives. Whether it's life in the ordinary meaning or in the *Dhamma* meaning, let there be development from life to life. Dwell with enough care, and intelligent observation - which, unfortunately, is something we mostly don't do, for the most part we're careless, we think a lot of ourselves and forget, we aren't properly aware hence there's hardly any life to life development taking place.

Now, we want to carry on and talk about accomplishing the perfections over a series of lives.

Accomplishing the *parāmi*, the 'perfections' in the old understanding is achieved while passing

through existences, through lives, through many lives, as in the *Jātaka* tales. We're perhaps familiar with the *Jātaka* tales which recount the 550 lives of the *Bodhisattva* who became the Buddha after accomplishing the perfections during the course of them. If we believe in that way then we'll have to avoid harming anything, because to accomplish the *pārami* we'll need to maintain good intentions, such having benefit as we pass through lives as per the ancient understanding. But it will also have benefit for 'life' in the *Dhamma* language sense, which holds that a 'life' is one burst of thinking concerned with one matter, with one experience, hence we'll need to pass through mental existences, through 'lives,' maintaining the same good intentions. However, don't cling to the idea of there being a permanent 'self' involved here, because that goes against the basic principle that there really isn't, just let it be a matter of the mind, the mind which becomes increasingly knowledgeable with every passing event, with every 'life' that passes. Now, that this should be a long and drawn out affair involving many lifetimes isn't satisfactory, so we'll look at the form of development which occurs in the present life by means of a practice which the Buddha mentioned, and which the *Pandits* of former times laid down, the practice known as '*Brahmacāriya*.' The '*Brahmacāriya*' is a system designed to bring about mental development in this life: we practise, we develop the *Brahmacāriya* in the here and now, we make it a '*sandittiko*' experience, then there's no need to pass through more incarnations, through more lives. Systems for developing the mind existed before the Buddha's time, people had already developed *samādhi* before then, but it wasn't the best, the most useful form of the genre, although it did form the base from which the best developed. Making the mind *samādhi* to the level of all eight *jhānas* (meditative absorptions) had been achieved: it's plainly set out in the Buddhist records that Buddha-to-be went and studied with those able to teach him the eighth *jhāna* level, but that he, seeing that this still couldn't quench *dukkha* completely, wasn't fully satisfied, so continued to seek until he discovered the most complete system of practice. Now, when everything's been pulled together then the full form of practice, as the Buddha related it, consists in *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, or the 'three trainings,' accomplish these and the mind will be developed in this life. Hence there's no need for the trouble and strife involved in passing between incarnations. Practise here and now and it will have a result here and now, we can develop the mind fully in this life without having to wait. The various systems which were taught in former times and which were beneficial still exist and are included in the Buddhist system. As with the four *rūpajhānas*; the Buddha wasn't the originator of the *jhānas*, they already existed, he acquired them and taught about them, described how to practise them until the inflows of defilement, the *āsava*, were put an end to, thus: accomplish *samādhi* - the four *rūpajhānas* - and give rise to knowledge of the cessation of the inflows, the *āsava* - or, accomplish both the *rūpa* and *arūpajhānas* and give rise to knowledge of cessation of the inflows - or, accomplish the *rūpa* and *arūpajhānas* to bring about *saññāvedayitanirodha*, the 'cessation of perception and feeling.' There's the cessation of perception and feeling which doesn't put an end to the *āsava* because it just cools down perception and feeling for a time while not quenching *upādāna*, not quenching clinging, completely, then there's that cessation of perception and feeling mixed with *paññā*, with wisdom, which does put an end to the inflows, the *āsava*, once and for all. The ready-made system of *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā* is the heart, the core of mental development. *Sīla* is for the easier acquisition of *samādhi*, while *paññā* is the sort of knowledge that allows all things to be right and proper so that any activities can be carried out under the umbrella of *samādhi*. When

there's the intention to make *samādhi* then *sīla* will be present in the intention, and when developing *samādhi* successfully, *paññā*, wisdom, will arise to resolve any doubt and confusion. What really needs to be done is to make the mind *samādhi* because genuine mental development lies in its cultivation. In the eightfold path the Buddha puts forward right *samādhi* as being the core: 'right understanding' and 'right intentions' lead the way, 'right speech,' 'right action,' 'right livelihood,' 'right effort,' 'right mindfulness' are supporters, while *samādhi* is the boss, the governor, the core component. That which will quench, will put an end to our problems is *sammāsamādhi*, the other seven factors act as its supports. The mind can be developed using many, many techniques, but all will and must involve *samādhi*.

Mental training is the ultimate endeavour, because once accomplished the mind can then go anywhere, can visit any of the 'realms.' The mental realm, if we describe it properly, is actually four realms, there's the *kāmāvacarabhūmi*, the sensual realm, there's the *rūpāvacarabhūmi*, the realm of pure form where gross sensuality is absent, there's the *arūpāvacarabhūmi*, the realm of the formless, and there's the *lokuttarabhūmi*, the realm which is above and beyond all the others. There are these four main realms of existence, but each of them also has several subsidiary levels. The human mind is special, and, once trained, can visit all of them.

Now, we'll need to really see for ourselves that we, by surrounding the mind with sensuality, have trained it, made it such that it's become completely sunk in sensuality, in the pursuit and enjoyment of the different forms of sensual pleasure, it's become sunk in the *kāmāvacarabhūmi*. Or, perhaps we've trained the mind so that it's lost interest in gross sensual matters, trained it so that it's able to dwell in *samādhi*, in the several levels of *jhāna*, thus in the *rūpāvacārabhūmi*, or, perhaps we've gone above and beyond even that and are able to dwell in the *arūpāvacārabhūmi* too. Once trained, we can, and easily, establish the mind in any of the various realms as and when we please.

Don't treat this as an insignificant matter, because if we're able to make the mind bow to our wishes we can solve all of our problems, and then, whenever there's *dukkha*, we, because we've trained it well, will be able to make the mind not experience it as *dukkha*. Hence we practise until we can see all things as being 'just like that,' as being just what they are, then, because the mind experiences feeling in the 'just like that' manner too, there isn't any *sukha* or *dukkhavedanā* to deal with, no happiness or unhappiness arising from anything we experience: should something come along that would normally make the mind feel happy or unhappy it won't be able to do that, because now we experience everything as being 'just like that,' we experience things as they really are. This would represent the well-trained mind. Hence we practise as much and as well as we can, and although our practice might not be complete, what we do will bring benefit.

So, know that the mind can be trained, and that there are various methods available for us to use. We can choose whichever method we want, but the mind can be trained, this we've now established.

Let's recapitulate: this mind, once trained, can go anywhere, it can travel to, or visit any of the four realms: the sensual, the formed, the formless, even in the transcendent.

Now, people hardly know anything about these realms: the *kāmāvacārabhūmi* is the sensual 'wandering,' or 'realm,' the *rūpāvacārabhūmi* is the realm of 'pure form,' of the *rūpajhānas*, the 'form' meditations, while the *arūpāvacārabhūmi* is the realm of the *arūpajhānas*, the 'formless' meditations. As for the *lokuttara*, that really isn't a *bhūmi*, a 'realm' at all because it's not dependent on those conditions which support existence, it's essentially the *nirodhadhātu*, the liberation element, and, being liberated from 'self' belief, the mind doesn't have anything to do with

existence. Even so it's still referred to as a '*bhumi*,' hence there is a '*lokuttarabhumi*' but it doesn't involve 'existence.'

Now, the mind which has been well trained will be able to visit any of these realms. Later books set out thirty-one *bhumis*, or realms which are '*lokiya*,' that is, 'worldly' in nature.

First, there are those realms understood as being places of deprivation. These are fourfold: 'Hell,' the animal realm, the 'hungry ghost' realm, and the 'demon' realm, although not necessarily in that order. These are usually understood as being places actually existing somewhere in time and space that we go to after death, but we say that's not the way it really is, rather, we say, if there's a certain kind of mental concocting, of thinking, happening in the mind it will have a certain kind of result: if, for instance, there's the sort of thinking that causes the mind to become hot, like it's on fire, then that's the equivalent of 'Hell,' but this will be the mental 'Hell' mentioned by the Buddha, which is more of a reality than any Hell under the ground, the whereabouts, or actual existence of which can't be known for certain, to which we can only go after death, and which can't ever be a *sandittiko* experience. The 'Hell' which is real, which is personally experienceable here and now, which manifests whenever the mind is 'hot' with the heat of hatred, of anger, is largely ignored, but there's plenty of interest in the other kind. How ignorant is that? The '*preta*,' the 'hungry ghost,' hungers, hungers in the most ignorant, insane way. It's the hunger of *taṇhā*, of craving that makes one a *preta* - hunger, excessive hunger (for the delightful, the stimulating). The ignorant mind is often like that, and whenever it is there's existence as a '*preta*,' as an 'hungry ghost.' Then there's the animal realm: animals are ignorant, un-knowing, they don't know anything, don't know the things that should be known, or if they do know anything their knowledge will be wrong knowledge, hence they're easily confused. When one is in the same condition, when one doesn't know, is confused, when there's this kind of ignorance there's existence in the animal realm. The mind is sometimes like that. In the 'demon' realm the trend is towards cowardice, the sort of cowardice which is unseemly, detestable, shameful, so, when one is in that condition mentally, then, at that time, there's existence in the realm of the demons. These four are described as 'deprived' - 'Hell,' the 'hungry ghost,' animal, and 'demon' realms.

Now, moving up we come to the human realm - 'human,' as in the general understanding. The human realm is like the middle ground, the base from which the human mind can become anything, or can change into anything, that is, can move around and through the other realms. It's the nature of a human being to struggle and strive, we'll do wrong, we'll do right, and as a result we can be, mentally, in any of the four realms at any given time. However, that wouldn't involve us actually physically being in 'Hell,' or being an 'hungry ghost,' an animal, or a 'demon,' we'd still be physically human, and would still have human problems.

Now, sixth are the *devatā*, the 'gods' of the six sensual heavens, places replete with sensual pleasures. These *devatās* enjoy sensual pleasures to the full and can't be compared with humans, because humans, for instance, still bathe themselves in sweat on occasion, while these *devatās* don't - in fact, if they should happen to sweat then they'd drop dead instantly, hence they draw the line at sweating. They experience sensual happiness but without having to sweat for it, something humans can't emulate. The sensual realm *devatās* are thus different from humans. There are six levels, or classes of them. Add these six to the four deprived realms and the one human realm, and that gives a total of eleven thus far.

Now, continuing 'upwards,' there are the *devatās* of the realm of 'pure form' known as '*rūpābrahmas*.' The *devatās* on the *Brahma* level number sixteen classes and arise through the

power of the four *rūpājhānas*, (that is, these realms are experienced when the mind is fully concentrated.) Sixteen plus eleven makes for twenty-seven realms thus far. Then there's the final group, the *devatā* of the 'formless' realms, the '*arūpābrahmas*,' which are of four classes: those of the sphere of 'the infinity of space,' of 'the infinity of consciousness,' of the sphere of 'cessation of perception and feeling,' and those of the sphere of 'neither perception nor non-perception.' Add these four to the others and the total is then thirty-one. Some people like to memorize the thirty one realms, students of *abhidhamma* can often mouth the thirty-one *bhumis* with some facility.

The worst evil and torment occurs within the deprived realms, humans experience both happiness and distress, the gods of the sensual realms experience happiness based in sensuality, the *rūpa* and *arūpa* *Brahma* gods experience happiness based in their personal, though still selfish, purity, they being exceedingly proud of that it forms the source of their happiness. However, all of them are mad! If we talk like this people look at us askance. But we aren't worried. We say that if there's infatuation with and clinging to anything capable of provoking it then those who do it are mad, and aren't '*lokuttara*.' Those thirty-one realms aren't *lokuttara*, aren't beyond the world, and won't be until such time as clinging ceases in them.

The mind which is developed to the utmost dwells with the *lokuttara*. The *lokuttara* realm is *asankata*, unconcocted, unconditioned, where the mind has begun to, or has already reached the ultimate (*nibbāna*). The aforementioned thirty-one realms are *lokiya*, worldly, and are *sankata*, are of a nature to concoct and to be concocted (to change and transform continually) according to their particular type.

Now, he (the Buddha) said that all the aforementioned have *saññā*. *Saññā* here doesn't mean the recollection of this or that, it means perception, that is, the recognition of any experience as being in this or that way, as having some particular quality. All creatures, the deprived, the human, the gods in the six lower levels of heaven, are those who perceive on the sensual level, they perceive through the lens of sensuality, hence the *kāmā-vacarabhumi*, the sensual realm.

Taken from below upwards, the deprived, the humans, and the gods of the six heavens all perceive through the lens of sensuality, all have *kāmāsaññā*, (they perceive in an unpurified, base manner). Now, the mind of a *devatā* of the *rūpabrahma* level perceives the '*rūpasaññā*,' perceives through the lens of 'pure form' (so perceives experience in a purer manner), and isn't concerned with gross sensuality.

The minds of the final four *arupabrahmas* have '*arupasaññā*,' they perceive through the lens of the 'formless' (so perceive in a still more purified way), which they understand as being without form, as fine, as subtle, as without *dukkha*.

Saññā is that which determines the level, or realm, people will exist on or in. In perceiving there's the recognition of the 'flavour' of any particular realm as satisfying. Those of the sensual realm perceive sensuality as possessing a satisfying flavour, the *rūpasaññā* group perceive 'pure form' in the same way and aren't concerned with the gross sensual, while the *arūpasaññā* group find satisfaction in the perception of the 'formless,' in that which is without form.

There are different kinds of attachment involved here: if to sensuality then one has *kāmāsaññā*; if to 'pure forms,' one has *rūpasaññā*; if to the 'formless' one has *arūpasaññā*. Ordinarily beings adhere to the sensual following the example of the gods of the sensual plane and all humans, even those in the deprived realms place their hopes in, cling to the sensual quality of experience.

The higher mind which has escaped the sensual arrives at the 'form' group, that is, at the *rūpajhāna* level. If we practise and make the mind *samādhi* to the level of the *rūpajhānas* then the first *jhāna*

(concentration) has *vitaka* and *vicāra*, applied and sustained thought and we no longer perceive on the gross sensual level, the mind has come to dwell with *vitaka* and *vicāra*, with *pīti* and *sukha*, satisfaction and happiness, and *ekagatta*, one-pointedness, with the components of *jhāna* (so, correspondingly, now perceives on the level of ‘pure form’). In the first *jhāna* there’s happiness born out of that freedom from sensuality. A person who can acquire *samādhi* on the *rūpajhāna* level knows the happiness arising from the mind freed from *kāma*, knows the mind uncrowded by sensuality - as when someone used to experiencing the unclean meets with cleanliness for the first time, feels satisfied with it and doesn’t want anything more to do with the unclean, so, in a similar way, one now sees the sensual as unclean, knows the freedom from sensual involvement and the happiness which is its fruit. The happiness arising from that freedom represents the comfort and pleasure of one who dwells in the first *jhāna*, they then have ‘*rūpasaññā*’ (have perception purified to the level of the first *jhāna*), and have the object (*āramana*) of *jhāna*, of concentration, in that happiness born of freedom from sensuality.

Now, moving up from the first to the second *jhāna* there’s the happiness born of *samādhi*, there’s a ‘moving up’ from freedom, from *pīti*, from whatever, and there’s now interest in *samādhi*, and having *samādhi* there’s happiness. The happiness born of *samādhi* then forms the basis of their *saññā* (their ability to perceive on a yet purer level,) however, it’s still *rūpasaññā*.

On arriving at the third *jhāna* the psychic factors, that is, the mind, is pure so there’s happiness as a result, there’s nothing disturbing the mind, the pleasure arising from that forms the comfort and happiness of that sort of mind, there’s *saññā* (the appropriate level of perceptual purity) based in this happiness.

Now, when arriving at the fourth and final *rūpajhāna*, there’s neither *dukkha* nor *sukha* to contend with, the sensations aren’t of *dukkha* or *sukha*, there’s just the purity born from equanimity and mindfulness; pure mindfulness because of the presence of equanimity forms the happiness which is the seat of *saññā* here (the basis of perception purified here to the level of the fourth absorption.)

In moving up step by step the quality of happiness increases. This is called mental development - gradually developing the mind.

If there’s the desire to go further, to meet with the ‘formless’ then it’s necessary to see the formed, the four levels of *rupasaññā* (perception purified to the level of ‘pure form’ through acquisition of the four *rūpajhānas*) as being somewhat coarse, to feel some distaste for them so that they aren’t wanted anymore, then the focus becomes *arūpasaññā*, the ‘formless.’

Move up, change from *rūpasaññā* to *arūpasaññā*. The *arūpasaññā* (perception purified to the level of the ‘formless’ based on acquisition of the *ārūpajhānas*, the ‘formless’ meditations) puts an end to *rūpasaññā* (perception purified only to the level of the fourth *rūpajhāna*), now there’s absorption into *arūpasaññā* (which involves acquisition of the four ‘formless’ concentrations: the ‘infinity of space,’ the ‘infinity of consciousness,’ ‘nothingness,’ the ‘sphere of neither perception nor non-perception’), hence *arūpasaññā* arises as another four groups.

The final group is *saññāvedayitanirodha*, the quenching of perception and feeling, which is subtle. This is to not ‘hold on’ to perception, because (ignorant) perception and feeling have quenched so that there’s no sensation of clinging, either in the perceptual process, or to any percept - it’s the quenching of *saññā*. However, if there isn’t enough wisdom involved then the *āsava*, the inflows won’t be put an end to (and, because still influenced by defilement, perceptions and feelings won’t be completely purified,) if there is then the inflows will be gone.

Now, accessing these realms involves a step-by-step quenching process known as ‘*nirodha*’ - a gradual, step by step quenching: *rūpasaññā* quenches *kāmasaññā*, *arūpasaññā* quenches *rūpasaññā*, and, finally, the *saññāvedayitanirodha* quenches the previous eight *saññās* (meaning the previous eight mental attainments, so the *kāmasaññā* isn’t included here). There’s a gradual quenching, quenching, quenching, which is known as *anupubbanirodha* which involves nine levels: four *rūpajhānas*, four *arūpajhānas*, one *saññāvedayitanirodha*.

If the mind should enter that quenching process it’s said to have accessed the *anupubbavīhāras*, which involves the same nine levels.

Now, if one takes pleasure in all of those nine it’s called *anupubbāsamābati*, ‘*samābati*’ here describes a ‘drinking in,’ or ‘tasting’ of the flavour of those *vīhāras*, which is akin to experiencing a lesser level of *nibbāna* - *nibbāna* which isn’t yet quite full. When entering the four *rūpa*, the four *arūpajhānas*, and the *saññāvediyatinirodha* there’s the gradual reception of the happiness in those *vīhāradhammas*, hence it’s known as *anupubbāsamābati*. It’s in this way that the mind is developed.

However, there are still obstacles to development which arise step by step along the way, and which should be known. Hence, there’s step-by-step success but there are obstacles to success which arise step by step too. Much as happens when people who’ve had a liking for one kind of thing, then, when changing to something else, find that their previous preferences come back to haunt them. For instance: those fond of sensuality when they come to prefer and seek out *samādhi*, which isn’t sensual, find that their previous preference will obstruct their progress. They call this *āpādi*(sic.), or ‘sickness.’ Therefore the interest in the *rūpajhānas*, the liking and clinging in them will be *āpādi* as regards the *arūpajhānas*, that is, the satisfaction felt with the first *jhāna* will hinder the attainment of the second, and so on. A simple comparison comes from householders who through indulging in sensuality find, when they come to ordain, that that indulgence has to be checked but that the habit follows them and becomes an hindrance, gets in the way of them finding satisfaction in the sensually arid monkhood, hence they have to disrobe. Simply put: anything one has been used to finding delight in can come to be an hindrance, can get in the way when one wants to move higher. Happiness in the first absorption will wait around to hinder us when we try to move towards the second, and when we get the second absorption the satisfaction we feel in it will act as an hindrance when we come to move on to the third. It will be like this, step by step by step, right up to the ninth level.

This is a subtle mental matter: the mind cannot advance because it will still be sunk in feelings of satisfaction towards things previously experienced, so that while in the act of moving to something better it still doesn’t really want to do that. To look at this in another way: the sensual realm is composed of deprived states in which any satisfaction will be derived from low, base experiences, hence it’s seen that most people can’t get out of the deprived levels of existence because the happiness and satisfaction they’re used to experiencing pulls them back, stops them from rising higher - as with the drunkard, such an one, if they’re asked to stop imbibing and drink clean water instead, won’t be able to do it, because the delight and satisfaction they’re used to getting from drinking spirits pulls them back. This is called *āpādi*(sic.), there are nine kinds of *anupuppāpādi*. The mind thus has nine kinds of *anupubbanirodha*, nine kinds of *anupubbavīhāra*, nine kinds of *anupubbāsamābati*, and nine kinds of *anupubbāpādi*. This is the story of the mind, and the technique for developing it, something that we need to grasp, to see fully and completely, so that we can walk the path correctly.

We might have mentioned more detail than is necessary, but it doesn't matter, if we can understand this then it will be a good thing to know the truth about mental development, because when we don't have proper knowledge such development is impossible. If we're to develop the mind here and now then we need to know the foregoing, if we're not interested then we'll have to let things go along as they will. It depends on what pleases us. But if we want to be a practitioner then we need to manage things in the right way and train the mind in accord with this system of practice, a system discovered and taught in former times. At present Buddhism is the repository of this system preserved in its entirety. So study it, and use it to develop the mind. If we use it properly then we might attain the path, fruit and *nibbāna* full and complete in this life. To whatever extent we're willing to practise then we'll get the commensurate result. If we're willing to practise properly then we'll get the proper result, that is, a fully developed mind, and here and now, in this life. This is what's necessary for developing the mind, for making an ordinary person into one of the highest sort, into a 'noble' individual, an *Arahant*.

LDB

VII. Looking at (reviewing) life from all angles.

What was the aim of the previous talks? It was to look at the *Dhamma* from all possible angles, something I call 'reviewing.' This time we'll be 'reviewing' both the *Dhamma* and life itself. This word 'review' here has the meaning of looking at something in a comprehensive way. However, looking into anything really deeply, or comprehensively, can't be done with just the physical eyes, we're going to have to use the eye of wisdom too, then we'll be able to see in an all-around, a comprehensive way, see the inter-connectedness of all things, as with the world we inhabit, which, if we see it correctly, is actually an interrelated, interdependent system, it's 'one.' But that sort of seeing is difficult because we don't quite know how to go about it. Now, if, for instance, we wanted to get the best view of the surrounding countryside we'd climb to the top of a hill, then we could see everything for miles around, we'd be able to see in a comprehensive way. But what we're concerned with here is the *Dhamma*, the ultimate truth, the truth that, whatever it is, it's void of any 'self' principle, something that can't be seen with the physical eyes, only with the eye of wisdom, with the *paññācaksu*, or, *Dhammacaksu*, the '*Dhamma*-eye.' Life is, ultimately, the same as the *Dhamma*, but in order to see it in that way we're going to have to use the *Dhammacaksu* to do the 'seeing,' then we'll understand ourselves and all things better than we do now.

To not 'see' all things properly is to not know them properly, which brings misunderstanding and the consequent division, separation, then infatuation, aversion, liking, disliking, fear, anxiety, longing after, envy, jealousy, and so on. All those states of mind are representative of ignorance, the ignorance which comes from not seeing things as they truly are. If we can see according to truth then we'll see everything as being 'just thus,' as being 'just like that.' Seeing the 'just like that' quality of things is at the heart of Buddhism. Some cling too much to the written word so don't know just where the heart of Buddhism lies, hence, for all those without knowledge of the *Dhamma* we want to say that it lies in the seeing of all things as they really are, in seeing all things as being 'just like that,' as 'just thus.'

But what is 'seeing,' and what is 'not seeing'? The answer has already been given: if we still see things as likeable, as not likeable, as hateful, as fearful, and so on, if we're still stuck in the world of duality then there's ignorance and we're not 'seeing.' If we see 'thusness,' see that all things are 'just like that' then liking and disliking, aversion and fear etc. are absent, and that's called 'seeing.' If we don't 'see' then we live in ignorance, which reveals it's presence in the bouts of happiness and unhappiness we experience. So arises defilement. We always seem to have some level of defilement, have a life fraught with at least the mental disturbance which comes from unknowing, from not understanding, from doubt and confusion, from being in the dark as regards our surroundings, until the stronger defilements, *loba*, *dosa*, and *moha*, appear.

The ignorant desire to get anything is a manifestation of *loba*, which means 'lust.' The ignorant desire to get away from, to destroy anything, is *dosa*, which means hatred, while confused, uncertain desiring is the province of '*moha*,' which means delusion. Take a good look: we have problems, we're disturbed, troubled by *loba*, *dosa* and *moha*. Taking a good look here is what we call reviewing.

When *loba*, *dosa*, and *moha* arise in the mind then we don't 'see,' because then there's the ignorance which brings mental heat, distress, restlessness. Life troubled by the defilements is a tortured life, a disturbed life, not a satisfying, bright and cheerful experience at all.

When we ask those from other countries who come and study Buddhism why they do, they all give the wrong answer, because they don't recognize the problem they have of being continually disturbed and distressed by the defilements. They don't know what it is they're agitated and worried by, and which it's the aim of the *Dhamma* to put right. They're not aware of their problems so they come to study Buddhism without really knowing why. We Thais, although we're Buddhist, have the same problem, that is, we don't know why we're Buddhist, unless it's for the making of merit, the assumption then being that Buddhism is something sacred, something holy. Hence, in the final count, we fail to use the *Dhamma* in any truly beneficial way. There's a lot of this sort of thing, and it's annoying, time-wasting, tending, as it does, to encourage blind belief.

We should study well, come to know the truth, to recognise the 'just like that' quality of both life and *Dhamma*.

If we look on the obvious level then life has to have *Dhamma*, if we can use the *Dhamma* to make life correct there'll be peace and happiness. If we go deeper than that we'll meet with the truth, the truth that *Dhamma* is life, that life is *Dhamma*, that, when we get right down to it, there's really only *Dhamma*, it's both life and the condition for life. Try to grasp what we're saying. We've talked about the *Dhamma* a lot, more than a lot, but it's still not being used in a completely beneficial way, there's still no real connection between life as we live it and the *Dhamma*.

At this time, however, we won't talk about the *Dhamma* itself so much as about the problem that gets in between the *Dhamma* and life: the assumption that there's a 'me,' a 'self.' We cling to the 'self' so causing life to become a hot experience, but it doesn't have to be like that. To be able deal with this problem we need to take a better look at life, a comprehensive look so that we can understand how it connects to the *Dhamma*, then we can learn how to manage it so that it becomes a sublime experience instead. 'Sublime' sounds like a word writers would use, but the Buddha used it too, he used it when referring to the *Dhamma* itself, to the process of studying *Dhamma*, to the process of practising of it, and to the results arising from practise. It's not that we want to sound modern, it's because there isn't any other word which can better describe the *Dhamma*.

Here, there's something we should consider, something the Buddha once said, it goes something like this: 'when this world is full of ignorant people, who will be able to pick the flower, who will be able to pluck just the right flower from the garden?' The 'garden' here is the *Dhamma*, the *Dhamma* 'garden,' and in this *Dhamma* garden are many *dharmas* - here being likened to the flowers in a garden where grow blooms of every kind, the beautiful and the not so beautiful, the large and the small, every conceivable kind - so, who can pick the right flower, the right *dhamma*, the one they ought to pick, and be able to get benefit from it?

Hence the first stage in the true quenching of *dukkha* consists in knowing how to pick that *dhamma* capable of putting an end to our everyday problems. All people without knowledge have *dukkha*, have an everyday lack of mental well-being, revealing itself as liking and disliking, as love and hate, anger, fear, anxiety, longing after, envy, jealousy, etc. So, who, from amongst the mass of the human population, will be able to pick that special, splendid flower able to cure those problems, to cure *dukkha*.

Well, what sort of people are we? We should be the sort able to make the right choice and get the benefit of an everyday existence which is fresh, cheerful and bright, a life without any of the forms of *dukkha*. But from a glance there seem to be a great many 'flowers' in the 'garden' and it seems impossible to choose just the right one, but if we have some knowledge it's quite possible to pick and use just the flower, just the *dhamma* that will let us defend against the loving and hating, the anger, the fear, the yearning after - those unhealthy responses - through the simple expedient of being punctual, of being mindful enough to catch them before they can develop. Defilement, the concocting of *dukkha*, is a matter of dependent origination, of *paṭiccasamupāda*, about which we've already said a good deal, so at this time it only requires that we mention the matter of punctuality, of 'catching the moment,' of being able to bring just the right *dhamma* at just the right time to solve the *dukkha* problem. Let's be mindful enough so that we can be ready to apply restraint on every occasion of sense contact that might otherwise give rise to problems. Those problems arise in our mental life, hence the quenching of *dukkha* must happen here too, must take place where *dukkha* is - we need to understand life well enough for that to happen.

That's what we call 'reviewing' - looking at life in an all-around, all-encompassing manner, from every angle, and well enough so that we can then go about putting an end to our problems.

As has been said, *Dhamma* and life are connected. It's usual to say that they're inter-connected. If we were to go further we could repeat that *Dhamma* and life are one and the same, but for now we can say that they're connected. We should take a good look at both. What, for instance, is *Dhamma*? We've talked a lot on this subject, talked a lot about *Dhamma* having four basic meanings: 'Nature,' the 'law of Nature,' the 'duty' according to the law, and the 'fruit' or result, which arises from either doing or not doing that duty - the 'four meanings of *Dhamma*.'

Now, that which is called 'life' in the usual understanding, is a natural phenomenon, that is, the body and mind are natures controlled by the Law of Nature. The body and mind have a duty to perform, that is, they need to operate properly so that *dukkha* doesn't happen. This isn't too deep and is easily grasped: do wrong and then, in accord with the Law of Nature, there'll be illness, disease, even death, or something close, in other words, there'll be *dukkha*. It's not worth being born, having an hundred years or less of life, if we can't live happily. This world is millions of years old, but a human life doesn't last for more than an hundred years, yet it still can't be lived properly. There's ignorance, so much ignorance that the right sort of improvements can't be made. In the, about, one hundred years from birth until death, in all of this life, we ought to come to know

something properly so that we could then dwell without *dukkha*. There seem to be more *dukkha* problems for people than for animals, because people are capable of doing lots of thinking while animals can't, or don't think too much, hence they don't have the same mental distress. In this particular case people are worse off than animals. Although we can invent beautiful and stimulating things we still can't quench *dukkha*, hence the amazing things we invent are without real benefit. *Dukkha* is the kind of problem that isn't understood as being a problem, one we don't see as being so. Humankind, being ignorant, doesn't get the result commensurate with having been born human. We should have the greatest happiness but instead we have almost none, we can't compete with cats, and even dogs and chickens have less *dukkha* than we do. It's believed that animals dwell in ignorance and that humans are so much smarter, so why then aren't we happier too? This is a problem I think should be comprehensively observed, should be reviewed, especially by those people of middle-age and more, those closer to death, because if such die in their present condition they'll do so, probably, without any gladness, they'll die still shamed by cats, for instance. If we can hurry and arrange our remaining years so that they're properly lived, so that we dwell above the problems, without *dukkha*, that will be more in keeping with the true human condition. Hence, I invite people to take an interest, to observe these things, which in reality boil down to just two: *Dhamma* and life - only those two: investigate them completely, know them until they're seen as being 'just like that,' act towards them accordingly and there's no *dukkha*, only coolness, tranquillity, and the smooth and calm flowing on of life, and then we won't have wasted the human opportunity and of having met with the Buddha's teaching.

Now, to continue, how will we go about investigating life? First we'll look at it as the *vaṭṭasaṇsāra*, or *saṇsāra*. We're perhaps familiar with the *vaṭṭasaṇsāra* because it's been talked about many times already. '*Vaṭṭasaṇsāra*' refers to something spinning around, something cycling around. 'Life' has meanings both in the language of the world and that of the *Dhamma*. In worldly language it's concerned with things which have life - living creatures, plants, trees, and so on, in the language of *Dhamma* it has a rather deeper meaning, that is, of being fresh, cool and peaceful. If we live with *dukkha* then, in *Dhamma* language, that's looked on as being the same as death, if we're distressed by birth, ageing, sickness, and death, that's a form of living death. Hence, to be truly alive, we need to live without *dukkha*, to have a life which is fresh and bright. Thus 'life' in *Dhamma* language has a profound meaning.

If we analyze a little we'll see that one kind of life is under the power of the causes and conditions which concoct it so is prone to change and transformation, but that another kind isn't, isn't concocted, isn't prone to change, and because of that isn't afflicted by *dukkha*. Such a life is lived with true knowledge in attendance and is called '*visankhāra*.' A life lived above any concocting ought to be seen as worthwhile, and should be what we aim for. Life which is still ignorant, apart from the *Dhamma*, is a life with problems, a life full of *dukkha*. We, still being without knowledge, don't know how to pick the right flower from the Buddha's garden, don't know how to pick the *dhamma* that will quench *dukkha*, we're not able to choose because we don't know what to choose. But we're Buddhists, disciples of the Buddha, so we ought to get benefit from the *Dhamma* garden. The flower symbolizes the *dhamma*, the medicine, or whatever we want to call it, that can solve our problems, can quench *dukkha*. Right now we don't know what this is, people generally don't know it, so have to experience a life afflicted by problems, spinning around in the *vaṭṭasaṇsāra*.

We'll take a look at the *vaṭṭasaṇsāra*, at the spinning, the cycling around pertinent to this life, something which isn't usually given much attention.

We'll start with 'birth' - there's birth, then there's death: from the time that we're born we'll spin around until we die, and from death the spinning will continue until the deathless is attained, all of which involves causes and conditions. From birth to death there are causes and conditions involved, and going from death to the deathless requires that the necessary causes and conditions be present too - that there be proper human behaviour. At present there's spinning around in birth and death, there's the *vattasaṅsāra* of one still asleep, of one who still doesn't know, has still to awaken, has still to put an end to *dukkha*. Such an one has only birth then death, birth then death, birth then death, they die to be born and are born to die, and so on and so forth, they don't expand their knowledge to include that of how to attain the deathless.

In the womb, before there's any sort of development there's still freedom from *dukkha*, because a child must grow to the point where it can know sense impacts by way of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, because it's then that there can be feelings, desire towards the feelings, and then *dukkha*. At the beginning of life there's no *dukkha*, then comes the spinning, then comes the *vatta*, the *dukkha*. At first life is *dukkha*-free, then, as it develops, there's more and more concocting, more and more clinging, more and more *dukkha*. There's *dukkha*, then no *dukkha*, alternately, over and over. During the course of one day there are times when the mind won't be concocted, when there won't be any *dukkha*, and although such times will be short in duration they will happen, but then some experience will concoct the mind into *dukkha* again. So, end the power of the causes and conditions supporting that performance and there'll be freedom, no *dukkha* at all.

Now there's *dukkha*, now there isn't, now there is, now there isn't, all happening quite naturally in dependence on contacts with our surroundings, with the environment, the responses to which we're unable to control. We as yet haven't a full enough experience of *dukkha* to be able to let it end, at this time we can't do this, although it's something dependent on causes and conditions we can't control it, we don't know *dukkha* properly so we spin around in it: there's *dukkha*, then we're free of it for a time, then it's there again, then it's gone again - so we fare on, spinning around because we're unable to control our minds. This is the *saṅsāra* as it spins in the mind, not somewhere outside of us.

There's the kind of spinning which is free from *dukkha*, then, wait a moment, and it will change into the kind which is *dukkha*: there's the spinning around which is free of *dukkha*, then that freedom will change into captivity, into *dukkha*, as we enter the world of duality, of the black and the white. We spin around like this, now free, now in the world of black and white, now free, now not free, and so on. Look on this as an imbalance, as a form of mental instability, because in truth we're unbalanced but we don't know it, we apply the word 'unbalanced' to the palpably insane, as for the 'me' who's also unbalanced, well, we don't acknowledge that because we don't see it in quite that way. In reality the mind of the worldly person fluctuates: now free, now not free, now free, now not free, and so on. There are causes and conditions which come and affect the mind, concoct it continually into the world of the opposites, of the black and the white, and so it will be until it can develop itself by applying that method we've already talked about so many times. We can't yet control the mind so as to let it be free, so as to not allow the black and white to appear, so as to let the mind spin around without *dukkha* arising, but if we can develop it then it won't, for most of the time, be able to give rise to the black and the white too easily, or too quickly. Think about it, this is something we need to really observe, and in great detail so that we can come to understand it.

The mind can be free of disturbance, but free in a way which can change, in that it can become disturbed – so, it's free, then it's troubled, then free, then in turmoil, then it's free again, and so on and so forth, until there comes to be enough of the sort of knowledge able to change the mind into the truly free version, into the sort of mind unable to return to the troubled state because enough wisdom, enough *Dhamma* knowledge has been acquired. We're then one who knows how to pick that special flower from the Buddha's garden and use it to keep the mind under control, to keep it always free. We'll need wisdom to recognize the sort of *dhamma* that can put a stop to any further disturbance, then this mind won't be concocted ever again because it will have attained *nibbāna*, and be above all concocting. At present the mind can be conditioned: it's concocted, and then, when the supporting conditions come to an end the concocting ceases, but then other conditions assert themselves and there's more concocting, and so on. Hence the mind spins around between being concocted and being unconcocted. This is the *vattasaṅsāra*, a deplorable, a frightening condition to be in. Such a mind, because it's still ignorant, still 'raw,' could be called 'unripe.' If the mind were enlightened, illuminated, nothing could concoct it, ever. That would be the mind of the *Arahant* - but we, well, just now we're still on the concoctable level, hence, for us, there's the concocting, no concocting scenario, and on and on.

This, in some detail, is the *vattasaṅsāra* as it is in our minds, a state of affairs that will persist until there's knowledge of the *dhamma* the Buddha awakened to: *idappaccayatāpaṭiccasamupāda*, knowledge of how *dukkha* arises and of the conditions that stop it from arising, that cause it to quench. The long version of dependent origination, of *paṭiccasamupāda*, consisting in twenty-four interlinked conditions, has been clearly explained: how twelve interlinked conditions running from *avijjā*, ignorance, culminate in *dukkha*, and then, once *dukkha* has arisen, how it then forms the starting point of the cycle which advances via the arising of faith, *saddhā*, the faith that there's a way to quench *dukkha*, followed by a seeking out of that way, then the practising until *dukkha* is quenched. So, perhaps we, on seeing that we have *dukkha* will be smart enough to recognize it as *dukkha* - we won't have *dukkha* and not know it as such, because in that case we won't be interested in striving to get rid of it - we have *dukkha* and we know that we do, and we know that *dukkha* can be quenched because we see that it depends on prior causes and conditions. Thus arises *saddha*, faith, belief that *dukkha* can be got rid of. There's knowledge of *dukkha* and there's the faith that it can be quenched, then there's the seeking out of someone who has the knowledge, or of some method which will result in its gradual quenching. If we still can't do this then we'll have to go on spinning around in *dukkha*, in that every time the 'me' thought arises there must be *dukkha* too, over and again.

That's where we'll be until the knowledge that *dukkha* can be quenched arises and grows, then there'll be faith in the something capable of quenching *dukkha* - although that will be yet to appear there'll be reason to believe. If we've gone this far then we're in the first stages of the path that leads to quenching, that called 'stream entry,' '*sotāpana*.' We're one who has firm faith in the existence of *nibbāna*, we have a mind which sees the way to *nibbāna*. Hence, the faith of a stream enterer is the real thing, it's not the same as that of the worldly person. So, advance in the wake of faith, seek and find the quenching of *dukkha*.

Here's the *modus operandi* by which we, ordinary people, can quench *dukkha*: we see *dukkha*, or the spinning around in it, we see the various conditions supporting it, and we see all of this well enough so that it's clearly understood, so that it's clearly seen that *dukkha* can be quenched, because for it to exist at all depends on certain causes and conditions being present. There's then faith that it

can be quenched. Then there's study, there's effort, there's the seeking out, there's the step-by-step quenching of *dukkha* culminating in escape from the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*. This sequence of events is also referred to as escaping from the *sankata*, from the 'put-together,' the concocted, and meeting instead with the *asankata*, the unconcocted - moving from the *sankata* and proneness to attachment, to the *asankata* and freedom from it. Until this happens we have to dwell with clinging until we can escape and meet with its opposite, non-clinging, the goal of mental development.

If we briefly sum up this part then we can say that falling into the cycles of the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra* is like being drawn into a whirlpool and not being able to get out again. A boat, for instance, once drawn into a whirlpool usually can't escape, this mind, when mixed up with ignorance, is in a similar condition, in that escaping ignorance is difficult to manage. Thus it's necessary that we know all about this particular problem. Don't let it be just talk, just mere words: *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*, *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*, *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*, because then we won't really understand.

Now, we want to continue looking at the *vaṭṭa*, which, although unrecognized by us, is everywhere and constitutes our normal, everyday experience. That cyclical nature is common to everything around us.

First of all we'll look at the atom, one of the smallest divisible parts common to all elements. In an atom there's the *vaṭṭa*, that is, there's a spinning around. As atomic theory is explained, there's an electron cycling around a positron, or whatever they're called, we don't need to know the details anyway, but there's one thing circling another in accord with certain principles. Hence, the *vaṭṭa* – in the material sense - can be found in an atom. These atoms form the basis of all things, they mingle together as the elements, the *dhātus*, as body parts, as worlds. Everything has tiny, tiny parts, has atoms, and in each atom there's a spinning around. We 'see' in a profound way - in the material sense - when we can recognize the *vaṭṭa* in an atom.

Now, the mind, the *bhavangacitta*, the passive mind, which is the mind without any thought, the natural mind, the most basic form of the genre, arises as individual moments which persist for the briefest time before ceasing. Hence there's an arising, a persisting, and a ceasing, a flashing into existence, momentary persistence, then ceasing, but so quickly that it can't be timed. This is called 'mind,' which, although a regular part of life, is yet to become the sort of mind that's this or that way, that is, it's yet to be concocted into being this or that kind of a mind, it's just the basic mind spinning along, arising, persisting, and ceasing. Consider: even before any experience comes in to concoct it it's believed that the mind arises, persists, and ceases, arises, persists, and ceases, that it spins in a cycle.

That's the *vaṭṭa* operating in the fundamental mind, the mind without any augmentation, without anything concocting it, yet it's still subject to this arising, persisting, ceasing cycle. Perhaps there's some cause that we don't know about by which Nature controls the continual arising, persisting, and ceasing? Anyway, that's the mind, the mental element which combines with the body. When we take a look at both the body and mind then we find that the *vaṭṭa* is in everything that goes to make them up. It's as if the spinning around, the cycling is the 'ante,' the origin of all things physical and mental.

Those who study the mind, Buddhist and otherwise, have come to the same conclusion, that the mind maintains itself through a process of arising, persisting, and ceasing, hence the most subtle truth of the mind is that it's cyclical, and any arisen thing must be the same. We can see this cyclical nature in the myriad things of the world – as with trees: trees sprout, they grow, they die, they sprout, grow, and then die, and they leave seeds behind to continue the sprouting, growing and

dying performance *ad nauseam*. They're cyclical; if it wasn't so they couldn't continue. Hence, this spinning, or cycling has a somewhat special power, in that it's because something spins that it's able to sustain itself. Like stars, all the stars in the universe can exist because they rotate, this rotatory motion is a must, if it didn't exist then nothing else would. In a life there's birth, there's ageing, there's sickness, and there's death: birth, ageing, sickness, and death, it must be this way, must cycle around like this if it's to be a normal kind of life.

The life cycle: birth, ageing, sickness, and death form the most meaningful of the cyclical forms. We can look at something else, isolate some other component to observe: of the many and various material things of this world that which is most necessary for human beings is water. The water element operates cyclically, cycles around, hence we continue to have water for our use. Water, manifesting as vapour, will float up into the sky to form rain clouds, the rain clouds will condense and fall to the earth as rain water, which in time will evaporate, will rise up as vapour to form rain clouds once more, and so on. If this didn't happen the water would be gone, there wouldn't be any left. Even the things mankind puts together operate in a cyclical manner too, as with trade, as with the cycle of profit and loss: there's profit, there's loss, and there's 'breaking even,' as they say: there's the loss of capital, or there's a breaking even, or there's a profit made. It cycles around. Hence trade can sustain – it can't be just one way, just profit all the time, or just loss all the time, it has to cycle around. Or, there's gambling; gambling must involve winning and losing, getting or not getting, that's what sustains it, there can't be a 'no-loss' situation, if there was it wouldn't be gambling. Or, to look at something more natural: some animals eat grass and when such an animal dies it can be said that the grass then feeds off the animal, the grass eats the animal: when a particular animal is born it will, eventually, eat grass, as a buffalo does, and, if and when the buffalo falls down and dies, then, in a sense, the grass will devour the buffalo - the buffalo eats the grass - the grass eats the buffalo - it's a cycle. The ancients used to say that when the water level rises the fish will eat the ants, when the water level drops the ants will eat the fish. It seems that, on the material side of things, Nature forces cyclical patterns of behaviour to enable things to exist. Now, the mind, we come back to the mind: as it's set out in the texts the mental cycle divides into three parts known as the *vaṭṭasaṇsāra*, or just the *vaṭṭa*: *vaṭṭa* means to spin, or cycle around, and what spins or cycles around in the mind are *kilesa*, *kamma*, and *vipāka*. These matters have been explained I don't know how many tens of times, so that one, having heard, ought to be able to recall the appropriate meanings without needing to have them explained all over again. We have *kilesa*, defilement, arising which we're unable to control so that there's *kamma*, that is, action performed under the power of defilement, and when there's action there'll be *vipāka*, the result of action, and that - the result - then goes to strengthen or encourage the *kilesa*. Hence the *kilesa* arise again, then there's more *kamma*, more *vipāka*, and more strengthening of the *kilesa*, and so on and so forth. *Kilesa*, defilement, *kamma*, deliberated action done in ignorance, and *vipāka*, the results of those actions, it's these three cycling around in the mind that keep us in motion, make us unable to stop, to quench. Hence there's *dukkha* involved in the cycle: there's the *kilesa* and the appropriate *dukkha*, there's *kamma* and the appropriate *dukkha*, there's *vipāka* and the appropriate *dukkha* - the results of *kamma* involve *dukkha* too. All of this happens because we, being without knowledge, cling, we attach to 'me' and 'mine' and there's *kilesa*, defilement, because we do, then there's *kamma*, then *vipāka*, the results, or fruit of *kamma*. The mind, or the 'person' thus can't escape the power of the *kilesa*, of *kamma* and *vipāka*.

The *vaṭṭasaṇsāra* is here, not somewhere else, in reality the *vaṭṭasaṇsāra* is in this body and mind.

Observe that this cycle is peculiar to everything, if there's no cycling around in anything then it will disappear, disintegrate, all things must cycle around repeatedly. Within the cycle of 'dependent origination' (the step by step analysis of the second noble truth: the arising of *dukkha*) *viññāna*, consciousness, is pointed out as being the condition for *nāmarūpa*, mind and body, and when *nāmarūpa* has arisen it then becomes the condition for the arising of *viññāna*, consciousness. Consciousness and name and form support each other in this way, they form a cycle. The Buddha declared this but hardly anyone ever mentions that *viññāna* is the condition for *nāmarūpa*, while *nāmarūpa* the condition for *viññāna*. We just hear that *avijjā*, ignorance, unknowing, gives rise to *sankhāra*, the formations, *sankhāra* give rise to *viññāna*, *viññāna* gives rise to *nāmarūpa*, *nāmarūpa* gives rise to the *āyatana*, the senses, the *āyatana* give rise to *phassa*, contact, and so on, up to *dukkha*, but in some *sutta* texts it's particularly stated that *viññāna* forms the condition for *nāmarūpa* and that *nāmarūpa* is the condition for *viññāna*. The word 'nāma' here refers to consciousness doing its duty, while the consciousness that has yet to do its duty is called *viññāna*, when consciousness does its duty with *rūpa* then it's called 'nāmarūpa.' Observe then that the mind and body are the condition for consciousness, but consciousness is also the condition for mind and body – they spin around, over and over, without end. But this has to be seen: perceive this trick from both directions and it will be seen how the body and mind are the condition for consciousness, and how consciousness is the condition for the body and mind. If there's no consciousness present the body and mind can't function, while if the body and mind aren't functional consciousness can't be present. Hence, *viññāna* and *nāmarūpa* form a cycle too, spinning around supporting each other. This means that life is a cycle, it's heartbreakingly cyclical, and it's difficult to control, difficult to quench the *dukkha* involved because life is naturally cyclical. Atoms, mind moments, animals, people, anything of whatever sort, people's activities, stellar systems, the entire cosmos, all are naturally cyclical; there's no escaping the power of the cycles, we dwell under their power. This is the problem with life - that it must be cyclical; whenever we choose to take a proper look we'll see this. There has to be the comprehensive, all-around observation I call 'reviewing' then we'll see more and more clearly - more and more clearly until the knowledge arises that anything, whatever we experience is really 'just like that,' then there'll be no further happiness or sadness, no more being pleased or displeased, because then everything will have been understood, been seen in that way. The mind will then have been elevated beyond the point where it could be concocted, it will be *visankhāra*, and there'll be no more *dukkha*. Look, and see this general fundamental principle, it's the basic knowledge that we must first of all have, then we'll be able to see increasingly clearly until able to cut out infatuation, cut out attachment and free the mind, let it emerge from that which has been binding it, has been dominating it, let it escape from the ignorant spinning of the *vaṭṭasaṃsāra*.

The liberation of the mind is right here, there's no need to go anywhere else, just this is the ending of *dukkha*. The things which stand ready to concoct the mind are all around us, the causes and conditions, the things which come to concoct are always ready and always the same, but now the mind will be unconcoctable, a mind without *dukkha*, which has escaped from the world, has attained the *lokuttara*, has come to dwell above and beyond the power of worldly things. The body will still dwell in the world but in a different way than of yore. Before this mind was concocted, was under the power of the world and its ability to concoct, but now mind dwells above all of that, the many and various worldly things can't concoct it into foolishness, into infatuation, this mind, this person has escaped the world, and the matter is at an end. Now, seeing these things in an all around, a

comprehensive manner, reviewing them, as I put it, is it really necessary? Is it really useful, beneficial? If we see it as useful, as more than useful, as really worthwhile, then we should try, try to look, try to see using the approach we've described. We can't make anyone 'see,' we can only point things out and let people look for themselves, we can only advise. These things have to be personally experienced, so if we see this as being useful then we should go and observe, go and look for ourselves. If we still don't see it in that way, then we, for so long as we don't, won't really know ourselves, and not knowing ourselves is the ignorance of *avijjā*: not knowing that which isn't 'self' as being 'self' so that there's a 'me' and a 'mine' all the time. When we see properly we don't have those sort of problems, and although we'll still have to use the words 'me,' and 'mine' yet the mind won't take them to be realities because it will know 'thusness,' know the 'just like that' quality of everything. To not know is like being in the dark, like being blind, like covering our eyes with a cloth so that we can't see, thus allowing the mind to grab at anything as 'self.' That's wrong and full of problems, full of *dukkha*. If we do 'see' then we don't have the *dukkha* problem; it's like we've opened our eyes and now we 'see' differently, and, because now everything is properly understood, as it really is, all of our problems become solvable and we can make our escape into the *dukkha*-less, into *nibbāna*.

Right now there's something which doesn't let us see clearly, doesn't allow us even to look, in fact it makes us not want to look. This concealing agent is the problem. We live in this world with ignorance, '*avijjā*,' this is the concealing agent. Ignorance is a lack of true knowledge, a lack of '*vijjā*,' that is, we don't know things as they really are. Perhaps, we can give *vijjā* another name: *paññā*, which means 'wisdom,' so to be without *vijjā* is to be without wisdom, and if there's no wisdom there's no proper *sati*, mindfulness. *Sati* is like the conveyor, the bringer of wisdom to any arisen event or experience, but if we don't have *paññā* then *sati* won't have any wisdom to bring, which will mean problems, because then defilement will arise and unfortunate events will occur. Without *paññā* there isn't anything to manage experience properly. *Sati*, being the bringer of knowledge, is obviously important, it remembers and brings previously developed knowledge to bear. We've already talked about how there has to be already-developed wisdom, hence we must have practised and studied until wise enough, so that when any event occurs there's enough *sati* to convey that wisdom, then things can be dealt with properly. Hence *sati* and *paññā* perform different duties. When seeing a form with the eye, hearing a sound with the ear, smelling an odour with the nose, tasting a flavour with the tongue, feeling a touch by way of the body, or whatever, there'll be a sense contact, *phassa*, taking place, and if *sati* doesn't bring *paññā* to that contact in time then ignorance will be in charge and the mind won't know how to act. It's the nature of ignorance to cause wrong concocting, so there'll be wrong seeing, wrong understanding, there'll be defilement, there'll be the arising of *loba*, greed, *dosa*, aversion, and *moha*, delusion, and all because *paññā* didn't come to oversee an event. Not having *paññā*, wisdom, not having *vijjā*, not having the 'eye,' being without 'illumination,' is *avijjā*. *Avijjā* having power over any event will cause such to run its course under its power, then greed, aversion, and delusion will walk upon the scene, and there'll be *dukkha*.

Now, there are several results arising from *avijjā*, like '*mata*,' '*pamāta*,' '*moha*,' '*micchaditṭhi*,' all of which are of the *avijjā* lineage. If we just talk about *avijjā* there might not be complete understanding, hence we feel that we ought to go into some more detail. '*Mata*' translates as intoxication, intoxication with the *assāda*, the charming, or delightful quality of anything - being intoxicated by the delightful quality of those things capable of arousing delight, like sex, for

instance, because sex intoxicates and when we're intoxicated then, as already mentioned, nothing is properly understood, then we go wrong, we go the way of *dukkha*. 'Pamāta' means 'fully intoxicated,' intoxicated until forgetting oneself, until there's no self-awareness, until there's no proper mindfulness at all, only carelessness, negligence, misunderstanding, which leads to the same result. 'Moha' is delusion, the seeing of good as bad, of bad as good, and so on, which is like mistaking that dangerous weapon which resembles a lotus flower (actually a spinning disk with sharpened blades protruding from its edges) for a lotus flower. That's why we end up *puja*-ing things that cause *dukkha* by believing that they can actually quench it. We're almost all like this, we understand in an upside-down way, taking those things which are genuine refuges and stashing them away somewhere rather than making proper use of them, while at the same time taking things which aren't refuges at all to be refuges. That's to be led astray by the world and its charms - as we are by the money religion, believing money to be a truer refuge than the *Dhamma*, which is misguided. Finally, there's 'micchaditṭhi,' wrong understanding: because we've studied wrongly then we've understood wrongly, believed wrongly, we then see wrongly, which is *avijjā*, ignorance. We don't see things as we should so we can't defeat the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*, we sink into the *vaṭṭa* and experience *dukkha*.

Please, take a full and a complete look, perform a review. Review the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*, study it comprehensively, understand it completely, see the causes and conditions which combine together to maintain it, that is, see *avijjā*. Recognize the *vaṭṭa* as something powerful, something which covers the whole human world, the whole universe, because in every atom which combines together to form the universe is the *vaṭṭa*. The *vaṭṭa* exists even in one mind-moment. When we say this then some might disagree, but that's alright, if people want to disagree that's fine, but just take a look, take a good look, and gradually come to recognize the truth - because such knowledge has to build up, has to grow, so, build knowledge and vision, build correct understanding equal to the task of seeing comprehensively, of seeing truly, and the *dukkha* story will be finished.

To sum up: we have life, or that called 'life,' which is essentially of two kinds: that which is prone to concocting and is *dukkha*, and that which isn't and isn't. Life prone to concocting is a *sankatadhamma*, life which isn't prone is an *asankatadhamma*. Understand both kinds, because they're connected, and both have to be completely comprehended. That's what I call 'reviewing' - looking at something in a comprehensive manner. If we've yet to do this then let's do it; if we've done some reviewing already then let's do more. Developing a spiritual practice, making *samādhi*, cultivating the mind, is to allow the reviewing ability to arise, the ability to see in accord with the truth, to be able know all things as they are so that there's no more clinging to anything as 'self,' so that the *kilesa* don't arise and there isn't any *dukkha*. This, then, is the escape route, and the means by which we can escape from the fearsome cycle of *dukkha*, the cycle we know as the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*. The *vaṭṭa* is everywhere, within and without, it's everywhere in the world, in the universe, inviting us to spin around in the mass of *dukkha*. On condition that we can see all things truly, as they really are, then we can escape the cycle. In a manner of speaking we can break up the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*, destroy the cycle. The knowledge which can make that happen is the knowledge that can end *dukkha*.

This is something the Buddha talked about, laid out, but which we've never been much interested in, hence it's to be hoped that there'll be more interest than before, and more understanding, commensurate, of course, with the effort expended, with the sacrifices made, with the studying that

we do, with the listening, the thinking about, and the advice we're willing to seek in order to fully understand the *Dhamma* - that being the way to prosper in the religion.

This has been a review of the *Dhamma* and the life it's connected with, an all around look at the *Dhamma* and at life, which, in truth, are one and the same. Life must have *Dhamma*, then the problem of *dukkha* can be defeated. So, please, take a comprehensive look at both *Dhamma* and life, and then, perhaps, we'll be able to deal with our problems and come to stand with those who haven't wasted the human opportunity, and who might well use their remaining time to attain the highest thing a human being can attain.

We hope that all of you will accept the responsibility, value life, and act in a manner so as not to waste the human opportunity, and of having met with the Buddha's teaching.

LDB

VIII. The tree of life.

The *Dhamma* is everything without exception, it is, for instance, life, the development of life, and it's that which develops life too.

Now, regarding *Dhamma*, there's a problem with the way we approach it, that is, we study it in an unsystematic way. A 'system' is a connected set of parts, or steps, each of which, while performing their individual functions, join together to form the means by which a certain result can be obtained. We, traditionally, don't study the *Dhamma* in any such way, even teaching is unsystematic, the teachers teaching, we might say, spontaneously, speaking cleverly, but without any well-defined beginning or end in view, teaching in a way they feel comfortable with, so that anyone listening won't get any systematic explanation but will get a miscellany, odds and ends of information, some of which will be remembered and then forgotten. That's not a systematic approach.

Perhaps it will be better to explain this by taking an example from Nature which will make it easier to grasp and will save time. We'll take the example of the tree, because today we'll be talking about trees, and, particularly, about the 'tree of life.'

Now, how is a tree a system? Well, it has to have roots which go into the ground, and, of course, there must be the ground itself, then, continuing up from the roots, there's a trunk, and going upwards from the trunk are the branches, the branchlets, the leaf stems, the leaves, the flowers, and the fruits. This is a sketch of the system we call a 'tree.' For this system to work the parts must perform their individual functions and must connect together successfully: the roots need to go down into the earth for the purpose of drawing up the moisture and minerals, which will then be sent up through the trunk to the leaves for photosynthesis by sunlight so that the various elements which sustain the tree itself can be concocted, which elements will then return by way of the bark, thus building up the bark itself as well as the sapwood and the heartwood. It's a requirement that there be the right sort of water, sunlight, and mineral elements in the soil to concoct the many and various components that come together as a tree. Hence the tree is a complete and perfect system. At present we don't study the *Dhamma* systematically, that is, we don't see that the *Dhamma* has something akin to roots, branches, leaf stems, leaves, and flowers, we don't see it in a systematic way at all.

Thus we take the tree, with its easily discernable system, as the basis for our examination of the *Dhamma* and its study; we'll look on the tree, on the process of planting, cultivating and nurturing such, as analogous with the process of *Dhamma* study, so that we can instill some system into our own studies.

Thai people, children included, will generally be familiar with the planting of trees. Children, for instance, plant those trees appropriate for children, and, if they're smart enough, will get a good result from their efforts, that is, they'll have pretty flowers to show off to their friends. Provided that children grow into adolescence, they'll be capable of planting bigger trees than before, as befits their increased knowledge and abilities. On reaching adulthood they'll be able to plant and cultivate mango trees, coconut palms and the like, to manage them well and to get the fruits of their labours. Once they reach old age and have more elevated minds they can plant trees with a more elevated meaning, like the *pipal*, the *bodhi* tree, the banyan, the rubber tree, which are, in a sense, more significant. We're used to planting trees, to successfully cultivating and nurturing the different kinds as we grow older, all of which involves using certain techniques backed up by particular knowledge if the results are to be fully beneficial.

Now, to consider the 'tree of life.' If we're to compare human life to a tree then we need to understand life as having something akin to roots, a trunk, branches large and small, leaf stems, leaves, flowers and fruits, as well as needing sunlight, water and elements from the ground. However, it won't be quite the same thing, because life requires *Dhamma* too, requires a particular form of behaviour if it's to flourish.

We'll divide the 'tree of life' into four areas of investigation, which we'll look at as being 'trees' too. The first of these 'trees' is concerned with the physical, with the body, it's the 'body tree.' The second is the 'mind tree,' the mental system. The third is the '*bodhi* tree,' which is about wisdom, '*bodhi*' meaning wisdom. So now one 'tree' has become three: the physical, mental, and the *bodhi* 'trees,' these, if they're correctly nurtured, will be very beneficial for any particular individual. However, there's another 'tree' to consider, that which connects us with society at large, the *metta* 'tree.'

'*Metta*' is friendliness, while '*metteyya*' is that which helps it to flourish, being like the promoter of *metta*. This 'tree,' or mode, regulates the individual as well as the connection between the individual and the outside world. Internally there are three modes, or systems: the material, or physical, the mental, and the *bodhi*, or wisdom modes, but there has to be an external mode too, which is the province of *metta* and its supporter *metteyya*. It can be easily seen that if we're correct internally, that is, the body, the mind, and *bodhi* are correct, but externally the world's full of those looking to destroy and oppress then the full benefit won't be received. But if both inner and outer modes are correct then life will be fully perfected, and everything will be as it should be.

Now, let's look again at the sort of system an ordinary tree, a tree in nature has: there's a root system, a trunk, branches, leaf stems, leaves, flowers, fruits, and the trunk has bark, sapwood, and heartwood - which is the important bit - and there's the system of innards which runs throughout the trunk providing pathways for the food which comes from the ground to be concocted at the leaves whenever there's sunlight available, and which then returns by way of the bark to sustain the whole tree. These individual components, operating correctly, keep the tree healthy and safe.

The 'tree' of life is systematic too, in that the body, mind, and *satipaṇṇā* (mindfulness and wisdom - '*bodhi*') modes provide a similar service, hence we'll need to know how to deal with these properly.

The body, the physical mode, must operate correctly, in line with the *Dhamma*. The body is made up of the earth, water, fire, and air elements and these have to be right, in proper balance. All medicine must be concerned with the elements. Traditional medicine took much interest them and could produce compounds to treat of, or to get rid of disease, thus making life safer. So it is down to the present day, and although changes have taken place as a result of advancing knowledge, yet the principle still stands that there has to be rightness where the things which combine together as the body are concerned. Nowadays knowledge is greater, more refined, and things can be better done, but we can't abandon the original principle that, where the elements combining together as the body are concerned, things have to be right and proper. The more genuine knowledge there is the more good it can do. Hence the curing of physical diseases at this time is very good, and can advance yet more: the development of the child in the womb, for instance, could be managed so that it's correct, and, even before that stage, the putative parents could be enjoined to do the right things when bringing about the conception of the child, then, once born, the child could receive a careful and proper up-bringing in the physical sense. If this were the case our children would have healthier bodies and be better equipped to survive. Don't forget that the *Dhamma* is all about correctness, there isn't any way it can't be, the word itself having that meaning. So, parents, act properly and there'll be a proper conception, the child will then prosper, grow in the womb in the right way, and, once born, will continue on in a physically correct manner until it grows into the right kind of adult.

This body maintains a nervous system, which is what allows the body to be in contact with the mind, the nerves conducting relations between body and mind. The nervous system must be correct too, if there's mismanagement then it won't be, it will be deficient, we'll have a defective nervous system.

Take it that being bodily correct, being correct with regard to all the physically based systems is *Dhamma* too. Don't listen to those who say that *Dhamma* must be in the temple, that we have to go and chant first if there's to be any development, only then will there be *Dhamma*. We're saying it here and now: make the physical modes correct, deal with the body itself and all the things connected with it properly, eat proper food, dwell in an appropriate place, and so on - we can even include the household utensils we use - deal with it all properly and that's *Dhamma*, as it applies to the physical processes.

Hence attend to the body and everything connected with the body properly: the material things, possessions, money, wealth, people, whatever, as well as the nervous system which connects mind with body, make all correct. Study, get to know these things, get the body to do its proper duty. Does anyone's interest ever extend this far; does anyone ever study *Dhamma* like this? I say that it's necessary for us to re-study, fully, systematically, if all the components combining together on the physical side are to function properly. Even food, even eating, at present we feel that this isn't very correctly approached, because people don't know the difference between what the body needs and what the defilements, the *kilesa* want, such people are 'asleep' when they eat, delighting in their food they go the right way as far as the defilements are concerned, the wrong way as far as humankind and the *Dhamma* are concerned. At present we eat under the sway of the defilements rather than of the *Dhamma*. So, approach food, the method of eating, and everything concerned with food with *Dhamma* in mind, not defilement.

This body in *Dhamma* language is called '*rūpa*,' or a '*rūpadhamma*.' Correctness as regards the *rūpadhamma*, the body, and all the things concerned with it, we'll call the *sīla* mode, or the training

in *sīla*. Get to know the *sīla* training, what it is, what it relates to? Don't be one who sits and mouths the precepts: *panaṭipātā*, *adhināḍānā* etc. those are just the skin, the surface level of *sīla*, because if we only do that we won't really understand, won't have faith, so won't practise properly. Develop a deep understanding of *sīla*, of rightness where the bodily system and the things connected with it are concerned, as with the material things outside us, and the various parts which combine together on or inside the body, like hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, and so on, the thirty-two body parts have to be correctly maintained, as does the house we live in, the utensils we use, and so on. All of this we call rightness of the bodily, the physical mode - *sīla*, or '*sīlasikha*,' the *sīla* training level, the level aimed at the body, speech, and related matters.

We make knowledge and wisdom into our eyes and then we can start to behave properly with regard to the body, to the physical 'tree.' Just as when we were children planting small trees, we knew how hence we could plant them properly; on growing up we planted bigger trees with skill, we graduated to the coconut, mango trees, etc. until we were planting the *bodhi* tree, the rubber tree, and so, on with facility. If everything is properly managed then any tree we plant will be fine, as will be the case with the physical side of life too, everything has to be right then the body will be in an ideal condition to withstand any problems, like diseases, sickness, fevers, etc. and be more able to take on its rôle as the seat of the mind. If the body is in a proper state it will help the mind, help wisdom to attain the same condition. This, then, is the bodily system, the physical 'tree' which we'll nurture correctly by means of *sīlasikha*, the training in *sīla*.

Now, take a look: are we right and proper human beings, are we correct? There's quite a lot about us which isn't, because the education system doesn't develop us properly there's a lack of certain knowledge. We aren't, for instance, taught how to raise our children well, how to bring up our youth properly, so we spoil them and allow physical faults to develop. Education isn't complete, isn't as it should be, in this day and age there's an abundance of the unnecessary being taught. Finally, notice that this is a down-to-earth affair, it's scientifically based and has nothing to do with superstitious belief, with ghosts and goblins, nothing to do with anything sacred or whatever, it's concerned with the natural, with being naturally correct, so it can be made real use of. This, then, is the first mode, that concerned with the body, the physical component of the 'tree of life.'

Now, we'll take a look at the second component, the mental part, at the 'mind tree.' In *Dhamma* language and in the temples they refer to the mental as '*nāma*,' although it can also be called *viññāna*, or *citta*.

Anyone who can say that they're mentally correct, then, if that's really so, they shouldn't have many problems. But at present, at least in most cases, the mind will still be making mistakes, we'll have minds which aren't one hundred percent, minds which are still faulty, prone to error. If there's too much mental eccentricity to the point where other people become aware of it, then that person will be said to be 'not all there,' their mind being obviously defective. It's difficult to explain the system of the mind, but then we don't have to know all about it, we just need to know what it's necessary to know.

Now, the body is based on the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, while the mind and its various disorders is based on the element of consciousness. Consciousness is no more extraordinary than are the other four elements, it just appears to us to be something more, something wonderful, mysterious, but if we can see that it's really just an element dependent on causes and conditions we can then study, get to know the conditions underpinning the consciousness element, underpinning the mind, and then we can do some developing.

We don't need to know all about the mind, we just need as much knowledge as is really necessary, hence we need to know what the Buddha had to say about *dukkha*.

The Buddha made it clear that *dukkha* starts to happen when an infant begins to experience *phassa*, sense contact, and, more specifically, feeling - feeling is better. When the baby is still in the womb it's innocent of feeling and so can't think, but on being born into the world then, in a few days, it will become aware, although in a small way, of the feelings arising from sense contacts at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind itself, the baby will thus begin to feel satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which will then bring about a burst of thinking culminating in *dukkha*. The mental system begins to function when that baby starts to be aware of feeling, when it receives contacts and knows feelings. The baby exits the womb without knowledge, in the womb it has no knowledge of what's what, which is much the same as not having a mind at all, it can't think about anything until it begins to receive contacts and feelings of pleasure, displeasure, or of neither one nor the other, at which time it responds by feeling happy or unhappy, which then conditions more thinking. It's at this point that the mind really starts to operate.

Now, there's the problem of how can there possibly be mental correctness when the infant comes from the womb minus knowledge, without any mindfulness and wisdom. This being so it's difficult for a small child to have a properly operating mind, it's mind will develop haphazardly in dependence on whatever conditions are prevalent at any given time in accord with the law of cause and effect. It's like the child's mind and any knowledge it acquires just drift in the wrong direction. This is why we, ordinary, worldly people don't know about *dukkha* or about its quenching, and why we do wrong and have to experience that problem. This is the origin of incorrectness.

Now, how can we become correct? Who will come and help us to be so? The broad answer is that it will depend on certain causes and conditions making their appearance in our lives. Hence, if a small child receives the right kind of upbringing it will feel and think properly as a result. It will, however, necessarily follow the example of it's Nurse, or it's mother, or whoever brings it up, and they, if they deal with the child in the customary, though wrong, manner, will increasingly cause the child to develop a wrong mindset, so that, it being regularly surrounded by those things capable of leading it astray will find infatuation with the delicious, the beautiful, the fun, etc. and will come to want only those sort of things.

This is how the mind and its knowledge get perverted. We don't possess the sort of tradition or culture which would naturally train a child to be mentally proper, to have right knowledge, so it must grow up in an haphazard manner surrounded by things it doesn't understand properly, so being made happy by the likeable, unhappy by the unlikeable, and experiencing *dukkha* as a result. It can be said that the child grows up in darkness, in ignorance. Everyone's been a baby, so, think back: we're born and we grow up in the midst of darkness, of unknowing, depending on whatever those who bring us up surround us with. Here, perhaps we can be forgiven for straight-speaking, because it's not out of ingratitude, but those who raise us, our mothers, repeatedly surround us with, and allow us to become infatuated with, stimulating things so that we habitually seek our happiness in them. This is wrong, because then if anyone acts properly it will only be to avoid some problem, or to get something, it will only be for that sort of reason. Hence *dukkha* can't be quenched, we have to bear with *dukkha*, have to dwell amidst a variety of problems experiencing *dukkha*. The mind becomes used to thinking wrongly, which promotes wrong speech and activities so that we naturally go more in the way of *dukkha* than in the way of its quenching.

Now, while growing up, passing through adolescence, and becoming a husband or a wife, we're going to be continually confronted with the various forms of *dukkha*. There'll be lots of it, so that, gradually, we might begin to recognize that life is nothing but trouble, stress, pain, and, that being so, what can we do to get rid of it all? It's in this way that we, gradually, step by step, may come to the *Dhamma*: we begin to think that perhaps there's something able to solve the problems we've now come to recognize, something that can quench this *dukkha*, so that we start to seek that something out, to seek out the *Dhamma*, that which they say is the quencher of *dukkha*. Perhaps we ordain, certainly we study, we learn, we exert ourselves to quench the *dukkha* which has been building up since we came from our mother's womb.

Hence the difficulty - do you see? It's hard for us to quench *dukkha* because we weren't smart when still in the womb, and, because we've remained ignorant ever since, there's been a large accumulation of what's known as *kilesa*, defilement. It's hard for us to control the *kilesa*. We've fallen under their power, under the power of ignorance, and, as a result we haven't acquired any really worthwhile knowledge. But now we want to get out, we want to purge, to cleanse the mind of problems, something difficult to achieve, but if we can't bear it any longer then we'll try to find a way, we'll seek until the change into the quenching of *dukkha* mode appears.

We've gone on at some length to reveal that it's natural for human beings to come into the world without correctness, without knowledge of how they should behave so as to avoid *dukkha*. As a result only the sort of knowledge that actually produces *dukkha* develops.

We'll need to know the ABCs of the quenching of *dukkha*, so study the *Dhamma* properly, and be systematic, don't rely on some sketchy explanation given on the spur of the moment, because if we do then the *Dhamma* won't be able to do its duty, won't have its proper effect. If *Dhamma* is correctly delivered it's able to quench *dukkha*, if not it can't. So it falls to us to do some extra studying, and to do it properly, which means that the knowledge we've acquired in a sketchy, shortcut way will have to be revised.

When the Buddha sent disciples to promulgate the religion he emphasized that they should spread the '*Brahmacāriya*,' that is, reveal the *Dhamma*, flawless in its beginning, middle and end, in a pure, correct and complete manner, with nothing lacking. The Buddha emphasized that the *bhikkhus* who were to do the promulgating should do it fully and properly systematically, after all there were those in this world capable of knowing, of understanding, of gaining benefit from such a teaching. Hence it's our duty to do more study, and to do it properly, do it systematically.

Anything still lacking we need to add so that we can arrive at a systematic framework - as with the tree with its roots, trunk, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruits, making up a full, complete structure, so let our *Dhamma* knowledge have a fully systematic structure to it too and then we can use it to maintain the physical, mental, and wisdom modes of life correctly. This is the way to make ourselves safe.

Don't be discouraged if it seems like a lot, if we take on as much as is necessary then it's not such a lot - just as knowing how to plant trees successfully isn't so big a deal that we have to go and study at some university somewhere for years: Farmers when they have a little experience - note well - with just a little experience they understand every necessary point and can plant each variety of tree in such a way that they get the best return, the best fruit. They know how to plant the durian, the mango, the rubber in the most perfect ways, they know, and their knowledge is full and complete so that they get an hundred percent return, and without having to go somewhere for ten years to acquire a degree to confirm their knowledge. It's much the same with *Dhamma*, in that we don't

need to study for a degree, but we do need to study as much as is necessary, and in the right way so that we know all about *dukkha* and the way to quench it. Begin with the ABCs, with the roots of wisdom, with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, the body, and the mind. Start by studying the senses, how this system operates to give rise to the *kilesa*, the defilements, to craving, clinging, and to *dukkha*, and then try to manage things so that *dukkha* doesn't happen. It isn't that we'll need to study the whole of the Buddhist scriptures, rather we'll study the essentials, just that much, as much as is necessary for us to know all about the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind, so that we're able to control our responses to the sights, sounds, etc. and the *kilesa* can't arise.

Explanations other than that are just fluff, not concerned with essentials.

The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind have a fixed, unchanging mode of operation, one that we've talked about many times and in many ways under the heading of *paṭiccasamupāda*, or 'dependent origination.' These senses represent the ABCs, what the Buddha described as the starting point of the *Brahmacāriya*. But perhaps we're not that interested in this most important subject, then we might make assumptions, we might guess, might surmise: it's like this, or it's like that - that's how the *kilesa* lead us astray, until we leave the sphere of *Dhamma* altogether and fall in with the superstitious, until we take up with the superstitious version of *Dhamma*, become someone who clings to a superstitious view of life.

So now let's make a scientific study of a real system of Nature: essentially we have the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind, paired with the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects, these six pairs, each pair functioning in the same basic way. For example: the eye meets with a form and eye-consciousness arises, these three working together are known as *phassa*, or contact. On the arising of *phassa* then arise *vedanā*, feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, then comes *taṇhā*, desire fuelled by those feelings, if it's a feeling of satisfaction then desire will be to get, to acquire, if dissatisfaction the desire will be to destroy, so arise the defilements, *rāga*, lust, or *dosa*, aversion, or *koda*, anger, or, if there's no sure comprehension of what's being experienced, *moha*, delusion will walk upon the scene - the *kilesa* arise and there's ignorant desire, *taṇhā*, followed by ignorant clinging, *upadāna*, and the subsequent occurrence of *dukkha*.

If we have sufficient understanding, if we're smart enough, we can know this as it really is, so be aware when there's the sort of contact called *phassa* and feeling, *vedanā*, arises, be well aware, don't be ignorant with *phassa*, contact, or with *vedanā*, feeling, rather know them as they are, as being 'just like that,' just natures, don't give them meanings they don't really have and there won't be any happiness or the opposite arising, there won't be any foolish desire, *taṇhā*, foolish clinging, *upadāna*, and no *dukkha*, the matter will fizzle out right there.

This is the sensory system: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind, a system that we'll study in detail. However, the full story might not be suitable for everyone, so, we do as much as we can, that is, we practise to be able to know when *phassa* (meaningful sense contact), or *vedanā* (feelings of delight, of stimulation, or the opposite) are happening, this much will be enough.

Hence the mind receives some supervision, it improves, develops, comes to be a mind which is proper, which is smart, knowledgeable, a mind which is firm, a mind which would find it difficult to fall under the power of the *kilesa*, those defilements that prevent it from doing its duty.

If the mind is like this then it represents a mental system, a mental 'tree' which has become correct, which has advanced, which has thrived. Right now, however, the mind will still be weak, the mind of the worldly person will be weak, enslaved by the *kilesa*, it will be a slave to defiled sense objects, will be a mind without ability, unable to resist, unable to sustain itself normally, a fluctuating mind

under the power of its surroundings, completely defiled, without *samādhi*, without strength, a weak and wandering mind continually dissipating its energies.

The mind of the worldly person is habitually that way, but its owner won't generally be too interested - although, in truth there isn't an owner, it's the mind itself which is the owner - so, for now, the mind, infatuated, will dwell in the mass of *dukkha* and continue to do so until it's suffered enough oppression and enough of a battering to start learning its lesson, then it will realize, recognize the problem to some extent and become interested in moving away from it, in going in that direction which leads away from *dukkha*.

How long will it be before this happens? A person, once born, must dwell sunk in the mass of *dukkha* for just so long, until the mind learns its lesson. The 'self,' the owner of the mind, or of anything else for that matter, doesn't really exist, there's only the mind which, becoming infatuated, falls into and dwells with *dukkha* until it becomes sufficiently aware of the situation, learns its lesson, and develops the certainty necessary for it to begin travelling a new path, to begin going in the opposite direction to the one it's habitually followed.

The mind can smarten, can be chastened and can change its direction. But the mind must help itself, which tends to cause some discouragement, but nobody's going to come and help us, we have to help ourselves: the mind feels chastened by *dukkha*, feels fed up with it, becomes bored with the things that promote it and turns away, starts to look for the opposite way, starts to try and correct itself.

At present (early 1980s southern Thailand) there's hardly any training aimed at correcting the mind, because there's not enough teaching, and what there is isn't correct. The developing of proper *samādhi* remains largely unknown, it's not just about sitting with a purified, stable, but introverted mind, blind to sense experience, there's also that *samādhi* in which the mind is purified and stable but capable of activity too - which represents the mind able and ready to do its proper duty. The kind of *samādhi* where the mind sinks inside itself doesn't display the qualities of a perfect mind. The *samādhi* which does is the kind we can use in the performance of all tasks, in every branch of human endeavour. If the human mind were to operate in a truly proper way we'd have this wonderful tool at our disposal: a mind able to do anything at all in such a way that it remained free of *dukkha*, then we wouldn't have any trouble doing the things we have to do to make a living. This mind, mental system, or mental 'tree,' has to be properly nurtured, properly trained, a process we call '*cittasikha*.' This *cittasikha* (or *samādhisikha*) is a form of education, a course of instruction for the mind designed to make it correct, to make it into what it should be, into something truly beneficial.

Now, we'll look at the third system, the *bodhi* 'tree,' the *bodhi* mode; '*bodhi*' means right knowledge, that known as 'wisdom.' Wisdom can also be called *paññā*, *ñāna*, or *vijja*, depending on which word we prefer to use. Knowledge can be either wrong or right knowledge, each form having its own mode, thus right knowledge is one, wrong knowledge another, enter into either mode and one then lives accordingly. At present, our minds are wrong, and have been since birth. We've been struggling with *dukkha*, having to bear with *dukkha* from birth to the present time, and this experience, because it spins, or cycles around, because it repeats itself, is called the '*vaṭṭasaṇsāra*.' Here, there's no need for us to talk about what happens after death, about dying and being born again, that would be going too far, and as that can't be observed then it wouldn't be *sandiṭṭiko*, personally experiencable, either, so we'll concern ourselves with what we can observe, with what is personally experiencable, which is the *vaṭṭasaṇsāra*, the spinning around, the cycling

around in *dukkha* that's been happening to us in this particular life from the time we were born right up to the present, and which is a *sandiṭṭiko* matter.

The mind experiences repeated dis-ease, distress in the *vattasaṅsāra* until right knowledge starts to appear, the result of which is that going along in the old way can no longer be borne with and the mind begins to turn towards the *dukkha*-less. Hence there's searching, seeking, there's study, there's observation, there's investigation involved as the mind now moves in the right direction. The *Bodhi* tree mode, the wisdom mode begins to appear because *dukkha* has been, to some extent, properly seen.

Wisdom, correct knowledge, how will it grow? In the *Pali* it says that there are at least two ways this can happen: through being taught by someone else, or through being continually bitten by *dukkha* and then coming to think about things, coming to look and find out things for ourselves. Knowledge arisen from a confrontation with *dukkha*, or with some form of insight, which gave rise to the need to turn and go in the opposite direction, is good, is knowledge which can help. As for the knowledge coming from some outside source, from something heard or taught, this won't be so effective, but will still have benefit, in that, having heard about something we'll consider it, and if it seems possible then we'll try it, and if on trying it we find that it's right we can continue on with it until we get the full reward. Such isn't based in blind belief, it's based in the *Pali* texts, on the words of the *Kālāmasutta*, so it's not that we hear someone say, or teach something or other and then just believe what we hear, rather we consider whether what's been said has reason behind it? Whether it's worth trying? And then, without yet believing it, just give it a try to see if it works. When we've tried it, tested it and got some result then we can believe, and then we can continue on until we get the final result.

The *Dhamma* is the same: when people come and say that *dukkha* can be quenched like this, then try it, consider it, practise it, and, once it's been seen that it works, effort can be increased and *dukkha* truly quenched. This represents development of the wisdom mode, we cause the wisdom 'tree' to thrive, to grow up fully through acting in this way.

In the *Pali* the wisdom mode is divided into two stages: seeing the truths of nature, that is, of *aniccaṇ*, *dukkhaṇ*, and *anattā*, this is the first stage, and when this is full the second stage arises, which is knowledge of withdrawal: when seeing *aniccaṇ*, etc. which is the knowledge that allows boredom and loosening of desires, then knowledge of release arises as a result.

Hence the distress, the *dukkha* we've been continually experiencing causes the knowledge to arise which brings about seeing into truth. Knowledge has several stages and several names which it would be a waste of time to mention because we wouldn't remember them all. We only need to know about two of them: knowledge of the truth of all things, that is, that all things are impermanent, suffering, and void of 'self,' or, we could say, that they're 'just like that' - if knowledge of this kind develops, then arises the second stage, that is, knowledge of *nibbidā*, of boredom, of the loosening of desire, and of the escape, which constitutes the proper result.

Observe well that knowledge proceeds in this way: there must first be the seeing of the nasty quality of *dukkha*, of the things which are the base for *dukkha*, are the conditions for *dukkha*: we see clearly that something is a condition for *dukkha*, and is itself *dukkha*, this is the beginning of the withdrawal mode, of the no longer wanting to be involved with something mode, of boredom with the stimulating things we've been involved with, boredom unravels that involvement, that clinging. When clinging is at an end there's the escape, which is called *nibbidā*: there's boredom, the fading out of desire, the loosening of desire, release, then escape.

Hence there are two main modes, our mindfulness and wisdom has two stages: knowing things as they are, this is one stage, the concomitant boredom, loosening of desire, and escape from those things forms the second stage. *Paññā*, wisdom, has these two levels.

Now, what causes this kind of knowledge to arise? As mentioned a short time ago, it arises from having heard some teaching, considered it, and then having practised - or, it can arise from an excess of *dukkha* which causes the necessary revulsion and turn around in lifestyle. This second instance is the reason behind Buddhas, or Buddha-like people arising of their own accord, why ‘*pacceka*’ Buddhas can appear without having had anyone to teach them, other, that is, than the circumstances of their lives. Now, we call it good luck that, although there’s ignorance and we’re unable to find the way by ourselves, there’s still the *Dhamma* teaching which has been found out and given us to study, to listen to, investigate, observe, experiment with, and to practise for the desired result. So, we don’t let the good luck of having someone give us the Buddha’s teaching go to waste. At the same time we don’t just straightaway accept it as correct either, because that would be contrary to the advice contained in the *Kalamasutta*, rather we consider whether it’s reasonable, whether it’s worth trying out, and if we see clearly enough that it is then we try it, get a result, and, once that’s happened, put our faith in the Buddha’s *Dhamma*.

The wisdom mode arises through development and is known as ‘*yoga*.’ In the *Pali* it says that ‘wisdom firm as the earth can arise from *yoga*.’ *Yoga* is about systematically engaging in right activities, so *yoga* is a system, and when behaviour is systematically correct then firm, penetrative wisdom can arise.

Now, don’t fall into thinking that we haven’t got the character, haven’t got what it takes, that we might not be able to create *paññā*, so that we stop making the effort, fail to act and let things go along as they will. That wouldn’t be right, because wisdom, *paññā*, is a *sankhāra*, something conditioned, it has a cause and supporting conditions and follows the law of Nature, so, create the conditions for the arising of wisdom, that is, engage in a systemized form of proper conduct, and wisdom will appear, then one can escape.

First is *sīlasikha*, for managing the body, the physical side. Second is *cittasikha*, dealing with the mind. Third is *paññāsikha*, dealing with wisdom. When all three modes are correct the task is done.

However, there’s still one problem remaining, although our own *dukkha* is quenched there’s still another problem left, the problem of how we’re to live together amicably in this world? There’s a mode concerned with social behaviour that we’ll have to get right, the ‘*metta*’ mode, or, we might say, the ‘*metteyya* tree’ - developing *metta* is a systematic process which, just like a tree, needs to be properly cultivated, nurtured, until its flowers and fruits appear in the world. Call it ‘*metta*,’ ‘*maitrī*,’ or even ‘*karunā*,’ however, calling it ‘*metteyya*’ is good because ‘*maitrāya*’ is the name of the future Buddha, and ‘*maitrāya*’ and ‘*metteyya*’ are one and the same. *Metteyya* means ‘supporter of *metta*,’ and having ample supporters of *metta* in this world would mean that people, being replete with *metta*, would always display a friendly attitude. Everyone would be friendly and there wouldn’t be any enemies left - that’s the religion of *maitrāya*, a world without any enemies, not even one, no naughty boys left at all.

The objective of the religion as taught goes a step further than the escape of individual human beings from *dukkha*, who then find it difficult to live together in the world with people in general, with the hooligans, thugs, and naughty boys. Hence there has to be another mode or system able to

make all people friendly without having even one naughty boy left, a final mode which, when fully developed would represent the real and true ending of all human problems.

Let's go over this again: there are four important modes: *sīla*, *sāmadhi*, *paññā*, those three for the safety of individuals, plus the *metta* mode for a peaceful and happy society. This is collectively called 'alms-giving.' Now, some people will wonder just where the aforementioned alms-giving actually occurs here? Well, it's inherent in *metta*, in loving others, that's the alms-giving.

However, performing alms-giving to control and eliminate selfishness on the personal level is a narrow understanding of *metta*, we prefer the broader understanding, hence universal friendliness, being without any enemies, this would really be *metta*. This world ought to have *metta*, we should be friends, be without enemies, then people would dwell in complete safety. An individual escaping from *dukkha* and becoming *Arahant* still won't represent the fullest meaning of that concept until it's become a world-wide phenomenon, when there's nothing but friendliness the full meaning of *Arahant* will manifest, and then there won't be any problems left to solve. Remember, it's about four parts: correctness of the body, of the mind, of wisdom, and of society, which is *metta*. These four add up to the *Dhamma* system complete. So, study the *Dhamma* systematically, don't approach it in a sketchy, haphazard manner so that it becomes difficult to get any real benefit from.

Now, the final point we want to make is that we should make the four modes operate simultaneously: we should maintain physical correctness and mental correctness, we should possess correct knowledge, and be correct where *metta* is concerned during the course of each and every passing day. That would represent the fully ripened *Dhamma* system. When we can see that all around, universally, there's the *Dhamma*, then it's done, and there's nothing left that could be a problem.

Buddhists, make this happen, make the body, the mind, *satipaṇṇā*, and society at large function properly. Look at life and see that, internally, the body, mind, and *satipaṇṇā* represent three strands of correctness, and that externally there's another strand which has to be made correct too, and that bringing that one external strand and intertwining it with the others makes the mind brimful of *metta*.

The body, mind, *paññā*, and *metta*, these four add up to the 'tree' of life and are the systems which have to be full and complete if life is to be properly developed, just as actual trees thrive when their life systems operate correctly.

To sum up: previously we approached the *Dhamma* in a sketchy, unsafe manner and were unable to see it as a full and complete system, but now we can see clearly that it is a system, just as a tree is a system, and that we can make it thrive and bear fruit. Minus a clear and correct understanding we can't practise properly. Study, or education which is sketchy, which isn't fully systematic, which can't be properly put into practise, is an impractical proposition, and is so because it's yet to be made perfectly and clearly systematic. So, see the *Dhamma* as a system full and complete, like a series of trees - the 'trees' of the body, of the mind, of wisdom, and of *metta*.

Hurry up! Make it a reality, see all things properly, as they actually are, and the matter will be concluded. Know yourself, be one who knows that it's really the mind which makes itself into a 'self,' makes itself into the owner, makes the 'me,' makes the 'mine' and gets *dukkha* as a result - and know that it's the mind, in the fullness of time, that gradually starts to turn away, to turn around, comes step-by-step to the knowledge that there isn't a 'me,' comes to know that it doesn't

want to feel that way anymore but wants only the natural way, the right way, wants to go along in harmony with causes and conditions.

The matter ends when the mind knows that it isn't 'me,' because then there's no 'me' to produce all the mistakes, and the *kilesa* can't arise anymore if there's no 'me' to give them the opportunity.

LDB

IX. Everything in life is a matter of the mind.

Now, anything that happens during the course of life will be dealt with by the mind, and just the mind; today we'll take a look at this point.

Such a thing may seem barely credible, but pay attention and we'll perhaps come to understand and even agree. Even so it is something difficult to see, and to accept, that the mind is the sole experiencer of everything that happens in life from start to finish, from the beginning right up until the attainment of *nibbāna*, and that there's no need for a 'self' to be involved at all. It's difficult for people to arrive at such a conclusion of their own accord.

Originally the mind is just a natural element, a natural element which is continually being concocted by the things surrounding it, a natural element which has to operate in ignorance, in delusion, until it gradually changes, wakes up and transforms itself into the sort of mind that isn't ignorant, isn't always in error, the sort of mind that might, therefore, attain the utmost thing possible for human beings: *nibbāna*.

First there's just the mind, mind without anything added to it, then it becomes a defiled mind, full of *kilesa*, full of ignorance, then it evolves and puts an end to all of that. Grasp this first of all: in the first stage there's just mind, the mind which is a natural element, without right or wrong, good or bad, without the *kilesa*, the 'luminous' mind, mind just as it is in Nature. In the second stage it becomes ignorant, full of *kilesa*, and has to spin around in the *saṃsāra* for a long time experiencing distress. In the third stage it turns itself around, awakens, knows *dukkha*, recognises the distress and dis-ease involved in the *vaṭṭasaṃsāra*, in the continual spinning around, so trains itself, develops the *dhamma* which allows it to escape the *kilesa*, to escape the *saṃsāra*, attains to *nibbāna*, and, as a consequence, dwells completely free from any of its former problems.

If we put all that in another way then we could say that in the first stage the mind is without the 'self' delusion, it's just mind without the 'me' thought. The second stage represents the ignorant mind with the feeling of 'self,' of 'me' and 'mine,' while in the third stage the mind has said goodbye to all that. There are these three stages or levels involved in developing the mind.

It's worth a chuckle that this amounts to so little: just mind; mind with defilement; mind without defilement. The *Dhamma* with its 84,000 sub-*dhammas* can be expressed in just three short phrases: mind alone; mind with defilement; mind without defilement. Remember these three points, take them, debate them, discuss them, investigate them: mind without the *kilesa*; mind with *kilesa*; mind that's put an end to the *kilesa* and attained *nibbāna* – or, if we prefer, the original mind without the feeling of 'self,' then mind with the 'self' feeling, then mind having put an end to that phenomenon.

This 'self' brings *dukkha* into life so it's very important. 'Self' belief can't be avoided and becomes very solidly entrenched to the point where it's difficult, or even impossible to dislodge. It's

problematic that both understandings are taught: that there is a 'self,' and that there isn't. However, the 'not-self' teaching is the correct one here. Having said that, there is a passage in the *Pali* texts which raises doubts, the passage where the 'self' is described as being the refuge of 'self,' but if that's properly understood then any confusion disappears, because this 'self' which forms the refuge for the 'self' is what the mind believes itself to be. Mind when ignorant thinks that it's a 'self,' that it's 'my self.' The 'self' therefore is the ignorant mind, which will stay ignorant until someone comes along to help it destroy its ignorance, that 'someone' is the mind itself, hence it's said to provide a refuge for itself. The mind spins around in the mass of *dukkha*, slowly awakens, becomes smarter, and finally gives up the 'self' idea altogether.

It all starts with six naturally existing elements, the Buddha says that a person is composed of six elements: the earth, water, fire, and air elements representing the physical side of things, the *viññānadhātu*, the consciousness element, which is also the mind element, representing the mental side, and, finally, the element of space, the *ākāśadhātu*, the element which is empty, void, or free, and is the seat, the base on which all things depend. The Buddha declared this. Free space is the 'seat' of the world, of the universe: all the worlds, all the universes, what are they established on, what do they depend on? They're established on free space, if there wasn't any free space they wouldn't exist, that they can exist at all is because there is free space available. Hence free space is the basic requirement for the arising and existence of all things, of all *dhammas*.

Free space exists and the Buddha set it out as one of the elements. Regarding this point, don't forget that the *Pali* texts say - although it's an unfamiliar passage - that there isn't anything which isn't an element, that everything is elements, even *nibbāna* is the *nibbānadhātu*, the *nibbāna* element. In reality Nature is all about elements. Hence space, free space is an element too.

Concerning this there's an analogy which is very good, which we should remember: the value of a cup is in its ability to contain, in its hollowness. A dish, a glass, or whatever, is useful because it's free of anything and it's hollow. If a glass or a dish is filled up with something already can it be used? A pan, if there's something filling it up already, can't be used for anything else. Hence a pan, a big water jar, a dish, a glass, a water bottle, these are hollow, have free space, and can be useful. So note the value of free space, in that it allows other things to exist within it. Free space exists, the Buddha set it out as one of the elements.

A person, then, is composed of the six elements, of earth, water, fire, air, on the material side, the consciousness element, which is the mental side of things, and the *ākāśadhātu*, the space element, which isn't material or mental.

The elements of earth, water, fire, and air combine together in the body: the earth element is that which takes up space, whether it be small or large, atomic or whatever, it has the characteristic of taking up space, it's solid, resists the touch, and requires space to exist in. The water element has the property of making the earth element stick together, if there wasn't any water then that wouldn't happen and there wouldn't be any shapes, or forms anywhere. The fire element is heat, temperature, that which causes change and transformation to occur. The air, or wind element manifests the property of expansion, it's that which lets movement happen. These four elements combine together as the body, and as anything else material. We usually say that the earth element is in head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, and skin, the water element is present in blood, pus, snot, and tears, etc. But that would be a vague explanation, it should be said that the earth element is hard, has resistance, takes up space, and is easy to find in head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, and skin, that the water element is in the fluidity which sticks things together, and can be easily detected in blood,

pus, snot, and tears, that the fire element can be detected in bodily heat, and that the wind element is in the gas which moves things around in the intestines, in the stomach, and so on.

The four material elements are always in combination, as happens in the flesh, where the hard part is the earth element, that which makes it hang together is the water element, the fire element provides any heat, and there's the wind element, that which moves, and which manifests in the various gases which are everywhere in the fleshly body - in the muscles, even between the cells. We can't dissociate these elements from each other, observe, for instance, the blood: in blood the earth element manifests in the, very subtle, hardness of the cells, but fluidity, heat, and the gas which expands continuously are also to be found. Even in the blood which we would, perhaps, understand as being the water element, all four elements are to be found.

Now, the *viññānadhātu*, the element of consciousness, is a natural element, and, operating as the mind, its properties are to feel, think, perceive, and to know, to be aware. It can do all those things provided that there's an instrument available which will allow such to happen, that instrument is the body. The body is a combination of the four elements and contains a nervous system, the material components of which are part of the body. The nervous system is the seat of the consciousness, or mind, element, which relies on it in order to operate. Hence the body and mind can't be separated, if they are then the mind, not having the means, won't be able to operate, while the body, if it doesn't have the consciousness element, will be in the same condition. Hence the physical and mental elements must be together, they can't be separated. Finally, there's the space element, which acts as the supporter of the other two groups.

Hence we start with the six naturally existing elements, what we assume to be a person is a combination of them. The law of Nature having created them, they then each go about doing their respective duties. The five, for instance, in dependence on the sixth, the element of space, the *ākāśadhātu*, cause the arising of the body and mind. We can't actually see the *ākāśadhātu*, what we can see are the things which depend on it, like a stone, we can see the stone but we can never see free space, and yet every atom of the stone is dependent, is established on it.

These are the six elements which combine together naturally to give rise to what we call a 'person,' what we suppose to be a person, which phenomenon can then be separated into a body, a mind, and free space. The body is the material part, the mind, referred to as '*nāmadhamma*,' represents the mental. Perhaps we can give the body and mind a new name: '*nāmarūpa*,' that is, *rūpa* which has *nāma*, meaning a body which has a mind. Each person is a mind and a body, is *nāmarūpa*. The mind is the important part, the body is its supporter, the body serves the mind, in truth the body is just an instrument to allow the mind to operate. We can compare the body to that which lets electricity to do its duty, hence a battery, a dynamo, a generator, or whatever, will fulfil much the same rôle for electricity as the body does for the mind. The bodily side of the equation has four elements, the mental side has one, while that which acts as the support for both amounts to one element too - the space element. It all begins right here.

At first it's just the mind, mind without the *kilesa*, without defilement, thus still without thoughts of 'me' or 'mine.' This sort of mind exists naturally and in the *Pali* is referred to as 'luminous.' This luminous mind can't think about anything foolishly, hence there's no 'self' thought, it's still just the mind, the original mind, the mind without defiled thinking. Be aware that the mind will be luminous for as long as the *kilesa* don't arise, they might arise at any time, but until they do the mind will retain its luminosity. So, because this mind hasn't received any training, any development, and has yet to be defiled, it's still the original mind, just the mind. Life starts out with

this sort of mind, but because it has to depend on the body and therefore on the various things contacting the body through the senses, the mind will be concocted and will be defiled. It's in this way that the original, unadulterated, undefiled mind will become a defiled mind; be aware of this. To see this more easily, consider the time when the child is still in the womb: a baby lying in the mother's womb has a mind so it will be able to feel, but it won't be able to think, it won't, therefore, be capable of experiencing happiness or unhappiness so won't be able to create thoughts of 'me' and 'mine.' An infant still in the womb won't be able to experience feelings, pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-one-nor-the-other, of a magnitude capable of forming the basis for clinging. Hence we say that there's still no reception of feeling at this time because the six senses of the infant still in the womb aren't doing their full duty, and although there'll be some feeling, as when the body feels anything, it won't be a full experience: the eyes won't see forms, the ears won't hear sounds, or if they do it won't be a full experience of hearing so won't cause (meaningful) feeling to arise, the nose won't be breathing, or smelling, there'll be no tasting because any feeding will be done through the umbilical cord attached to the child's navel, the skin will be receiving touches while in the womb but in a natural way, not in the same way that a person dwelling in the world does. A child still in the womb doesn't have, or doesn't use the six senses fully, hence, at that time, it's mind remains unadulterated, it's yet to give rise to the *kilesa*, yet to cling to itself as 'me.'

Now, when the time comes for the child to exit the womb things will change as it begins to experience through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind in the 'normal' way. This is known as getting, or acquiring the six senses. It's at this time that feelings can arise, because now there are sense contacts taking place, that is, the eyes are seeing forms, the ears hearing sounds, the nose smelling odours, the tongue tasting flavours, the skin receiving touches, the mind receiving its objects. Things are now very different. Now the small child - say one month old, because that will be better, the child then being more certain to have feelings arise fully from sense contacts - will come to know the delicious and its opposite, be aware of the pretty and the ugly, be aware of sounds that are soothing, sweet, or the opposite, will smell odours of the kind that are pleasant or unpleasant, will be aware of comfortable and uncomfortable touches, and experience mind objects capable of pleasing or displeasing it in the same way as with the other senses.

At this stage be aware that the child has eyes, ears, a nose, tongue, body, and mind, and can contact forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects, which will, if delightful, cause feelings of satisfaction, if undelightful, dissatisfaction, and that all of this will happen naturally. We need to grasp the fact that this will happen quite naturally. If the eye receives light waves of the kind which cause the optic nerve to experience comfort such an experience will be understood as being, for instance, pretty; if the light waves are of a coarse, vulgar nature, then they'll be understood as ugly. There have to be suitable light waves hitting the eye to cause pleasant or unpleasant feelings and the appropriate desire towards them. Light waves causing the eye to experience comfort or discomfort are received and there's either happiness or unhappiness as a result. Now, the ear when receiving the appropriate sound waves will feel comfortable, so that the child will experience happiness, while, if the sounds aren't comforting, it will experience the opposite. The child will gradually come to feel comfort and discomfort via the ears and will be happy or unhappy as a result. The nose is the same: if an odour has just the right amount of gas particles that will cause the olfactory nerve to feel comfortable and the odour will be judged as fragrant and desirable. If the odour has too many gas particles then it will be a strong smell, a bad smell, hence uncomfortable and undesirable. Therefore, it's quite natural for the eyes, ears, and the nose to feel comfort or

discomfort, there's no need for anybody to come and teach this. The skin is the same: if there's something which, for instance, is soft then that softness is comfortable for the skin; if something is harsh, rude, then it feels uncomfortable. Hence the child, feeling comfort on the skin surface also feels pleased, as, for instance, on being bathed, being powdered, those being gentle experiences they cause the child to feel satisfaction, while experiences of the opposite sort will cause it to feel dissatisfied.

So, now our child knows contacts with both poles of experience, those which are attractive and those which aren't. Now things are different, now it's no longer in the womb, now it has feelings arising by way of the eyes, the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, is able to experience in the same way that adults do.

Now feelings, both those that please and those that don't, cause the child to become either smart or ignorant. This child, incidentally, represents us, all of us. We, on emerging from the womb, receive feelings by way of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, of the sort that are pleasant, comfortable for those organs, and of the sort which sometimes aren't at all pleasant or comfortable for them, both kinds can make us either wise or ignorant. Here we'll recall what the Buddha said – that the child doesn't know about deliverance of the mind through wisdom (the child doesn't know how to react to sense experience in such a way that it won't have to experience any undue problems during the course of its life) while in the womb, it's ignorant because it doesn't have this knowledge, so, once born, it feels happy and unhappy when it meets with feelings: happy when experiencing feelings capable of creating happiness, unhappy when experiencing the opposite. This is ignorance: there's ignorant feeling because there's no knowledge of deliverance of the mind through wisdom, through insight, while the child is still in the womb, so, once born, it lets things go along as they will, feels happy when anything comes along capable of causing happiness, unhappy when anything comes along to cause unhappiness, so arise the kind of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects which can cause happiness, satisfaction, infatuation, as well as the kind which cause the opposite (the child comes to know things as being 'good' or 'bad.') This child is now able to be happy, satisfied, and to be unsatisfied, unhappy, angry, irritated – so, it can be seen that, now, the mind isn't just the mind anymore.

Can you see this? This mind isn't just the mind when this happens, it's the mind covered with ignorance, the mind capable of feeling happiness and unhappiness. When liking anything and feeling happy there's one sort of defilement involved, when disliking something and feeling unhappy or dissatisfied there's another sort involved.

Hence we arrive at the second stage, where mind isn't just mind anymore but a mind with ignorance, *avijjā*, a mind in which the *kilesa* can arise, a mind capable of feeling happiness and unhappiness. The child doesn't know about deliverance of the mind through wisdom, doesn't know that everything is really 'just like that,' that everything is *aniccaṇ*, *dukkhaṇ*, and *anattā*, and when it doesn't have this sort of knowledge it's going to be capable of being made to feel happy or unhappy. That's ignorance: sometimes the child is infatuated with whatever it's experiencing, then the defilement of *lobha*, or *rāga*, greed has arisen; or it's drawn into hatred, into anger, then the defilement of *dosa*, aversion, or *koda*, anger, has arisen; or it's doubtful, confused, suspicious, then the defilement of *moha*, delusion has arisen. Now our child is able to give rise to the 'root' defilements, to *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*. It isn't just mind anymore. This is the second stage, the second stage of the mind's ascent to knowledge.

Now let's take a more detailed look: The child, although small, is composed of the six elements: earth, water, fire, and air make up it's body, consciousness, *viññāna*, is it's mind, and the spatial element is what all of that dwells within. The mind relies on and acts through the body. Whenever the body acts then the physical part, which amounts to the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body itself, is doing its 'duty,' this represents that child's *rūpakhandhā* arising. Now, whenever there's meeting together of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind with the world outside, that is, with forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects, then *viññāna*, consciousness, arises, which is the *viññānakhandhā*. The *viññānakhandhā* operates as eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose, consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and mind consciousness, operates altogether in six ways. This is the *viññānakhandhā* arising for that child. Now, when there's a sense contact the *vedanākhandhā* will arise, that is, there'll be, either, pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling, or neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling as a result. This is the *vedanākhandhā* arising for that child. Now, the child will understand whatever is being experienced via the senses as being this or that, it can discriminate, can recognize colours: black, red, green, yellow, etc. It can discriminate forms: short, long, big, small, it can discriminate male and female, and, as regards the mental *dhammas*, it can discriminate between the pleasant, the unpleasant, and the neither pleasant nor unpleasant kind; it can also recognize value, meaning: this has value, this has meaning, this is useful, this is important. This is *saññā*, perception, the *saññākhandhā* arising for that small child. Now, when there's been enough perceiving, enough recognizing and discriminating, then thought arises, thoughts of how to act, as, for instance, once there's recognition of prettiness then thoughts arise in the form of desire, desire to get, while if the ugly or disgusting is recognized there's thought in the form of desire to get rid of. The child acts in the way that small children do: perhaps it flattens an insect, that is, the child acts in accord with its feelings and subsequent thinking about what it's just perceived, and if the child, even though it's a very small child, sees an insect and perceives it as 'my' enemy it will then proceed to flatten it. This is thought arising, the thoughts concerned with getting, keeping, eating, using, killing, destroying, and, perhaps, concerned with consideration, with not hurting, not harming. This is the arising of the *sankārakhandhā* for that small child.

The five aggregates, or five *khandhas* have arisen for that small child, but be aware that they don't all arise at the same time, that they never arise simultaneously: first is the *rūpakhandhā*, the necessary prerequisite without which the mind won't be able to do its duty, then, in dependence on there being sense impacts, the mind arises, which is the *viññānakhandhā*: the eye meets a form and the consciousness aggregate arises at the eye; the ear meets a sound and the *viññānakhandhā* arises at the ear, and so on. However, the *viññānakhandhā* doesn't arise at the same time as the *rūpakhandhā*. When the consciousness aggregate has arisen there's *phassa*, contact, then there's feeling, the feeling aggregate, the *vedanākhandhā* arises, then the aggregate of perception, the *saññākhandhā* arises to discriminate, to determine the thing being felt, or to be concerned with the arisen feeling, and then, lastly, there'll be the various forms of thinking, which is the *sankārakhandhā* arising. The aggregates don't arise simultaneously, they're the cause for each other's arising, and they're just Nature.

Now the 'self' delusion will arise, that is, the child can think, can feel, so that whenever there's an event which causes the mind to pay attention, to concentrate on, for instance, the *rūpakhandhā*, on the body, then the thinking that 'I' am the body, or that the body is 'mine' will arise, depending on the experience. If there's the intention for the body to do something then the body will be 'me,' but

if there's a higher awareness involved then the body will just be 'mine.' The *vedanā* are feelings, the mind can feel and when the mind experiences a feeling then it's going to take itself to be 'me' and the feeling it's experiencing to be 'mine.' The mind takes itself to be 'me' because it's the 'feeler,' it feels the feeling, the feeling itself, the *vedanā*, will then be clung to as 'mine.' Hence the mind gives rise to 'me' and 'mine' in dependence on feeling, *vedanā*. Now, *saññā*, perception; perception perceives, recognizes. The mind doing the perceiving is taken to be 'me,' to be the perceiver, while the perceiving is 'mine,' that is, it's 'my' *saññā*, 'my' perception. Hence the *saññākhaṇḍha* is felt to be 'me,' or 'mine.' The *sankhārakhaṇḍha* is the same again, the thinking mind clings to itself as 'me' and to the thinking as 'mine.' The *sankhārakhaṇḍha* is thus clung to as 'me' and as 'mine.'

So, each of those five aggregates will be clung to as either being 'self,' '*aṭṭā*,' or a possession thereof, '*aṭṭaniyā*.'

Take a look in the *Pali*, in the text known as the *anattalakkhaṇasutta*, at the part where the Buddha made the point that there isn't a 'self' or anything belonging to a 'self.' With this in mind can we call anything 'self'? We can't. Can we call anything a possession of 'self'? We can't. It's because of clinging that there's a separation into 'me' and 'mine.'

So, now this isn't the mind alone, it isn't just the mind, it's the sublimely stupid mind continually clinging to *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, and *viññāṇa* as 'me' and 'mine.' It isn't just the mind anymore, it's the mind full of *kilesa*, the mind with *taṇhā* (foolish desire,) with *upādāna* (foolish clinging,) and with *avijjā*, with ignorance as the major stockholder. Increasingly living like this causes the mind to develop more and more of the same, because the child grows up, reaches adolescence, then adulthood, and during the course of all that anything appropriate that comes along will go to support the mind ever more strongly in this way of thinking. The things that particularly concoct the mind are *saññā* and *vedanā*, these concoct the mind with ever increasing power, so are referred to as 'mind conditioners.'

Here, we'll sum up the essence, the most important bit for everybody: the mind sees itself as being 'me,' and anything connecting with it at such a time as being 'mine.' Further, when the mind siezes onto anything it will also project the meaning of 'self' into whatever it happens to be experiencing. For example: a child goes and hits it's head on a chair, it hurts so the child then feels that 'I' was hurt by that chair, and in so doing projects the meaning of 'self' onto the chair; the child is ignorant to the point that it feels the chair is possessed of a 'self,' and that it's own body is another 'self.' Now they're enemies, the chair has become the child's enemy, so it might kick it, or, if it's still too small to kick it, then perhaps mama can come and help to punish the chair for what it did. Some ignorant people really do that, teach children "self" belief by hitting a chair or something to stop their child from crying.

Hence, the 'self' is illusory, not something that really exists, 'self' is something which the mind cooks up through ignorance. Knowing this makes *anattā* easier to understand.

We've been considering *anattā* for years without understanding it. *Attā* is a thought; if the mind thinks there's a 'self,' that's *attā*, as when there's delightful feeling and there's the thinking that somebody is experiencing it, that's mind taking itself to be 'me,' and then anything that comes along to connect with it at that time becomes 'mine.' Hence there'll be a 'self' associated with the five aggregates depending on whether there's some meaningful form, feeling, perception, etc. being experienced. There isn't really a 'self' at all, it's just the mind led by *avijjā* into wrong thinking,

wrong understanding, it's not a reality, it's just a *māyā*, an illusion arisen in accord with Nature's law which causes the mind to think that there's a 'self,' that there's a 'me' and a 'mine.'

Now the mind isn't just the mind anymore, now the mind is full of ignorance and infatuation, full of *kilesa*. The arising of the *kilesa*, the arising of defilement into the mind can be summed up as the arising of 'self.' The 'self' is the nest of the *kilesa*, is their gathering place: there's *lobha*, greed, so there's liking, happiness because of the 'self,' there's *koda*, anger, displeasure because of the self, and there's *moha*, so there's deception, confusion, there's spinning around, because of the 'self.'

So, at present our minds are full of the stupidity of 'self' belief, now this, now that way, changing continually, but, essentially, ever the same, in that it's always the mind that clings to itself as 'me.' There isn't a 'self,' there never is a 'self,' it's not the truth, but there is the feeling of being such, and as people have to rely on their feelings hence they're bound to say that they have a 'self,' they must feel that there really is such a thing. Hence, if we use worldly language then we say that there is a 'self,' because we feel that there is. But if we look at it from the deeper *Dhamma* angle then, in truth, there isn't, there's just wrong understanding, wrong thinking.

So, looked at in the *Dhamma* way there isn't a 'self,' but if looked at as a feeling that actually occurs in the mind, then it's a *māyā*, an illusion. Our problem is that we can't see through the illusion so we go about believing that there really is a 'me,' hence, because we weren't smart when in the womb we're going to have 'self' belief until we get put in a coffin.

Now this mind is full of defilement, full of 'self' belief, it's originally luminosity has been completely lost and now it's a mind full of *kilesa*, full of ignorance.

At this time we need to look again at the *anusaya* and *āsava*. Now, on the mind giving rise to the *kilesa* - the arising of *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha* is called the arising of the *kilesa* - then, once arisen, there begins to develop a familiarity with them, that is, an habitual pattern starts to emerge, as with the first arising of *lobha*, greed, which then produces a familiarity, a tendency, or inclination of the mind towards greed; as with the first arising of anger which gives rise to a tendency of the mind towards irritation, or anger, and as with the first arising of ignorance which gives rise to an inclination of the mind towards ignorance, which inclinations, or tendencies, then accumulate in the subconscious. Hence depending on how much *kilesa* arises the *anusaya* will accumulate, will build up in the subconscious. This familiarity with, or inclination towards defilement is referred to as 'anusaya.' The *kilesa* are one thing, the inclination that gives rise to them, *anusaya*, is another.

When there's a large accumulation of *anusaya* in the subconscious it will press to come out, which action is called *āsava*, or 'outflow.' If we've accumulated a lot of *anusaya* there'll be a lot of pressure from the outflows, the *āsava*, rather like when we put water into a jar that leaks, then, if we put just a little water into the jar there'll be just a little leakage, but if we put a great deal of water in until the jar is full then there'll be strong pressure for the water to leak out, in fact it will spurt out. Having a lot of *anusaya* means having a lot of *āsava*. Because of this the child is primed to readily fall into liking, into disliking, and into confusion, into an habitual cycle of behaviour which will become stronger with each passing day. The *kilesa* arise causing the *anusaya* to accumulate in the subconscious, and the more the *anusaya* accumulate the more quickly and strongly will the *āsava* flow out.

The *kilesa* express themselves in three ways: as the *kilesa*, the defilements, as the familiarity with, or tendency towards defilement, which is *anusaya*, and as the outflow of defilement known as *āsava*. Now, if there's no *kilesa* there's no *anusaya* either, which means that the *anusaya* decrease every time the *kilesa* are denied the opportunity of arising, so that should we exercise control and

not allow the defilements to emerge then the *anusaya* will decrease, the accumulated reserves will diminish. Hence, not allowing *lobha* to arise on one occasion will weaken *rāgānusaya*, the tendency towards greed, while not allowing anger to emerge will diminish the tendency towards it, will reduce *patighānusaya*, and not allowing ignorance to arise will reduce the *anusaya* of ignorance, the *avijjānusaya*. The *anusaya* are sevenfold: *rāgānusaya*, the tendency towards greed, or lustful behaviour; *patighānusaya*, the familiarity with or tendency towards anger, towards irritation, towards doing harm; *ditthānusaya*, the tendency towards views, *viccīkiccanusaya*, the tendency towards doubt, uncertainty, *manānusaya*, the tendency towards conceit, *bhavarāgānusaya*, the tendency to lust for becoming, and *avijjānusaya*, the familiarity with and tendency towards ignorance. The *anusaya* will flow out as the *āsava*, as the outflow of sensuality, *kāmāsava*; of existence, *bhāva*, which is *bhāvāsava*; and as ignorance itself, *avijjāsava*.

This is the mind which has lost its original luminosity completely, now it's full of dirt, fully encrusted with it, filthy with the *kilesa*, the *anusaya*, the *āsava*. But isn't that what's sitting here now? These are the treasures we've accumulated in life: the *kilesa*, *anusaya*, and *āsava*.

Now, the mind acts under the power of the *kilesa*, that is, there's deliberated action under the power of defilement, which is '*kamma*.' The result of *kamma* is called '*vipāka*.' It's *vipāka* which helps to increase the strength of the *kilesa*. The *kilesa* are the cause of *kamma*, when performing *kamma* then the result of *kamma* will be received, and, if the result is satisfactory it will go to strengthen the *kilesa* on the greedy side of things, if unsatisfactory it will strengthen the *kilesa* of the negative side, hence, if life is allowed to follow the usual path, the *kilesa* will always be on the increase, they aren't going to diminish, unless, that is, one turns into the path of knowledge, of awakening, something that requires we be ready and willing to operate in quite another way. But for now there's *kilesa* so there's the performance of *kamma* - when there's *kilesa* there must be *kamma*, it can't be avoided - if there's the *kilesa* of *lobha*, greed, then actions will be dictated by greed, if the *kilesa* is anger the actions will be dictated by anger, and if the *kilesa* is delusion then the actions will be dictated by that. When *kamma* is performed there must be a result: if the result pleases then there'll be the desire to repeat it, if the result is displeasing there'll be the desire to do something else, something different, hence either the form of *kilesa* behind the original activity or its opposite form will be strengthened, but whichever form is strengthened the source will be the same - our own activities and their results.

We get the results of *kamma* here, in this life, there's no need to talk about any after death state. If this is clearly grasped then it's scary, because it means that the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra* (the ocean of birth and death, the so-called round of rebirths) revolves right here in the mind: there's *kilesa*, the performing of *kamma*, and the receiving of the results of *kamma* - *kilesa-kamma-vipāka*, *kilesa-kamma-vipāka*; the *kamma* cycle spins strongly right here in the mind, and who knows how many times during the course of even one day and night. This sort of mind is the most base, while it's spinning around in the *saṅsāra* it isn't the luminous mind, it's an ignorant, infatuated mind caught up in the *kilesa-kamma-vipāka* cycle. This is the *vaṭṭa* that's right here and now.

The foolish mind, the mind which is thick with *kilesa*, which is darkened by *avijjā*, has an intense sense of 'self' and spins around and around in the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*. If, however, we look at this from a more worldly, or popular point of view, then it presents the form of a spinning around in a series of lives, in this life and the next, and the next, and so on. This also is the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*. The after death version of the *vaṭṭa* is inaccessible to the living and not therefore *sandiṭṭiko* (personally experienceable,) so we don't want to talk about it, rather we prefer to talk about the *vaṭṭa* that is

accessible and which is *sandiṭṭiko*, which is personally experienceable, thus: there's *kilesa*, then there's activity under their influence, then there's receiving of the results of those activities which will inevitably involve a further strengthening of the *kilesa*. This is the *vaṭṭa* we should be afraid of, because spinning around, falling into the cycles of *kilesa-kamma-vipāka*, *kilesa-kamma-vipāka* is a truly fearsome affair.

Now, continuing on: the *vaṭṭa* cycle, what's it all about? It's about *dukkha*, and only *dukkha*; for one trapped in the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra* there's only distress, only a lack of ease, whether it's the *kāma* realm, the *rūpa*, or the *arūpa* realm, there'll be *dukkha*. The mind thinks in the way of *kāma*, of sensuality, and has *dukkha*, has to experience distress because it does, or it thinks on the level of the *rūpadhammas*, the fine material level, and has *dukkha* too, but in a more refined way, or, mind thinks on the *arūpadhamma* level, the immaterial level, and has *dukkha* of a still more refined sort. The *kāma* 'wandering,' or realm is about being 'stuck' on sensuality. Those who worship the sensual range from the hell beings and the other three deprived states, the ordinary human realm, and the six lower heavens, all of these gravitate towards the sensual: the four deprived realms, the one human realm, and the six lower heavens, eleven altogether. These experience *dukkha* as it occurs in the *kāma* realms. If it's more elevated then it's a matter of the *rūpabrahmas*, of being a *Brahma* and having a mind which doesn't opt for gross sensuality but goes for the happiness deriving from the experience of pure form. There are sixteen *rūpabrahma* levels. All sixteen involve a spinning around in the sort of *dukkha* which is subtle, hard to comprehend, hard to see, yet involves infatuation just the same. The *kāma* realm beings fall for sensuality, the *Brahmas* of the *rūpa* realm seek the happiness deriving from pure form, while the *arūpabrahmas* seek the *arūpadhammas*, the immaterial *dhammas*, the *arūpajhānas*, seek the happiness deriving from the formless meditations.

All the realms, all the existences are *dukkha*: the *kāma* realm, the *rūpa* realm, and the *arūpa* realm, each of them involves *dukkha*. In the *Pali* it's said that even a tiny bit of excrement stinks, just a little bit stinks, a bit so small that it can't be seen will still stink. Think about it - the realms of existence are the same: all existence, even the tiniest experience, is *dukkha*. Because people still don't see this they have to experience *dukkha*: even a tiny bit of excrement stinks; all existence, even the tiniest hint of it, still involves *dukkha*.

Hence, the mind spins around; the ignorant mind spins around, changes locations, goes into the *kāma*, into the *rūpa*, into the *arūpa* realms and back again, all the while depending on this one physical body. This is life in the language of *Dhamma*. But if we use ordinary language as it was used in the past, before the Buddha's time, then we'd be talking about being physically born: born into hell, or being born as an animal, as a god, as an hungry ghost, as a demon, and doing all of that in some other body in some other world, or we'd be talking about being born in a sensual heaven as a *devatā*, dwelling in a castle with fairies and such, or as a *Brahma* in the *Brahma* world on the *rūpa*, the form level, or on the formless, the *arūpa* level. People explained and still do explain it all in that way, as was and is their wont. We don't object to that, don't disagree, but such isn't *sandiṭṭiko*, that is, it's not personally experienceable, and, given that, then we don't want to talk about it, rather we prefer to talk just about what is personally experienceable.

At the present time we feel that we're most disturbed and troubled by sensual pleasures, with seeking them out, with getting them, with experiencing them, hence dwelling in a heavenly state fully equipped with the five chords of sense pleasure would still be *dukkha*: because of the clinging

to such as being ‘mine’ there’ll be distress on being separated from them, and then there’s the infatuation involved in the actual experience, all of which is *dukkha*.

Attain the good and the better levels, the *rūpabrahma* and the *arūpabrahma* levels, still with clinging to ‘self’ and there’ll be *dukkha*, it can’t be helped, because the better the quality of life the greater will be the desire to avoid death. In the *Pali* it has it that those who most want to avoid death are the *Brahmas*, because their state is a very happy, very comfortable, very healthy one, hence they don’t want to die. The greater the desire to avoid death, the greater the fear of it will be, the greater the fear, the greater the *dukkha*. Hence, those who most don’t want to die will be those who most fear death, as with the *rūpa* and *arūpabrahmas*, who, when there’s mention of that subject they, because they cling to existence more than others do, will feel the most alarm. Human beings are better.

Hence it’s said that those in the sensual, and in the *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms are all subject to *dukkha*, because they’re all prone to clinging.

Anyway, now the mind isn’t the just the mind anymore, it’s the mind full of *dukkha*; it’s funny that before the mind was just the mind, without any property, whereas now it’s come to be a mind filled with *dukkha*, it’s become a mind rich in mental dis-ease, distress.

Now the second stage has been dealt with, in which the original mind, the mind without any additions, comes to have the defilements, the *kilesa*, and experiences *dukkha* fully, it spins around in the mass of *dukkha*, floats on the ocean of *dukkha*. This is the second-stage mind.

So, the third stage: the third stage mind is the mind that will come out from the mass of suffering, come out from ‘self’ belief.

The third stage mind spins around in *dukkha* and tastes it: tastes this, that, tastes all kinds of *dukkha* - and then what? Think about it, what happens? Mind gradually remarks the *dukkha*, feels it more and more keenly, feels *dukkha* snapping and biting and learns from the experience: *dukkha* bites but it teaches too, teaches people, goads them into doing something about their foolishness. When *dukkha* has been borne with in the realms for a long enough time we start to learn from it: the distress, the dis-ease, the constant *dukkha* of the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra* causes the realization that this state of affairs can’t go on, from which comes the gradual understanding that *dukkha* comes from clinging, clinging to ‘self’ idea, to ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ Because enough time has elapsed then the, at first, vague idea that this problem has attachment to ‘self’ as its source grows, which sits well with the Buddha’s teaching that clinging to the five aggregates is *dukkha*.

Experiencing *dukkha* over a long period of time, equivalent to having fallen into hell five hundred times, wouldn’t such an experience make one smarter? Hence, from being immersed in the mass of *dukkha* one starts to feel fed up with that situation and begins to look at turning things around, starts to think about going in the opposite direction for a change. Realization gradually arises concerning our foolishness, our defiled mental state, our clinging and attachment, and we start to display the sort of behaviour that will, eventually, allow us to escape.

So, once we reach the point of being really fed up with *dukkha* we’ll be interested in hearing about its quenching, and then we’ll seek, seek out the right people, seek out the wise, listen to their teaching, come to understand *dukkha* and its cause. Hence we come to the Buddha’s teaching, to that of some disciple of the Buddha, or to some other wise individual, we hear about the four truths and can understand easily because we have *dukkha* in abundance and we know we do, unlike someone with no understanding of *dukkha* at all, who won’t be in the least interested in such things.

At present young people hearing about the four truths don't take the information in, because they're infatuated and, still not having been sufficiently bitten or disturbed by it, prefer to dwell in the mass of *dukkha*. But, if someone has had enough then they will want to listen, and having heard will be able to understand. Hence, if we ask why some on hearing the *Dhamma* don't grasp it, while others do, it's because one sort of person is already chastened by the experience of *dukkha* so takes an interest and understands easily, while the other, being still ignorant, hears too, but doesn't get the message.

At the time of the Buddha it was, perhaps, easier for people to understand because they didn't have as many deceptive things to deal with as now, when there are many more things capable of tempting people into the mass of *dukkha*. At the time of the Buddha there wasn't so much of the stimulating and delightful around as there is now, hence there would have been more opportunities for people to hear about the *Dhamma*, and it would have been easier for them to understand too. Now there's so much 'bait' around, so many of those things that can deceive, can cause infatuation, and lure people into problems. Hence, people in this era find it difficult to listen to and understand the quenching of *dukkha*, in this day and age the *Dhamma* remains mostly sterile.

Take a look at Bangkok, or anywhere you like, it will be packed with things that deceive and pull the ignorant into infatuation and *dukkha*. Now it's even in the temples, it's not just the home or the market place anymore. This is why it's so difficult for people nowadays to know *dukkha* well enough to start feeling bored with it. So, help a little, don't let your children go the same way, don't bring those things and deceive children with them, let children know such as deceptive. I used to point out over the wireless that it's primarily parents who make their children ignorant, who cause them to fall into infatuation. If they'd take their children to the shops that sell toys and suchlike and explain to them that those very things are what make and keep us ignorant, take them to the places that sell delightful, stimulating, and expensive things, and let them know that it's these that make and keep us in the dark, if parents would explain why this is so then perhaps their children would grow up to be less foolish, and less in love with the stimulating. Give them the chance to see such things as they really are, as a waste of money, no more than that, then, perhaps, children would be less easily deceived, and better suited to listening to and understanding *Dhamma*. At this time there's only a deeper descent into ignorance, into infatuation: children grow into young men and women, into fathers and mothers, still infatuated with the delightful, with the deceptive. Hence, the *Dhamma* must remain mostly sterile, mostly barren, it can't be of real assistance. Now we've come to the third stage, at which the mind begins to understand life, to understand *dukkha*, to understand the deception, and to understand better the deceptive things of the world. Hence we start to listen more because now we know we have problems, we have *dukkha*. So, we go to ask the wise: Why is there *dukkha*? We go to seek out a follower of the Buddha, or some wise person. Such people can teach us how things are: this is *dukkha*, this is the cause of *dukkha*; then we know that there was, and is, someone able to quench *dukkha*, someone who discovered the quenching of *dukkha*, who practised for its quenching, and that there's still the *Dhamma*, the means, by which that can be achieved.

The mind has now come to know the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*, it learns about *sīla*, *samādhi*, *pañña* - the eightfold path - and practises, practises: there's practise, there's investigation, so that knowledge arises. Before there was only ignorance, non-knowledge, but now we come to see that everything is *aniccaṇ*, *dukkhaṇ*, and *anattā*.

There are several ‘knowledges’ collectively known as *dhammaḍḍhiñāna*: knowledge of *aniccaṇ*, *dukkhaṇ*, *anaṭṭā*, *suññatā*, *tathātā*, and *paṭiccasamuppāda* adds up to *dhammaḍḍhiñāna*, although such is more usually called ‘*tilakkhana*.’ So, the mind begins to understand the *tilakkhana*, begins to awaken, begins to clear out ignorance, starts to see the danger in the *kilesa* and to distance itself from them, begins to understand the harm in ‘self’ belief, and in the spinning around in the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*. Hence, mind goes up a level to the *nibbānañāna*, arrives at the knowledges that make attainment of *nibbāna* possible, such as *nibbidañāna*, which is the knowledge of boredom with the *sankhāras*, with the world and its charms, and knowledge of the desire to escape, *muñcittukammayatāñāna*, so that the knowledge which releases the mind from clinging to the things it used to cling to, *vimuttiñāna*, arises. The mind meets with *nibbānañāna*, has *nibbānañāna*, has the knowledge that opens the door to *nibbāna*.

Mind has now undergone change, has expanded. It attains the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*: having had enough of the world there’s a loosening of desire towards it and the subsequent escape into the path of the *sotapāna* (‘stream enterer’), the first level of safety, into the paths of the *sakidāgāmi* (‘once returner’), *anāgāmi*, (‘non-returner’), and *arahant* (perfected human being). Now the mind is a mind without defilement. At the start of life it was undefiled too but was always prone to becoming so, but now the defilements can’t re-arise. Hence the original purity of the mind isn’t the same as the purity which is the end product of practice. When it was in its originally luminous state its purity was conditional. Hence the mind in the first of the three stages is pure only because the defilements haven’t arisen, when we come to the third stage the mind is pure because it’s been trained, been developed to the point where the defilements can’t arise, it’s now ‘forever pure,’ one might say.

This is the mind attained to the *visankhāra*. Mind attained to the *visankhāra* is beyond being conditioned, nothing can concoct it ever again. The matter is at an end.

So, to recap: first there’s just mind, then it’s mind plus defilement, then it’s the mind which has put an end to the defilements. The matter ends with the third stage when the mind shakes off the defilements so completely that they can’t arise ever again. This is all about the mind, it’s all mental, even *nibbāna* is a matter of the mind, of the mind which has been smartened to such a level that it can never again act foolishly.

Hence, from a speck of dust, a tiny morsel of defilement, to the attainment of *nibbāna*, it’s all a matter of the mind. Right here is the point that we want everyone to be aware of: that all things whatsoever are of the mind, are mental.

The first mind is mind alone, just the mind, the second mind is the ignorant mind, the third is the mind which has ended ignorance so that it now finishes up as more than ‘just’ the mind, more than the mind as it was at birth, it’s the mind which can’t have *dukkha* ever again.

LDB

X. Whatever there is, it will just be elements.

We’ve been looking at everything as being mind, so we can sum up the ‘Little Dhamma Book’ as follows: at first it’s just the mind, the original mind, mind without any feeling or thought, without *kilesa*, defilement, but without knowledge, so that it’s an ignorant mind. Subsequently, this

ignorant mind receives contacts via the senses, experiences feelings, clings, and has to experience *dukkha*. Then, because over time it has to taste a lot of *dukkha* in the *vaṭṭasaṅsāra*, the mind overcomes its ignorance, chases ignorance away, comes to know ‘what is what,’ and makes its escape.

These three stages represent the whole story. However, some people won’t be entirely comfortable with the understanding that everything is mind, being more at home with something with another name, so today we’ll look at everything as being ‘*dhātus*,’ as being ‘elements.’ If it can be clearly seen that all things whatever are basically just elements then there won’t be clinging to anything as ‘me’ or ‘mine,’ the mind will make its escape and that, also, will be the end of the story.

We still don’t understand the *dhātus*, being ignorant from birth we still don’t understand these things. We don’t realize that both we and the things we experience are really combinations of elements. We see sense objects in such a way that they can cause us to experience this or that kind of happiness, can cause us to become infatuated, and, as a consequence, fall into clinging and *dukkha*. We live this way until realizing that the things we find so delightful are really just natural elements, after which we cease to attach, so putting an end to *dukkha*, to the problems of life. Thus: at first the elements aren’t recognized; subsequently they are as the realization occurs that all things are really just elements; then there’s escape into the ultimate element, the *nibbānadhātu*, and the matter is at an end.

First we need to look at the ‘*dhātu*.’ ‘*Dhātu*,’ or ‘element’ is the last thing met with when taking anything apart, should there be a step by step deconstruction of something it will end at the ‘*dhātu*,’ having arrived at the elemental it will be enough, to try to go further would be to go too far. In Thai, *Pali*, and western languages the meaning is the same: the *dhātu*, the element is the last useful thing to be met with when deconstructing things bit by bit.

Going a little deeper we find that the *dhātu* has two levels, the ‘pure’ and the ‘combined.’ The ‘pure’ elements, according to the sort of science we might have studied at school, were more than ninety in number, and now (1982) the number has increased to more than an hundred, and, probably, there are still more to be discovered. When it’s still a single element without anything coming to combine with it then it’s called a ‘pure’ element, when two or more elements are joined together it’s referred to as a ‘combined’ element, which element then assumes another form.

Oxygen and hydrogen are pure elements, but, when conjoined, they produce the combined element we know as ‘water.’ A pure *dhātu*, like copper, when mixed with tin becomes something new, becomes brass, or, take a pure *dhātu*, like gold, combine it with a pure *dhātu*, like copper, and an alloy appears, which is another combined element.

Human beings are concerned with both kinds of *dhātus*, the pure and the combined, it’s because we’re able to combine the elements that we can produce many different combinations possessing meanings capable of luring us more and more into clinging and *dukkha*, in this way we become enamoured of the elements.

We’ve been using ‘worldly’ language, which can describe only the obvious material elements, but even high level study reveals only knowledge of these. *Dhamma* language, or the language of the mind, however, describes more *dhātus* than the obvious material ones. There are pure and the combined elements here too, odd phenomena, but all referred to as elements, as *dhātus*, some of which might sound strange, like the ‘eye element,’ the ‘ear element,’ the ‘nose element,’ the ‘tongue element,’ the ‘body element,’ and the ‘mind element,’ all of which nobody talks about, so nobody hears much about them, but in *Dhamma* language they’re all referred to as elements:

‘*caksudhātu*,’ the eye element, ‘*sotadhātu*,’ the ear element, ‘*kānadhātu*,’ the nose element, and so on; and there are yet more elements paired with them: the ‘*rūpadhātu*,’ the ‘form element,’ which is paired with the eye, the ‘*sattadhātu*,’ the ‘sound element’ which pairs with the ear, the ‘*kandadhātu*,’ the ‘scent element,’ which pairs with the nose, etc. - there are the form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental object elements which are rarely or never heard about. The five aggregates, the *pañcakkhandha*, the *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *sankāra*, and *viññānakhandas*, are elements too, each is a *dhātu*. Then there’s the ‘good’ and the ‘bad,’ these are elements, and there are the skillful, unskillful, and neutral deliberated activities called ‘*kamma*,’ all these turn out to be elements too, even *kamma* itself is an element. These are just some of those elements, which, in the ordinary way of things, aren’t much heard about.

Now, concerning the mind, concerning the characteristics, or qualities of the mind, these too are elements: the *kāmaśāradhātu*, the element of sensuality, the *rūpaśāradhātu*, the element of pure form, the *arūpaśāradhātu*, the element of the formless, each of which can dominate and infatuate the mind. The highest *dhātu* of all is *nibbāna*, the *nibbānadhātu*, the *nibbāna* element. So it is: from a speck of dust, rising by degrees to *nibbāna*, it’s all about elements, and all of these elements can be summed up as being either *sankatadhātus* - elements which concoct and are concoctable - or, *asankatadhātu* - the element which is unconcocted and is unconcoctable. Hence, there isn’t anything which isn’t an element, because in this universe there isn’t anything other than these two groups: the concocted, and the unconcocted, the *sankata* and the *asankata*.

The subtler, deeper details are elements too, like those *kilesa*, the defilements, hence *lobha*, greed, is an element, *dosa*, aversion, is an element, and *moha*, delusion, is an element. The sensations arising from meaningful experiences, like deliciousness, that’s the element of deliciousness, while undeliciousness is the element of the undelicious - these particular elements, however, arise from the human ability to assume, or suppose. Even, finally, colours: red, green, white, which in truth are lightwaves of differing wavelengths, these are elements too, and the system which causes the arising of the various colours is also called an ‘element.’ In the language of *Dhamma* it’s all elements, it’s a clean sweep, there isn’t anything that isn’t a *dhātu*.

But it goes still farther, and there are elements which are difficult to understand, as with those which group, combine together, like the food we eat, that’s essentially elements, as is the ‘eater’ of food, as is the ‘wearer,’ the ‘user,’ the ‘getter,’ the ‘loser,’ the whatever it is, each is referred to as an ‘element.’ People who ordain as Monks and novices learn from their first day in the monastery that robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines are *dhātus*, are elements, natural elements, and that the wearer of a robe, the eater of food, the user of lodgings, the ingester of medicines, are just elements too, natural elements combining together into the person who will wear, will eat, will use, and so on. It’s all just elements. However, elements of this sort aren’t found in present-day scientific textbooks, but in the *Dhamma* way, in the Buddhist system we emphasize the understanding that the things eaten, used, worn, etc. are, in a particular sense, elements, *dhātus*, and that the person, or that which we call a person - the ‘eater,’ the ‘user,’ the ‘wearer,’ or whatever - is just elements too. Consider this carefully: when chanting the *dhātupaccavekhāna* (a reflection on the true nature the four necessities of life) both clothing and its wearer are said to be natural elements. This is a broader, deeper, and rather unusual useage of the word ‘element.’

Now, if we divide ourselves up into the obvious elements the earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness elements will be involved; if we then divide the body up into its constituent parts each individual part will be looked on as an element too, which elements, when taken together are

assumed to be a person. The aim of all this is to reveal that there isn't anything that isn't an element, so don't fall into wrong understanding and cling to things as being 'self.' If we're concerned with the quenching of *dukkha* then the important elements will be the six that we've been hearing about, and which we're a combination of: the earth, water, fire, and air elements, plus those of space and *viññāna*, consciousness. One who wants to understand the Buddhist religion well ought to remember the names of all six elements: *pathāvidhātu*, the earth element, *āpodhātu*, the water element, *tejodhātu*, the fire element, *vāyodhātu*, the wind, or air element, *ākāśadhātu*, the space element, and *viññānadhātu*, the consciousness, or mind element – six elements. The physical part of us is made up of four elements: earth, water, fire, and air, the *viññānadhātu* represents the mind which thinks, and the space which allows these things to exist at all is the element of space. We need to consider this a little so that we can grasp the space element, because no matter what anything is it must be based on the space element. If there's something already occupying a space, that is, if a space isn't free, then nothing else can exist there - like a stone, for a stone to exist at all there must be free space for it to exist in. No matter what it is it must have a free space to exist in, if not it can't exist. So we need to acknowledge the element of space as something which has value: a cup, because a cup has this free, hollow space water can be poured into it, hence it has use, has some value. If containers don't have any free space they don't have any use; they're useful because they have some free space, hence space is referred to as an element too, the element of free space, the *ākāśadhātu*.

Remember that we're a combination of the six elements, the earth, water, fire, air, space, and mind elements: there's the body, there's the mind, and there's the free space everything is established on. Animals, and even trees, have the same combination of elements, although they'll operate on correspondingly baser levels. As far as the tree is concerned the mind element will be very basic and couldn't be compared with, say, the mind of a person or an animal. Living things must have mind to a greater or lesser degree, if an expression of life is highly developed the mind will correspond, if less developed its mental capacity will be less developed too. We say that trees possess the element of consciousness appropriate for trees.

But some teachers, as is their wont, say that amounts to wrong understanding, to *micchaditṭhi*, but we don't want to get into a dispute with them, we just want everybody to understand that a person is composed of the six elements, that an animal is of the same composition but functions on a necessarily lower level, and that a tree is of a similar order but operates on a lower level still. Hence the feelings experienced by a tree can't be compared to those experienced by a human being, yet the tree must feel, because it can be observed that trees avoid things, some avoid problems by closing up their leaves at certain times, and trees do strive to survive.

Now, it's usually understood that *avijjā*, ignorance is an element too. Both *vijjā*, knowledge, and *avijjā*, ignorance, are elements. *Avijja* represents a lack of knowledge, and, to begin with, the mind is in this state, at first it naturally has the element of ignorance. Hence this mind element can think, but its thinking, being mixed up with the element of ignorance, won't be correct: the mind thinks, for instance, that it has a 'self,' so sees anything it contacts in the same way, and not as natural elements. This is the most important point, the root cause of all our problems is here: we have *dukkha*, are faced with *dukkha* because the mind element thinks incorrectly, is ignorant and perceives the various things it experiences as 'selves' and not as mere elements. Hence mind clings to experiences as being likeable or the opposite, hence we feel love, anger, hatred, fear, anxiety,

longing after, jealousy, envy, according to whatever's being experienced, because the mind, conjoined with the element of ignorance, is a mind which is foolish, which clings.

That's the starting point of our *dukkha*, although 'our' *dukkha* is really the mind's *dukkha*, 'we' don't exist, because in the end there's only a combination of the six elements, there's no 'me' element, no 'person' element, only the elements of earth, water, fire, air, free space, and consciousness - those six, functioning as the mind and body, being quite capable of doing the necessary duties.

So, the mind, mixed up with the element of ignorance, is completely deluded, completely infatuated, and clings to being 'self.' It likes the likeable, dislikes the unlikeable, is angry with that provocative of anger, and afraid of anything capable of provoking fear. Then there are the after effects of such behaviour, manifesting as the tendencies towards liking and disliking, towards anger, hatred, fear, etc. Hence we have problems arising from our loving and hating, our anger, our fear, which spread out in several ways.

All this results from the mind being mixed up with the ignorance element, it's then that it can produce the unhappiness element, the disliking element, the anger element, the hatred element, the fear element, the *dukkha* element - or, if current experience happens to be pleasant, congenial, it will produce the *sukha* element, the happiness element - or, if experience is of the indeterminate sort so that the mind doesn't know how to judge whatever's being experienced, the *adukkhamasukhadhātu*, the neither pleasant nor unpleasant element will be manifest.

The cause of *dukkha*, the cause of our problems lies in the mind element being combined with the ignorance element. We refer to that combination as an ignorant 'person,' but, in truth, there isn't anybody involved with the six elements. The mind is ignorant because it's combined with the element of ignorance, but when we use ordinary language we say 'we,' 'we.'

Now, the Buddha arranged the elements in a way which we should talk about here: the '*sankata*,' which represents everything on the *sankhāra*, the concoctable side of things, and which includes the experiencer of *dukkha* as well as the experience of *dukkha* itself. The *sankata* has three sub-groups: the *kāmadhātu*, which is the sensual element, the *rūpadhātu*, the form element, and the *arūpadhātu*, the element of the formless, all of which are 'concocted.' When the *kāmadhātu* covers, or dominates the mind it means that it's absorbed in sensuality. When the *rūpadhātu* covers the mind it's absorbed with 'pure forms,' the *dhammas* of pure form which are the signs of the *jhānas*, the meditative attainments (the first four levels of absorption, or 'full' concentration). When the *arūpadhātu* covers the mind it's absorbed with the 'formless,' and unconcerned with sensuality or with pure forms. The formless consists in, according to the textbooks, the experiences of space, consciousness, nothingness, and neither perception nor non-perception (the four formless objects of a mind in the higher reaches of absorption, or full concentration.) So be aware that things don't have to be 'formed' to be mind objects. If the formless element covers the mind it's then absorbed in such. Even so, such a mind doesn't go beyond the *sankata*, the concocted, doesn't attain to *nibbāna*, it remains on the concoctable level.

It helps to have the elements, no matter how many hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, arranged in these three sub-groups. The *sankatadhātu* thus consists in the *kāmadhātu*, which, when it dominates the mind causes it to sink into the sensual, in the *rūpadhātu* which, when it dominates the mind causes it to sink into pure forms, in the *arūpadhātu* which, when it dominates the mind causes it to sink into the formless. The entire human race is at some time in one or other of these three elements. However, the majority is stuck on the sensual element, the *kāmadhātu*, so wander around

in the sensual realm, or ‘wandering.’ On occasion a special sort of person appears and they will, sooner or later, find absorption in the *rūpadhātu*, as with the ascetics, hermits, sages, and so on. A really first rate ascetic will absorb into the formless, as was the case with two of the Buddha’s teachers. There’s nothing higher than the ‘formless’ as regards the *sankatadhātus*, the concoctable elements, *nibbāna* being an *asankata*, unconcoctable, affair.

These three encompass all *sankhāras* (all concocted things,) and are themselves *sankhāras*, are concocted and concoctable. So a person might find themselves existing (mentally) at some time or other in any of these three elements, ‘realms,’ ‘wanderings,’ or ‘existences.’ If they train and, from being ordinarily worldly, become a sage, then they’ll find happiness in *rūpa*, pure form, or in the *arūpa*, the formless, however, although they may train the mind to those levels and experience satisfaction and happiness yet there’ll be some level of infatuation involved, so that they won’t want to escape. Hence they say that the *rūpa* and *arūpa Brahmas* ‘live’ longer than anyone, so long that it can’t be calculated, because theirs is a realm productive of much infatuation.

Remember that the first main group, the *sankata*, consists in those beings which must cycle around, in all those elements which are concoctable so are in essence *sankatadhātus*, which *sankatadhātus* can then be divided into three the sub-groups: the *kāmadhātu*, the *rūpadhātu*, the *arūpadhātu*. Remember also that we move around in these three *dhātus*, or ‘realms,’ sometimes here, sometimes there, but mostly, being as yet undeveloped, in the element of sensuality, being happy with sensuality even to the point of sinking into Hell or some place of suffering.

Now we’ll say something new: all worldly people and those who aren’t worldly, that is, the *sankata* and the *asankata*, can be divided into another three groups, into the *rūpa*, the *arūpa*, and the *nirodha dhātus*. *Rūpadhātu*, the element of form, is also a support for the *kāmadhātu*, the sensual element, because sensuality relies on it, the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches all depend on the *rūpadhātu* - as does ‘pure’ form, the sort of form which isn’t obviously sensual. Then there’s the second element, the ‘formless’ element, the *arūpadhātu*, which is just the mind’s feelings and thoughts, which, however, is still *sankhāra*, still concocted by causes and conditions, thus prone to continual change. There’s also the *nirodhadhātu*, the element which both the form and formless elements quench (evolve) into, and which is the same as *nibbāna*, the *nibbāna* element can also be called the ‘*nirodhadhātu*.’ When both *Rūpa* and *arūpa* enter the *nirodhadhātu* both ‘quench’ away (cease being concocted.) ‘*Nirodha*’ means ‘remainderless quenching,’ if the quenching is only temporary it goes by other names, *nirodha* implies a full quenching, a full extinguishing of any supporting causes and conditions so that whatever it is can cease it’s concocting performance completely.

It’s just been said that the mind element is mixed up with the element of ignorance so is stuck in the *vaṭṭasaṁsāra*. The *avijjādhātu* itself is what causes the mind element to cycle round in the *saṁsāra*. Hence the *avijjādhātu* has to be quenched. Quench the element of ignorance by removing the causes and conditions supporting it, that is, by allowing the *vijjādhātu*, the knowledge element, take its place, and the mind will elevate, will mix with the wisdom element, the *vijjādhātu*, and see clearly into the truth of all things, most especially it will know itself as being just an element. The mind that thinks it’s ‘me’ is just an element, and anything that enters, connects with it, concocts it, is an element too, so, seeing all things as elements, as natural elements, there’s no arising of the feeling that this is ‘me.’ Hence, mind changes its behaviour and from being ignorant and infatuated it wakes up, becomes smart, knows clearly, and is joyful as accords with being awake. Before this happens the mind ‘sleeps,’ as it were, now it ‘wakes up.’

Here, we come to real self-knowledge, that is, the mind comes to know the mind - the mind which thought that it was 'me' now comes to know itself. Don't forget that the Buddhist religion is about 'not-self,' and that anything and everything is, as already mentioned, a matter of the mind.

Therefore, know that if sometimes we say 'me' or sometimes we say 'mind,' we're talking about the same thing. So, now the mind comes to know itself, to realize that it's an element, that it's connected with elements, that it has elements as its cause, and that any results it produces are elements too.

The elements concoct together, mingle and concoct together giving rise to an endless series of new results: the elements of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch, the elements of good and bad, of neither good nor bad, the sensual element, the element of pure form, the element of the formless, each kind, each group, concocting together without any limit.

When anything gets concocted it will arise as some new thing, as happens in the kitchen, where various ingredients are concocted into the different varieties of food.

Now, a quality of the mind is that it can be concocted by anything, there can be attractive things which can infatuate as well as ugly, unseemly things which can repel, and so on. Because we don't understand these things properly we're led astray by them, led into liking and disliking, loving and hating, into fear, anxiety, longing after, envy, jealousy, into thoughts of destroying, thoughts of possessing, etc. We're ignorant and don't know ourselves as being just elements, don't know that all we experience is just elements, that even the 'delicious' is only an element, we don't see it that way and think that something really is delicious, hence we want it, and that sort of desire is powerful, is powerfully defiled: we want to get something even though we might have to kill someone to get it, or we want everything, want to be a world power, or whatever.

The heart of the Buddhist religion lies in understanding the elements. The 'person' is a combination of the six elements. If we understand the elements properly then that's knowledge complete, because on realizing that there are only elements there's no more clinging to anything.

We should know how our religion differs from the others. As far as I know the teaching that there are only the elements is peculiar to Buddhism, other religions don't teach this, at least, if any do teach it I've yet to meet with them. The Buddhist scriptures explain that it's all just elements.

We're a combination of earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness, a combination of the six elements operating under the power of the law of *idappaccayatā*, the law of Nature, which is what causes them to continually concoct together and come to be in the form of a person. Other religious systems don't explain in this way. The Christian religion, for instance, says that God took a handful of earth(sic), breathed a command, and it became the first man, name of Adam; then he took one of Adam's ribs, breathed a command and it became a woman, name of Eve, after which the pair reproduced. This reveals that in the old Judaic religion we human beings weren't understood as being a combination of the six elements arisen in accord with the law of Nature, *idappaccayatā*, but that we were created by God, who conjured us from just the earth element.

How different is this from the Buddhist explanation? Remember that the Buddhist religion teaches that the elements, in accord with the law of Nature, congregate, concoct together to produce new results in this and that way. Christianity teaches that God breathed life and created people. The Buddha taught that everything is natural elements operating according to the law of *idappaccayatā*. Know the heart of the Buddhist religion; be aware that everything is just natural elements constantly concocting together under the power of causes and conditions.

Looking at it scientifically we can divide the religions into two groups, the ‘creationist,’ and the ‘evolutionist.’ The Buddhist religion is of the second variety, teaching that there is evolution, or development, in accord with natural principles, that is, the elements develop and evolve naturally. This is the view of the group holding to the evolutionist understanding. The other group teaches that God creates, which is known as ‘creationist.’ Those holding to the creationist theory aren’t concerned with the elements, but the evolutionists are, they holding that there must be elements combining together for there to be any evolution.

All this is designed to point out that, (1) the Buddhist religion is evolutionist in character, and that, (2) we’re just elements too, so don’t get too carried away, don’t get too inflated.

‘Me’ and ‘mine’ are insanity, are what the mind mixed with ignorance thinks up: this is ‘me,’ this is ‘mine,’ in truth it can’t be like that because there are only natural elements. If the element of ignorance enters it concocts the mind into ignorance; if mind puts an end to ignorance it means that the wisdom element has entered to do the concocting and mind is now wise, smart. When we’re in the womb we don’t understand that there are only elements, and once born there’s no way that we can know this. Thus the child grows up, reaches adolescence still ignorant, still not understanding, it grows up concocting *dukkha*, concocting until the tears flow. It concocts a lot of *dukkha* until, gradually, it starts to see things differently, it learns something new and now finds that it can no longer cling, can no longer take things to be ‘me’ or ‘mine,’ because now it sees everything as being just natural elements, consequently it’s life goes on in a different way.

Now some people have bad luck, they don’t hear this sort of thing so don’t practise and die unfulfilled: they’re born, know only *dukkha*, and they die unfulfilled. However, if some have good luck, have the good fortune to hear the Buddha word they can develop sufficient *satipaṇṇā* (mindfulness and wisdom) and be able to see for themselves that a human being is just a combination of natural elements. Such an one can then quench *dukkha*, can come out from the mass of *dukkha*, can cease being worldly and attain nobility, can be *Arahant* and can stop wasting their life.

Hence this is no small matter. At present the mind clings to being ‘self,’ has the defilement of *taṇhā*, craving, so spins around in the *kilesa-kamma-vipāka* cycle, in desire, action in accord with it, results of action, and the concomitant strengthening of the sub-conscious trends that keep us locked into that cycle, so that it repeats over and over, getting stronger, becoming ever more and more powerful with each passing day. This is called ‘*vaṭṭasaṅsāra*.’ In particular it’s pleasant feeling which gets desired more than anything else, pleasant feelings can be dangerous, can be the enemy, and a terrible enemy, such feelings being likeable they get clung to as ‘self’ all the time. So, because there’s no knowledge of the elements there’s infatuation with them, hence we spin around in the mass of *dukkha*.

Now, when we know that the heart of the religion is the teaching that there’s nothing but elements, then we can expand the explanation and say that the arising, or birth of the elements is the birth of *dukkha*.

There’s a difficulty with the word ‘birth’ here, in that we hear about it only as birth from the womb. In the *Dhamma* it doesn’t mean that, and although a child’s already been born from the womb it won’t be called ‘birth’ until the child actually does it’s duty, which will represent the ‘birth,’ or arising, of the elements, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, to operate and perform their respective functions. Thus, when all four elements concoct together properly, or are concocting together there’s said to be ‘birth’ of the body.

The elements arising on this one occasion is what allows the body to operate as the body, and the mind to operate as the mind, that is, allows them to do their respective duties; if body and mind haven't yet done their duties, or performed their functions, then they've yet to be born in this sense, for instance: although we already have a mind, if the mind is yet to think, etc. if it's yet to do its duty, then it's yet to be 'born.' Hence 'birth' in this meaning is tied up with the performance of duty, or function. The Buddha said that the birth of the elements is the birth of *dukkha*, in that when all the elements are performing their duties it's called concocting, concocting of the body, of the mind, of thinking, of ignorance, hence the arising of the elements is the arising of concocting, is the arising of *dukkha*.

If we don't pay proper attention we won't understand what's meant by the birth of the elements and we'll have *dukkha* because we'll think that the elements have already been born (as at the beginning of life), which would be a big mistake. If we say that the elements are already born then we're using worldly language, not the language of *Dhamma*. To describe the elements as 'born' when they're actually doing their respective duties (as the body and mind) is to use *Dhamma* language. When the elements do their duties there's full concocting, then there's the arising of this and that until the defilements appear, until craving and clinging arise. Hence, understand well when it's said that the birth of the elements is the birth of *dukkha*.

Now, to continue: seeing all things as being just elements is the ultimate, practising to see that all things are just elements, that itself is the highest *Dhamma* practice: earth, water, fire, air, space, consciousness, the good, the bad, the pleasant, the unpleasant – whatever it is it's seen as being just a natural element, whatever it is it's seen as being *anattā* - that's the peak of *Dhamma* practice.

A good ancient custom is that which has people who ordain as monks and novices, right from their very first day of entering the temple, study and learn the *dhātupaccavekhana* chant:

'*yathāpaccāyampavatamānaṃ*,' etc. (the reflection on all things as being natural elements, and covering the four main categories: food, clothing, shelter, and medicines.) But then it's sad that people get this by heart but don't ever really understand it. They just recite ordaining and not understanding, disrobing and still not understanding, not understanding the heart of the Buddhist religion although its form in words is accurately memorized and repeated over and over from the first day.

When all things are seen as being just natural elements there's no more clinging to them, which is called 'escaping.' If there's clinging to anything then there's the feeling of being 'me' too, which is called 'sticking,' to cling is to stick, so, when there's no more clinging there's escape, release from bondage, from attachment to those things which let *dukkha* arise, because all such are seen as they truly are, as just elements.

Now we want to mention the fact that even modern education, which teaches about the elements in a scientific way, can be helpful here, and by really studying the elements in a scientific manner one can come to understand them as elements, as atoms combining together as this and that thing. If we study in accord with modern, materialistic scientific knowledge it will be some help, so study in that way to see, to some extent, that there are only elements concocting together naturally. It's just that Buddhism lets us see more, lets us go deeper than science can, let's us, by using a similar approach, see that it's all just elements, then there's no more clinging to 'self.'

It's those things with an *asāda*, a delicious quality, that are the problem, because delight arises from contacts with them, there's clinging to the delightful feeling, and the mind, being ignorant, immediately gives rise to the feeling that it's 'me' who's delighted, and that the delight is 'mine.'

‘I’ am delighted, this is called ‘*atta*,’ or ‘self,’ while the thing clung to is referred to as ‘*attaniyā*,’ as ‘mine.’ There’s no proper understanding of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ because there’s no proper understanding of the elements, the ignorance element dominating the mind prevents it from knowing the truth.

Now, do we understand this? We perhaps like to say that we do when we really don’t. We should take it as a basic principle that, if we still find infatuation with anything, still feel aversion, experience anger, feel fear concerning anything, then we’re still ignorant and we don’t see all things as *dhātus*. When there’s no longer any liking and disliking, no anger, fear, anxiety, longing after, etc. then we can say that we ‘see’ in the elemental way. If that’s the case there’s no infatuation with anything, no anger aimed at anyone, because we see that there are only elements, then we’re not afraid of ghosts and ghoulies because they’re really just natural elements, there’s no anxiety, no longing after anything because it’s been seen that there are only natural elements. We measure ourselves in this way. Don’t think that because you’ve stayed a long time in a temple, or come to the temple many times, that you know all about the elements. Be careful, because you might not understand at all, better to observe, see if there’s still infatuation in feelings or not, still infatuation with the *sukhavedanā*, the *dukkhavendanā*, the *adukkhamasukhavedanā*, or not? If there’s no infatuation then there is real understanding of the elements.

To sum up: we, all of us, should develop our ability to study, to see, to know the elements more and better than we do at present. We still know too little about them. So aim at making more of an understanding, come to know them better, come to see *anattā*, see ‘not self,’ see that there are only natural elements concocting together without any meaning of ‘self.’ See the *dhammadhātus* – ‘*dhammadhātu*’ means natural element - see the *dhammadhātus* then we’ll be safe because we’ll understand properly. Until then we’ll be ignorant, ignorant of the elements, and we won’t know that we, and everything around us, is really just elements.

So, the first stage arises and *dukkha* appears. *Dukkha* bites, is distressing, and bites for a long enough time to cause knowledge to appear, the knowledge that can prevent further mistakes; not taking the elements to be ‘me’ will mark the second stage. The third stage is where the escape from *dukkha* occurs and represents, therefore, the perfection of the Buddhist way. Being fully Buddhist is to see all things as they really are, as just natural elements void of any meaning of ‘self.’ Right now, are we perfectly Buddhist? Think about it. If we, because of a lack of awareness, still think that there’s a ‘self’ then we aren’t yet Buddhists. ‘*Buddha*’ means one who knows, who’s awake, who’s joyful because minus *dukkha*, one who’s awakened from the sleep of ignorance. We must be thus if we’re to be perfectly Buddhist, and be so because of knowing the elements as they really are: as natures minus any meaning of ‘self.’ This is the only way to be perfectly Buddhist. We’re sunk in the mass of *dukkha* because we don’t understand the elements, because we don’t see the elements as they are we find infatuation with those which concoct together into the delicious, the satisfying, we’re infatuated with such until our salaries aren’t enough for our needs, then there’s corruption, and so on and so forth.

We’ve been concerned with the elements, with the fact that there isn’t anything which isn’t a *dhātu*, an element. The pure mind is an element which the element of ignorance comes to dominate so that there’s *dukkha*, so that the *dukkha* element arises. There’s ignorance so something which is really *dukkha* is seen as being *sukha*, then someone experiencing, for instance, sexual desire, will see it as being the *sukhadhātu*, and, because of the consequent infatuation, must meet with distress. They, subsequently, may wake up, as it were, come to know all things as they actually are so that the mind

no longer finds infatuation with anything, so that it becomes a mind which has escaped, has quenched the defilements, quenched ‘self’ belief, quenched all concocting and has attained the *nibbāna* element, the highest of the high, which, nevertheless, will still be just an element.

LDB

XI. Studying ‘*sankhāra*’ and ‘*visankhāra*.’

Sankhāra means something concocted; its opposite is *visankhāra*, which implies the un-concocted. In the whole Buddhist system nothing else is talked about apart from these two matters. Things which concoct and are concocted are animals and people, hence they have to experience *dukkha* until such time as there’s no more concocting, no *dukkha*, and the experience of *nibbāna* - which is the *visankhāra* - arises. These two words *sankhāra* and *visankhāra* should be understood. If we really know these two things we know everything. There’s nothing which isn’t either one or the other: *sankhāra*: concocting and the result of concocting - *dukkha*; *visankhāra*: non-concocting and its result - the peacefulness of *nibbāna*.

In the Thai language ‘*sankhāra*’ is usually understood to mean the physical body, as, for instance, when it’s said that quenching the *sankhāra* implies dying. Hence it remains a fundamental *dhmma* which is grievously misunderstood. It isn’t necessary to die to quench the *sankhāra*. Why that’s so will be explained anon.

At this time we can glance at *sankhāra* as it occurs in the *Pali* language, and where it’s various in meaning: it’s the activity of concocting itself, this is *sankhāra*; it’s the thing that concocts another thing, causes another thing to arise, this is also *sankhāra*; the thing concocted is *sankhāra* too, and there’s yet another, special, meaning: the ‘power of concocting,’ the power, or ability to concoct anything can also be called ‘*sankhāra*.’

Hence there are several meanings found in the *Pali* texts: the concocting itself; the ‘concocter,’ the ‘concocted,’ and the ‘power of concocting,’ the power, or ability, to concoct. Be aware, therefore, that *sankhāra* as usually expressed in the Thai language is too narrow of meaning, implying the body alone, but in the *Pali* all the meanings of the word are revealed.

While we’re about it, there’s something we should be aware of, something the Buddha said, something about ‘laying down’ the *sankhāra*, or ‘laying down’ the ‘concocting of age. Now, ‘laying down’ the *sankhāra* means stopping the power of concocting, casting off the power of concocting, and if we include the word ‘age’ then it’s about putting a stop to the concocting which allows the concept of ‘ageing’ to persist. When the Buddha set the date of his *parinibbāna* for three months ahead he’d decided just when he would ‘lay down’ the *sankhāra*, lay down the concocting supporting the ageing process once and for all, hence *sankhāra* here implies that which concocts, or allows ‘ageing’ to persist (rather than implying the body itself), that was what he would put an end to. So, if we can stop the concocting then the process of ageing will stop too. (The Thai phrase used in this passage: ‘*plong aiyo sangkarn*’ - lit. ‘laying down age concocting’ - is usually taken to mean, in the case of the Buddha, the fixing of the date of his *parinibbāna*, which, in the general understanding, would mean fixing the date of his actual death, or the date of the ‘laying down’ of his body; Buddhadāsa has given it a different twist here.)

Now, what is *sankhāra*? Think about it, because with the exception of *nibbāna* there isn't anything which isn't *sankhāra*: that which has and that which doesn't have life, that within us, that without, the things that are causes, the things that result from causes, *kamma* and its results, all, without exception, are *sankhāra*.

Sankhāra, because it appears in various contexts and in various places in the texts, can be misunderstood. For instance: of the twelve links making up the formula of *paṭiccasamupāda* one is called *sankhāra*, it being one of the first pair of conditions involved in the arising of *dukkha*, hence: *avijjā* is the condition for *sankhāra*, which *sankhāra* is then the condition for *viññāna*, which is then the condition for *nāmarūpa*, and so on through the twelve-linked formula. However, in reality all twelve links are *sankhāras*, are things concocting and being concocted, are the concocters and the concocted: *avijjā*, *sankhāra*, *viññāna*, *nāmarūpa*, *āyatana*, *phassa*, *vedanā*, *taṇhā*, *upādāna*, *bhāva*, *jāti*, and *dukkha*, all of these are *sankhāras*. The Buddha used the word '*sankhāra*' for the second link, that is, for the 'power of concocting,' thus *avijjā* conditions the arising of *sankhāra*, the power of concocting, which then conditions consciousness into doing its duty as the mind, etc. So be aware that *sankhāra* in this instance is being used in a specific sense, while on the more general level it represents just one *sankhāra* amongst a group of twelve.

Now, as regards the *pancakhandha*, the five aggregates, *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, and *viññāna khandhas*, here the word '*sankhāra*' occurs once, as the fourth aggregate, but all five are *sankhāras*. *Rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, and *viññāna*, all concoct and are concocted, so be aware that all five aggregates are *sankhāras*, it's just that the fourth is also called *sankhāra*, which, again, causes some people to misapprehend the term as just referring to one of the aggregates, not realizing that it applies to all five. The *Pali* language can present these kinds of difficulties, can be perplexing if not well studied and grasped.

Now, we'll take a detailed look at the word *sankhāra* as used in the *Pali* language particularly at the time of the Buddha. *Sankhāra*, when most properly translated means 'concocting,' but what does 'concocting' mean? In worldly language 'concocting' is to take several kinds of things and put them together to produce some new thing, as, for instance, with food: in the kitchen when concocting a curry several things come together, concoct together to produce the curry. Another example is the body: take a good look at the body, there's *sankhāra*, there's continual concocting in the body: this concocting this, that concocting that. Some bodily things are concocters, they concoct other things, like the liver, or the kidneys, for instance, they concoct bile, lymph, pus, etc. which are the 'concocted.' Our bodies are full of what in the *Pali* language are collectively called '*sankhāra*,' concocting on in a wide variety of ways. If we look outside in the world there's nothing but continual concocting. Sunlight concocts things, water concocts things, the earth, water, fire, and air elements concoct things, and not just now and again, but all the time. For instance: there are rain clouds which make the rain fall, the rain causes the ground to become wet, because the rain wets the ground there can arise plants, creatures, things of various kinds, even the habitat of fishes can arise, along with the various things that live in water - or, the rainfall makes the road wet and slippery so that people fall down, break their heads and have to go to a doctor, who then has to work. These are examples of how concocting works step by step. Take a good look and concocting will be seen everywhere: there's concocting of some thing and that thing then concocts some other thing, as with a tree, which once in existence then concocts other things, concocts fruits, for instance, which in their turn concoct other things too.

Concocting is a smallish word but its range of activity is enormous, covering the entire cosmos, because in every world, in every universe there's really nothing other than concocting taking place. Think about it, 'concocting' - '*sankhāra*,' just that single word encompasses all things whatsoever. The continual destruction of things so that other things can arise is called concocting and is the particular characteristic of Nature operating in its '*sankata*' mode. The other side of the coin is Nature in '*asankata*' mode, without any form of concocting and represented just by *nibbāna*. Hence all of Nature is engaged in concocting, in concocting the arising of an uncountable multitude of things, that's the activity of Nature, by Nature, for Nature, which makes it sound something like the logo of a democratic system of the modern era: 'of Nature, by Nature, for Nature,' however, reflects a truer state of affairs than does 'of the people, by the people, for the people.' It's the particular characteristic of Nature to concoct so that results can arise.

Know that if there's no concocting then nothing is going to happen. There's, for instance, the sun, but before there was the sun there had to be something to concoct it into appearing, that something was Nature – 'of Nature, by Nature, for Nature' - there was the concocting of the sun, then the sun went on concocting thus allowing other things to appear. It's believed that out of that process came this world, and in our world things were then, and are still being continually concocted. Think about it, recognize this process of concocting: first the world was a ball of fire, then it cooled, then there came living things, seeds, plants, trees, the vegetable kingdom, then there were creatures, people, gods, it was all a flow of concocting, was all the fruit of concocting. So we say that if there isn't any concocting going on then there won't be anything, not even the sun, nothing would appear. Here, we'll look at the sort of concocting which is problem, which causes *dukkha*. Now, there's the mind which can think and feel, and there are the five physical senses, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body, as well as their objects, the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. Once received those objects will give rise to results, in particular to the defilements, and with the arising of the defilements *kamma*, deliberated action, will occur, there'll be action under the influence of defilement, and there'll be the results of action, that is, happiness or its opposite, *sukha* or *dukkha*, will arise, to be followed inevitably by more concocting.

Because there's always the desire to be happy this continues to happen, there's a continual 'stream' of concocting the results of which appear as our happiness and unhappiness. The *sankhāra* are like this, they concoct, when the concocting stops so will the *dukkha*. We don't have to die to put an end to the concocting, just learn to receive whatever object presents itself at the senses without allowing feelings of happiness or unhappiness to arise and there won't be any problems. If there's wisdom the concocting can end. If it can't be stopped there'll be clinging and then there must be *dukkha* too. Hence the concocting is itself *dukkha*, *dukkha* is inherent in the concocting, because when there's concocting there's no freedom, no liberty, no peace, concocting bringing continual change and transformation. It says in the *Pali* that concocting is extreme *dukkha*, the Buddha said as much, so, if there's no concocting there's no *dukkha* either.

The word '*dukkha*' has several meanings, the first, that of 'pain,' is the most common. The second meaning is that of being unattractive, ugly: anything, when it's observed and seen to be continually concocting, changing and flowing, is unattractive. Even a stone, if recognized as changeful and thus deceptive, has this unattractive quality. *Dukkha* has this meaning, that is, when anything is properly seen it's unattractive. The third meaning is that of being unattractively empty, empty of, or without anything substantial that could be clung to as a 'self.' This is voidness but in its

unattractive guise, and is also referred to as *dukkha*. *Dukkha* has at least three meanings: painful, tormenting; when seen it's unattractive, ugly; and it's insubstantial, unpleasantly empty.

All *sankhāras* are like this: *sankhāras* that have life, have a mind, have feelings and can think have *dukkha* of the painful variety, while *sankhāras* that aren't alive, don't feel and think - like a stone - have the characteristic of being unattractive, ugly when properly seen, and, on top of all that, all *sankhāras* are empty of anything that could be called a 'self,' so are 'void' too, but in an unattractive way. It's basic to the study of *dukkha* that the *sankhāra* which have life, have mind have to experience *dukkha* of the uncomfortable, painful kind, so, for such, even being alive, even surviving involves *dukkha*. The *sankhāra* which aren't alive are things that, when properly understood, are *dukkha* in the way of being unattractive, ugly. Both kinds are void of anything that could be called a 'self.'

Now, looking at the opposite side of things, at that which is free, or without any concocting, the '*visankhāra*.' '*Sankhāra*' means concocting, '*vi-sankhāra*' means non-concocting. The *visankhāra* is also known as the '*nibbānadhātu*,' the element which is quenched, cooled, because without concocting. The Buddha described the *visankhāra* as '*nibbanam paramam suññam*,' as '*nibbāna*, the ultimate voidness.' *Nibbāna* is empty of the defilements, it's the *dukkha*-less, it's free of clinging, free of any problem, but it isn't nothing at all, it's emptiness, voidness, but in the *Dhamma* sense. In the Pali texts it also has '*nibbānam paramam sukham*,' which means '*nibbāna* is the ultimate happiness,' which, in this instance, has been set out in a more worldly way to interest people, because people like to be happy, and, while saying that *nibbāna* represents the final ending of *dukkha* won't interest people so much, saying that *nibbāna* is the ultimate happiness just might attract attention. Hence the Buddha sometimes described *nibbāna* in this way, but not often, in fact it's met with in just two places in the texts, while the description of *nibbāna* as being the final ending of *dukkha* - which is *Dhamma* language - is everywhere in the scriptures.

The 'one who knows' says that *nibbāna* is the final ending of *dukkha*, but if we want to interest people then we have to say that *nibbāna*, or 'non-concocting,' is the ultimate happiness, because people generally understand happiness easily then they'll be more likely to want to pursue the matter further, perhaps start to practise, and, in the fullness of time, might realize that avoiding clinging to anything means avoiding concocting anything, and that avoiding concocting anything means that neither *dukkha* nor *sukha* happen, then there's freedom.

Get a grip on the principle that concocting is itself *dukkha*, that is, it's troublesome, confusing, turbulent, it brings pain for living beings, and renders both the living and non-living unattractive, ugly. All *sankhāra* are concocted things and are *dukkha* because they are.

Now, why is there concocting? There's concocting because there's ignorance, *avijjā*. We're born as human beings, as people, we have eyes, ears, a nose, a tongue, and a body and mind, and there are the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects which are always impacting those organs, but there's also ignorance, no real knowledge, so that, when a form comes to contact the eyes, a sound to contact the ears, a smell to contact the nose, etc. concocting results because ignorance is invariably present, that is, there's concocting of the sort that allows the defilement of craving, *taṇhā* to arise, then there's *dukkha*.

Some people might ask about those things that aren't people, like animals, and material things such as stones, what makes them concoct? That's a difficult question to answer, and it has to be said that that's a matter for Nature itself and something that we can't know, our ignorance not allowing us to know just why it's Nature's function to concoct. For instance, where or what a stone was before it

came to be in its present location we can't know, perhaps it was once part of the top of a mountain which, over millennia, gradually came to be in its present condition. What caused it to do that? It was the concocting of nature, the rain, the weather, storms, etc. broke up whatever it was a part of before and deposited it in the place it now occupies. Even natures which don't obviously have life concoct within themselves and, eventually, this stone will dissolve into grains of sand, into specks of dust, on and on it will go - but we don't need to know or study about that. Scientists know that dust, rock sediment, and mud form into stones, and then dissolve again into dust, earth, mud, to form something new – like a 'sedimentary' rock, for instance, in which it can be seen that many kinds of small, tiny rocks have come together to form a whole. What is it that makes this happen, is it God? If we believe in God then, for us, it will be God who makes it all happen, but if we don't have that sort of belief then Nature will be seen as the responsible party.

To sum up: living things change and transform continually in a way appropriate to them; non-living things change and transform continually in their own way too, although not to the same extent, we say that, in the case of the living, that happens because of ignorance, because there's a lack of knowledge.

There's something interesting and quite surprising that the Buddha said: we, while still in the womb, don't know about *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* (liberation of the mind through wisdom - an involved way of saying that we don't know how to function as human beings). Babies don't have this knowledge in the womb, instead they have *avijjā*, ignorance, so they don't know that if they fall into concocting there'll be *dukkha*, neither do they know that the concocting could be stopped through the power of wisdom, through *paññā*. Infants in the womb don't have this kind of knowledge so they, once born, concoct continually through childhood, through adolescence, through maturity, into old age: *avijjā*, ignorance is their constant companion, their comrade, hence there's continual concocting, and that in itself is *dukkha*.

We should try to observe, try to see concocting: look around, look at a stone, at a tree, at people, at animals, try to see them as streams of concocting flowing on and changing continually. But at this time we probably won't have enough wisdom to see things in that way, so we'll find ourselves being concocted into coming and going, into doing this, doing that, into getting, losing, making a profit, making a loss, being hot, being cold, and so on and so forth, all of which will give the mind reason to cling. Hence, be clever, follow in the Buddha's footsteps, be able to look around and see only streams of change and transformation: look outside, all around, and see everything and anything through those eyes, the eyes that see streams of change and transformation continually flowing on; look inside, look within and see that there's just a stream of change and transformation. Look outside, look inside, at ourselves, at others, near and far, look at anything, whatever it is it will be just a stream of change and transformation.

As of now we don't see the stream of change, but we do see meanings in things, meanings that can stimulate and depress. Hence if something is pretty we like it, if it's ugly we don't like it, if it's sweet sounding we like it, if it's a harsh sound we don't like it, if it's fragrant we like it, if it's foul smelling we don't, we live like this and there's continual concocting, because of seeing things in the way that we do there's continual concocting, and from the liking and disliking come anger, hatred, fear, anxiety, longing after, jealousy, envy, and so on and so forth, ending up, in almost all cases, with some form of nervous disease. If we don't understand the things we experience properly there'll be some kind of mental abnormality developing, and all because we don't have *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*, knowledge of liberation of the mind through real knowledge.

Doctors say that there's been a rapid increase in the occurrence of nervous disease, probably due to the fact that, in these times, there's an excess of the sort of things capable of provoking concocting. Hence people in the modern world, it seems, are more prone to nervous diseases than of yore. We ought to study so that we can understand concocting, so that we don't get involved with it, so that we don't get involved with clinging.

We tell everybody to come and sit in the forest, which is where the Buddha got enlightened, and get some knowledge from those things which seem to concoct less than we do, like trees: the trees say stop, stop, don't make such a fuss, don't go concocting all over the place, don't go too crazy; the trees and the stones tell us a story: don't go too crazy, stop, cool down, but we don't listen to the trees and stones when they tell us to stop all the disturbance, the concocting, the craziness, we don't hear them. But, observe that if we come and sit with the stones and the trees, then we, to some extent, 'stop' of our own accord, we cool down to some degree: keep company with the trees and stones, with Nature generally, and we'll naturally concoct less. This is why people go to the forest to get their enlightenment rather than to some exalted teacher, or university, or to a house in a town somewhere. Every great teacher got their awakening in a forest, in a quiet peaceful place which had the power to cool down, to stop the concocting. The Buddha was born in the forest, was awakened in the forest, taught, wandered here and there in the forests, attained *nibbāna* in the forest. Hence, if we go to keep company with foresty things, then, perhaps, we too can be cool, at ease, comfortable.

Some complain that it's not true to say that they feel at ease when they come here (Suan Mokkh) that's because they aren't aware enough to be able to recognize that when they come to sit with the stones and trees the concocting diminishes, the power of concocting decreases. People do feel comfortable, more or less at ease in the forest. It's not the same in the towns where's there's a lot of disturbance, but if people would come and be with Nature they could experience some degree of stillness, some cooling down, and, from repeated visits might come to realize that the heat of *dukkha* comes from too much clinging, from too much concocting, then they might begin to try and concoct less, try to control the ignorant concocting. There's benefit in forest dwelling because it teaches us to do that, to concoct less, it's not like those places where we're tempted into concocting all the time.

Now, where's the 'office' of concocting? If we were concocting a curry then, in that case, the 'office' would be the kitchen, but the 'office' of concocting, of *dukkha*, of *paṭiccasamupāda*, of the *upādānakhandas*, of the 'clinging aggregates,' where is that? It's the mind, the mind which is mixed up with ignorance, the mind which still doesn't know, the mind is like the 'office' of concocting. If mind has knowledge it won't concoct, so any concocting has to happen at a time when it's ignorant. Our minds can be wise or unwise: perhaps we've studied and acquired knowledge, but, on wanting some particular knowledge it doesn't appear, or it doesn't appear in time, which means that our mindfulness isn't good enough to bring the necessary information quickly enough. Even though the scriptures have been studied and *aniccaṇ*, *dukkhaṇ*, and *anaṭṭā* have been perused, when some particular information is needed it doesn't appear because mindfulness isn't fast enough to bring it in time to be of help. That kind of mind must be ignorant, concocting on under the cosh of ignorance, and will have *dukkha* even though the texts have been studied. Hence it's said that the office of concocting is the ignorant mind. Even with the 'luminous' mind, the mind yet to meet with the *kilesa*, there's still the opportunity for ignorance to arise, because such a mind has yet to be trained there's still the chance for ignorance to arise at any

time. The mind without proper knowledge is an ignorant mind, such a mind is like the office, or, the kitchen, wherein *dukkha* is cooked up. Anything can concoct simply because it exists and is within the mental compass. Concocting is related to those things which are its ingredients, that is, to sense objects. Within is the mind, surrounding it on all sides are those objects which can enter via the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind itself, and, prior to those, there are the senses which will receive the sense objects. The inner senses are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, the outer senses are the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects, which will become ‘meaningful,’ become things with the power to concoct the mind, thus coming to be the ingredients of concocting.

On the first level there are sense objects, then, when sense impacts occur, there arises *phassa*, contact, or perhaps we’ll be more aware of feeling, of feelings of pleasure, displeasure, or neither-nor, because these are ingredients too, hence the senses, the sense objects, sense contacts, and the feelings are all ‘ingredients’ of concocting. If we use the language of ultimate truth then all of this needs to be *sandiṭṭiko*, to be experienced personally, it needs to be seen right here and now how sense objects concoct, how they concoct the arising of *phassa*, contact, how *phassa* concocts *vedanā*, feelings, and how the arising of *taṇhā*, of *upādāna*, of *dukkha*, is concocted.

If we were being scientific we’d have to say that time and place are involved here too, in that the time and place have to be right, because if the timing isn’t just so then the attractive, the sweet sounding experiences, might not be able to promote feelings of liking, of satisfaction. Hence time and place have to be just right, and appearance must be just right too, then an object capable of pleasing, of satisfying can arise: just as producing something eatable requires that the ingredients and the cooking time be just right, otherwise the food might not be so desirable. Hence the material components and the time have to be right for there to be the concocting of a mind object out of the data of sense experience capable of provoking ignorant desire and infatuation. That will represent the fruit of concocting: the successful concocting of the defilements. As for the concocting that won’t let the defilements arise, well, there mustn’t be any, ignorant, concocting then there won’t be any defilement. So, don’t be led astray by the pretty, the sweet sounding, the sweet smelling, the delicious tasting, the soft and gentle touch sensations, or the thoughts and imaginations that can charm the mind, don’t get infatuated or there’ll be the sort of concocting that leads into the mass of *dukkha*.

Now we’ll look at concocting as it applies particularly to people, which will be better than considering things without life, that hardly being to the point. As regards people – us – concocting has been around since we were born. In the womb we were conceived when the female egg and the male sperm concocted together, at which point there wasn’t a mind involved and no feeling of ‘self’ existed, but there was concocting. The egg developed until it became the seat for the consciousness element, the *viññānadhātu*. The consciousness element entered and dwelt in the concoction so that it could feel, now all six elements were present. So began the life of a tiny infant in the womb, as a mass of life developing in the womb, and, as there developed an increasing ability to feel so the mind developed.

That’s concocting, the increasing concocting of the earth, water, fire and air elements so that the mind develops, so that the body develops, so that there’s development into the baby which will be able to experience sensations by way of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. At the last there’s birth into the world, and the mind then develops further in dependence on contacts with its surroundings. This is concocting.

This infant, however, while still in the womb doesn't have any knowledge, particularly knowledge of how to keep the mind away from *dukkha* (*cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*, liberation of the mind through wisdom), hence, once born into the world, and not knowing about *dukkha*, it thinks in such a way that causes *dukkha*. Subsequently the child grows up and as it does then anything coming in through the senses will be capable of concocting *dukkha* so that through adolescence and into the adult years its life will be full of that problem. Finally, perhaps, the knowledge that things can't go on like this might arise, that not concocting, not clinging to things would be better, and the effort might then be made to practise towards that end. However, there'll also be the recognition that such a thing is going to be difficult to achieve while still living the household life with its continual disturbance, and that ordaining might be a good idea. So, perhaps that gets done, or else one goes into the forest to live, or into a cave, or into the hills, where concocting should be easier to avoid, then there's the building of the sort of lifestyle which doesn't involve concocting.

If there's still concocting there'll still be *dukkha*, when the concocting stops there won't be, even though sense objects will still have to be experienced. As far as people go, then the senses, the eyes ears, nose, tongue, body and the mind are much the same, any difference lies in the fact that one person will be prone to concocting and one won't.

Think about it, there's no need for anyone to die to stop the concocting, rather, we simply don't do it, we stop concocting, and we stop it because there's enough *saṭipaññā* (mindfulness and the right kind of knowledge) to allow us to avoid being delighted by the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental things that impact the senses. This is also called 'quenching,' or stopping the *sankhāra*. Hence, we can quench the *sankhāra* without having to die. In the Thai language it's wrongly said that quenching, or stopping the *sankhāra* involves death, but in *Dhamma* language quenching the *sankhāra* is about stopping the concocting and thus not having any *dukkha* to deal with, it's not about death, about dying.

So, we can see that, in the beginning, there's just mind, the mind alone, the mind which, while still in the womb, doesn't know anything. Subsequently mind acquires wrong knowledge so that there's clinging, there's concocting, so that there's *dukkha*, all of which continues until, having reached the limit of one's tolerance, the realization arises and matures that to not concoct would be better.

There are three stages here: mind alone, just mind without concocting, then the mind which does nothing else but concoct, then the mind which realizes that to not concoct at all would be better. This is the story of human life from the beginning until the attainment of *nibbāna*: just the mind, the original mind, then mind with ignorance, and, finally, mind with the ultimate knowledge, the knowledge of non-concocting.

Now, we'll take a look at that problem word '*anattā*.' *Anattā* means 'not-self.' According to the *Pali* both the *sankhāra* and *visankhāra* are *anattā*, both the concocted and unconcocted are 'not-self,' so, don't take either to be 'me' or 'mine.' Those *sankhāra* change and flow continually, and, being regularly concocted, can't contain or be 'self.' But the unconcocted, the 'stopped,' the 'cooled,' the peaceful can't be taken to be 'self' either, because it's just nature, just a natural element, a *dhātu*, the *nibbānadhātu*.

The four 'great' elements should be approached in the same way, we should understand earth, water, fire, and air as being natural elements and avoid taking them to be self-existent things. Both the *sankhāra* and the *visankhāra*, both the concocted and the unconcocted are *anattā*. If we use worldly language we'd say that those things which are unstable and *dukkha* are *anattā*, but that

which is stable and isn't *dukkha* is *anattā* too. There's no way that anything can be taken to be 'self,' to be *attā*, because whatever it is it's really just natural elements.

If we take anything to be 'me' or 'mine' that's wrong thinking, that's *avijjā*, and we get bitten, that is, there's *dukkha*. Because of clinging to something as 'self' there's biting, there's distress. Both, things which have no value and things which have value shouldn't be clung to, so, live life without clinging to anything. Good and bad shouldn't be clung to; bad things shouldn't be done at all, while any good activities should be performed without clinging. If we do bad things we'll get bitten; good activities can be beneficial, but if we cling the good will bite us too. In the high *Dhamma* there's no room for clinging to either. As for possessions, we can deal with even the most precious things without clinging to them, because if there's clinging there's biting, there's *dukkha*, there's 'heat,' mental heat. Thus one can have, can use, can take advantage of any utility, but avoid clinging to it.

Before the Buddha appeared they clung to the highest of the *Brahma* worlds as being the ultimate. The Buddha arose and said that wasn't so, he said that nothing should be clung to, then one could then go further, because higher than the *Brahma* worlds was *nibbāna*. Hence *nibbāna* was the escape from the good and the bad, the meritorious and demeritorious, from *kamma* and its results, *nibbāna* was the *visankhāra*, the unconcocted.

Non-concocting is recognized as the fourth form of *kamma* in the Buddhist system. Before the Buddha's time they only taught about good *kamma*, bad *kamma*, and *kamma* which was neither all good nor all bad - as it would be expressed in worldly language. In the *Pali* they talk about black *kamma*, white *kamma*, and the neither all black nor all white variety, hence three kinds of *kamma*. This is what was taught before the Buddha: that people must go along according to their *kamma*, bad actions bringing bad results, good actions, good results, and the neither all good nor all bad kind causing one to tramp along accordingly. The Buddha, however, realized that one could cancel out one's *kamma*, that is, one could live above *kamma*, put an end to it, one could perform *kamma* of the neither black nor white, neither good nor bad variety, that being the *kamma* which puts an end to both. This teaching lies at the heart of Buddhism, it's called *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*, or the 'noble eightfold path,' or whatever, depending on individual preference. But, please, recognize that it's *kamma* which brings about the ending of concocting, and that when there's no concocting then there's no good, bad, or not all good or all bad either.

One who sees clearly won't be afraid to say that both meanings, both good and bad are ultimately hellish, which anyone with the usual understanding wouldn't dare to say for fear of ridicule. I used to get just that for saying that both good and bad were despicable. There were people who thought it, and some who - because they only knew good and bad, and had no knowledge of anything higher - said out loud that such a thing was wrong speech and therefore a wrong teaching too. The 'good' and the 'bad' exist within the realms of the concocted, when there's no concocting then there's no good or bad, one escapes them, dwells 'above' both.

Nibbāna is above the good and bad, when the mind attains to that then there's no *dukkha* at all. The good and the bad are bases of clinging, both will bite if clung to, so avoid them. Nobody likes the bad anyway, but people like the good, hence there's distress because clinging to the good means staying stuck fast in the mass of *dukkha*. Therefore, don't let the good and bad concoct liking and disliking and the resultant clinging to 'me' and 'mine.' That will be non-concocting, will be *visankhāra*.

Concocting, or *sankhāra*, is a continual ‘flowing on’ displaying the characteristics of *dukkha*. *Visankhāra* is the opposite of that, being without any remaining ignorance, without any meaning of ‘me’ or of ‘mine,’ so without any concocting capable of causing *dukkha*, of making the mind experience torment of the various kinds - love, hate, anger, fear, and so on.

But we’re not much interested in the fact that the ending of *dukkha* lies in non-concocting, or that when there’s no concocting there’s no good and bad, these existing only within the realm of concocting, and that if one goes beyond the limits of the concocted they don’t exist. That itself is the escape, and involves performing the fourth kind of *kamma*, the kind which isn’t taught in other systems only in the Buddhist. But we hardly ever teach the fourth kind of *kamma*, that which doesn’t concoct the mind into either state, be it good or bad, we only teach about good and bad *kamma*, teach people to cling to good *kamma* and to get bitten by it.

All people with nervous diseases get them because of clinging to the ‘good,’ not because of clinging to the ‘bad.’ Anxiety, jealousy, envy come from clinging to the good. The good bites us, we’re under its power and it bites us, causes us to concoct continually, to regularly experience distress when we don’t get what we want, to develop nervous diseases, to become insane, and even, in some instances, to die. We only know the concocting side of things, we’re infatuated with it and aren’t aware of the unconcocted, the *visankhāra*.

Thus we need to understand both the *sankhāra* and *visankhāra*. *Sankhāra* is tied up with *dukkha* and its arising, while *visankhāra* is concerned with *nibbāna*, the *dukkha*-less, the unconcocted. When *dukkha* has no way of arising that’s *nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* means ‘cool,’ everything’s ‘cool’ when there’s no concocting. If there is concocting, even of the good variety, the result won’t be coolness, there’ll be mental turbulence of the good sort, there’ll be ‘heat’ of the kind that isn’t obvious, mental heat because of clinging. In reality the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ aren’t problems, in truth they’re just what they are, but if we fall for them, if we cling to them, they bite us.

Hence *Arahants* don’t cling, not even to the good, and although it comes to them in the form of support, of being waited on, of being worshipped, it never causes any ‘heat,’ any *dukkha*.

The word ‘*nibbāna*,’ according to the books, means ‘cool,’ ‘cool’ because there’s nothing around which is ‘hot,’ that is, there’s no *lobha*, *dosa*, or *moha*, there’s no concocting so there’s no greed, aversion, and delusion - the ‘heat’ - hence life is ‘cool.’ We could say that the *sankhāra* and *visankhāra* form a pair, one representing life in its ‘hot,’ concocted mode, one in its ‘cool,’ unconcocted mode.

This is Buddhism: *sankhāra* and *visankhāra*, it can be summed up in just these two words.

To repeat: it’s not at all necessary that we die to quench, or stop, the *sankhāra*, stop the concocting. I’ve observed that when attending funerals or related events where the funeral chants are used and where one hears the words ‘*tesaṇvūpassamo sukho*,’ that all those listening misunderstand, they misunderstand and think that dying and getting shoved in a coffin is ‘*sukho*,’ happiness. *Tesaṇvūpassamosukho* means that stopping all *sankhāras* is happiness, not that dying, quenching the *sankhāra* and reclining in a coffin, is happiness. The Buddha made the point that to not concoct, to stop the concocting wherever and whenever is happiness. But people hear and understand that when one dies and gets stuffed into a coffin the *sankhāra* is quenched and that’s happiness. In truth the *Pali* text doesn’t mean that, quench the *sankhāra*, stop the mental concocting and there won’t be any *dukkha*, there’ll be *sukha*. The Buddha didn’t utter those words so that they could be chanted when some person was lying in a coffin. He uttered them as a general principle: if there’s concocting there must be *dukkha*, hence stopping the concocting is *sukha*.

Then there's the chanting of '*aniccavātasankhāra*,' which means that all *sankhāras* are impermanent, however, it isn't usually understood in that way and the people listening will take it to mean that the physical body is impermanent. In truth it doesn't mean that, the *Pali* has it that all *sankhāras*, all concocted things, are impermanent, not just the body - all *sankhāras* arise and pass away.

It's to be hoped that, should we ever have occasion to listen to the funeral chants, then, on hearing these words: '*aniccā vata sankhāra upādavaya dhammino uppajitvā nirujanti tesaṃ vupasamo sukho*,' we'll remember that the stopping of concocting is happiness, not dying and lying in a coffin, not killing ourselves so that we can then lie in a coffin and be happy.

That's *visankhāra*, the stopping of all ignorant concocting; if everyone could stop concocting they'd be cooled, stilled, they'd be peaceful, free, and wouldn't have to spin around as a result of their *kamma*. *Kamma* is concocting, so, no concocting means no *kammic* actions, no *kammic* acts means no resultant problems, no arising of the defilements, no *dukkha* - that's the *visankhāra*.

Sankhāra is the concocted, *visankhāra* the un-concocted, according to the Buddha there are only two things in the universe, the concocted and the un-concocted, hence this 'Little Dhamma Book,' when reduced to bare essentials, comes down to just that much: the 'concocted' and the 'unconcocted.' The 'concocted' are actions done in ignorance, the 'unconcocted' are those done in wisdom. So, when we do anything, when we eat anything, use anything, or whatever, we do it with wisdom, without assuming that there's a 'me' or a 'mine' involved, and there won't be any foolish concocting: we don't act in ignorance, we act with mindfulness and wisdom so that benefit accrues, we let whatever we do be a natural affair.

The mind wants but one thing, to be without *dukkha*. The 'me,' the 'myself' doesn't exist apart from the mind. It's the mind that thinks of itself as 'me,' and that something is a possession of this 'me,' something is 'mine.' As long as there's still ignorance the mind will be thinking in this way. On attaining to the ultimate then only the mind remains, the mind without such thinking. That's the mind which has escaped, which has ceased to cling, which has put an end to concocting, which has attained the *visankhāra*, the unconcocted. There's no need to die and get stuck in a box for this to happen.

Animals quench the *sankhāra* in the animal way, humans should be able to do better, that is, we should be able to quench the mental *sankhāras*, those *sankhāras* within which are subtle, difficult to understand, which are the concocters of *sukha* and *dukkha*, these should be studied and comprehended. Don't let mental concocting arise and - without us having to go the trouble of dying first - there'll be coolness, then, when the time comes for the body to die it will be a question of the bodily *sankhāra* coming to an end in the normal way. When there's no concocting of 'me' and 'mine' the *sankhāra* die in the normal, natural way, the bodily *sankhāra* perish without the mind having concocted the thinking that this body is 'mine.'

That could be described as coming out from the 'shadow of death,' in that when the mind ceases to concoct there's no longer the thinking that it's 'me' who'll die, or 'me' who'll get, who'll lose, who'll win, etc. The mind emerges from any and all concocting and there's no more *dukkha*.

To sum up: we still don't understand the word '*sankhāra*' so we still can't understand the *Dhamma* either. We take *sankhāra* to mean the body, and don't understand it on the mental level, hence we misunderstand the quenching of the *sankhāra* as meaning physical death and don't recognize the fact that whenever there's happiness there's also continual concocting. So get to know the

concocting, the mental *sankhāra*, don't let the mind concoct, quench the mind's concocting then the defilements won't arise and there won't be any 'heat,' any *dukkha*.

When there's no knowledge there must be misunderstanding, we'll misunderstand and see the opposite of truth, deceived by our ignorance we'll see only 'me' and 'mine' in everything we connect with. When the mind can destroy ignorance then wisdom comes in its stead and there's no more misunderstanding, no misunderstanding that there's a 'me' or a 'mine' anymore and the mind is cooled, is *nibbāna*. We could say that life is cooled: if there's concocting life is hot, if there's no concocting then it's cool.

It's up to us; whatever we like, we have the right to choose whatever satisfies us. The Buddha said that we have the duty to choose, but that we have to take responsibility for our choices. If we choose wrongly then it's as if we take a dangerous weapon to be a lotus flower, because then we'll be deceived by the things we experience, make mistakes, and be unable to escape from the mass of *dukkha*. Hence don't misunderstand the *sankhāra*, the concocting and the concocted, dwell with knowledge and don't cling, because if we wed the mind to concocting we'll get bitten. We should want the *visankhāra*, the unconcocted, want *nibbāna* for the mind's partner, then life will always be cool and problem-free.

LDB

XII. Summing up the 'Little Dhamma Book'

However many matters there are in Buddhism we can sum them all up in just three lines: natural elements concoct together (as the human being) until there arises the thing called 'mind,' this would be the first line. Then, from that mind arises the 'wisdom mind,' the '*bodhi*' mind. From the *bodhi* mind comes the attainment of *nibbāna*, and that's it, there the matter ends.

The first point to be made is that there are only elements, natural elements. It's necessary to understand that there isn't anything that isn't a natural element, that everything physical and mental, all *rūpa* and *nāmadhammas*, are really just elements. If we use worldly language then we might say that from a speck of dust to *nibbāna* everything is elements: a valueless speck of dust is a *rūpadhātu*, a material element, *nibbāna* is the *nibbānadhātu*, the *nibbāna* element. *Nibbāna* is an '*asankatādhātu*,' and is the only 'unconditioned' element, while both the physical and the mental, all *rūpa* and *nāmadhātus* are '*sankatādhātus*,' 'conditioned' elements.

This is a principle we need to bear in mind – that in the Buddhist system there isn't anything that isn't looked on as being a natural element, hence there isn't anything that could be taken to be 'me' or 'mine.'

It's the basic understanding that there six elements: earth, water, fire, and air elements on the *rūpa* side of things, the consciousness element on the *nāma* side, and the *ākāsa*, the element of space, which shouldn't be included in either the *nāma* or *rūpa* category, but which is sometimes put into the *nāma* group - however, it isn't a matter of the mind so it isn't *nāma*, it ought to be recognized as the element which isn't either, *rūpa* nor *nāma*, it's the *ākāśadhātu*, the element of free space. These are the six elements. If we would include the *nibbāna* element here it would go in with the *ākāśadhātu*, the space element, that being void of either *rūpa* or *nāma* too. However, as the

ākāśadhātu is sometimes understood as being a *sankata*, or conditioned element, then, should that be the case, the *nibbānadhātu* couldn't be included in the same category.

Because people tend to understand the element of free space differently there's no universal agreement, so, to keep it reasonably simple, let's take it that the six basic elements are *sankatadhātus*, while the seventh, the *nibbānadhātu*, is *asankata*.

Now, looking at this step by step: there are six natural elements combining together as *nāma* and *rūpa*: the earth, water, fire, and air elements combine together as the physical, that is, '*rūpa*,' the *viññāna* element becomes the mental, that is, '*nāma*,' while the *ākāśadhātu*, the space element serves as the empty space necessary for both *nāma* and *rūpa* to exist within. This is the full story: the elements combine together and the things called *rūpa* and *nāma* arise. '*Rūpa*' represents the bodily side of things, '*nāma*' the mental side. The earth, water, fire, and air elements come together as the bodies of people, of animals, and as trees, stones, and so on, the element which can't be seen, the *viññānadhātu*, the consciousness element, does its duty as the mind so that whatever it is can have life, can feel. The mind is the leader here. There's also that which serves as the 'seat' of all the other elements, the *ākāśadhātu*, the necessary element of free space.

The *ākāśadhātu* might be something difficult to grasp for those who've never met with this sort of thing before, but there has to be some empty space for anything to exist in - as with a stone, there has to be some empty space for it to exist in. Material things can only establish themselves in places where there aren't any other things, while *nāma*, the mind, can establish itself only in a place free from *nāma*. Free space is thus the seat, or base of all things. Free space is that wonderful thing which can accommodate anything, hence it becomes something valuable, the world we live in is based in free space, if there wasn't any free space for it to fit into then this planet couldn't exist. Simple vessels - cups, bowls, or jars - because they contain free space also have a use-value, if that wasn't so then they wouldn't have any worth, but because they're hollow, because they provide some free space they can be used for putting other things into. We need to understand that there's this space, this hollowness, which, although it may not contain anything at all, still represents something important, hence it's referred to as an element, the 'space' element, the '*ākāśadhātu*.' This can be observed in those many things outside us, but it's better to look within, at ourselves. A person, or what we assume to be a person, consists of the earth, water, fire, and air elements, the mind element, and the element of space. Now, if we divide the body into atoms then each and every atom must be established on some free space, while the mind must establish on a space which is free of mind if it's to be able to concoct, to arise. Hence, if we still don't know about the space element then we ought to, it's mentioned in the scriptures, and even if we don't believe the scriptures we can see for ourselves that it's a reality. So, because there are the earth, water, fire, and air elements, along with the mind and the space elements all combining together naturally, there arises a 'person.'

Now, everything is ultimately mental, is mind, which is the leader in all things. The many and various experiences of life will continually concoct, change and transform the mind until the *bodhi* level mind is attained - mind attained to clear knowledge is the *bodhi* mind - the *bodhi* mind then enters into *nibbāna*, into the *nibbānadhātu*, the element of non-concocting, and there's no more *dukkha*, which represents the end of the story.

There isn't a 'self' to be found in any of this: the body isn't 'self,' the mind isn't 'self,' *nibbāna* isn't 'self,' why? because these are really just natural elements.

The mind isn't 'self' but when ignorant it can think that it is. This is important, problems arise because the mind, which is really just a natural element, when mixed with the element of ignorance can give rise to the thought that it's 'me.' The mind clings to being 'me,' takes itself to be 'self,' while taking the things it experiences to be 'selves' too, depending on circumstances. It's all about the mind clinging to the 'self' idea. When the mind is ignorant there can be clinging to anything as 'self,' mind clings, grabs, and when it does life becomes 'heavy,' that is, there's *dukkha*.

All *dukkha* arises from clinging, from the mind clinging, it isn't about clinging to anything with the hands, it's about mental clinging, this is the ignorant mind, the mind combined with the ignorance element unable to know things as they truly are and thus naturally prone to cling. This can be quite easily observed too: we eat something delicious, the mind experiences delight from the eating and concocts the thought that 'I'm' delighted, that is, there's a 'self' arisen to be the one who's delighted, while the deliciousness is then taken to be 'mine.' In truth there's only the mind, there isn't a 'self,' but mind has a lot of ignorance so when it experiences something pretty or sweet-sounding, or something fragrant, or something delicious, or some soft and comfortable touch, or some agreeable thought pattern, it experiences delight and gives rise to the thought of being 'me,' the 'me' who's delighted. The delightful feeling must come first, the mind contacts it, and then concocts the thought that it's 'me' who's delighted. The 'me' thought arises as a reaction to the experience being undergone, it wasn't there before the experience occurred.

This is at the heart of the most important of matters. If we don't know this then we won't know the cause of *dukkha*. If we do know then we can understand that there's *dukkha* because the mind is ignorant and clings to things, which allows the 'self' sense to arise. The mind will cling to itself as the 'me' who's delighted, and to the delight as 'mine.' Perhaps that mind will experience some incident connected with the body, as when the body collides with something and gets hurt, the mind will then take the body to be 'me,' take the pain to be 'mine,' and, at the same time, will project the meaning of 'self' into whatever it's collided with. Perhaps the mind will experience a feeling, pleasant or unpleasant, it will then take either itself or the feeling to be 'me,' if the mind which experiences the feeling clings to itself as 'me' then the feeling will be 'mine.' Perhaps mind recognizes something via perception, *saññā*, it perceives in this or that way, perceives 'person,' 'animal,' 'woman,' 'man,' or whatever, perceives 'child,' 'wife,' 'husband,' mind takes the perceiving, or that which perceives, which is the mind itself, to be 'me,' the perception to be 'mine.' Or perhaps there's thinking, which is called *sankhāra* - there's perceiving and then thinking in accord with it arises into the mind - the mind will cling to the thinking as 'me,' or to itself, the thinking mind, as 'me,' in which case the thinking will be 'mine.'

When the mind finally gets around to doing its duty properly those two things, the mind and the thinking will become one and the same, it's only when ignorance intervenes that they become 'two,' that a 'duality' reigns, one side of the equation becoming 'me,' the other side, the thinking, becoming 'mine.' Now, perhaps on some occasions the mind will take *viññāna*, consciousness - that which knows clearly what's being seen by the eye, what's being heard by the ear, etc. - mind will take the consciousnesses doing the knowing at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind to be 'me.'

Which brings us into contact with another form of teaching, a characteristic of which is that there is an eternal 'self,' and that the consciousness which does its job at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and at the mind door is this 'self.' But this isn't Buddhist, and some Buddhist teachers go wrong when they teach that such a thing is Buddhism. Don't make that into a Buddhist principle,

Buddhism is all about the ignorant mind clinging to form, to feeling, to perception, to thinking, to consciousness as being 'self.'

In truth it's a matter of the mind being concocted by the various elements, the things that concoct the mind, the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects, are all elements, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and the mind are elements too, be aware that these are all elements, not 'selves,' and that when each pair meet together they can perform their respective duties, that is, there can be seeing, hearing etc. The leader, however, will always be mind, the still unknowing mind, hence there'll be the ignorance element to concoct mind into 'self' belief in dependence on the things being seen, heard, and so on.

But everything is mind. For instance, whenever there's the seeing of a form the mind will then arise to perform its function, any 'seeing' will happen because the eye has been impacted by a form and eye consciousness, *caksuviññāna* has arisen, that's how the mind knows the form, knows what it is. So we say that the 'see-er' is really the mind. Don't make the mistake of taking it to be a 'self,' it's just the mind operating in the normal way. When there's the seeing of anything it's the mind that does the seeing. Now, the thing being seen – a tree, for instance, will be the mind too: the tree being seen will be a 'tree' the mind has created, it's not that the tree goes into the mind to be processed, rather that the mind creates an image within itself of something outside it. The mind thus 'sees' a tree, but the 'tree' the mind sees is actually a creation of the mind, not the actual tree itself. Hence the thing seen is also a mental matter.

Say this sort of thing and, usually, people won't believe it, scientists working on the material side of things probably won't believe it either because they know only the material, but in truth anything and everything is mind, is a mental matter: the 'see-er' is mind, the seeing is mind, and the thing being seen is mind, is something mind-made.

To go over it again: the eyes meet a form, gives rise to eye-consciousness, and there's seeing of the form - the 'see-er' here is the mind, or eye-consciousness. When eye-consciousness arises it performs the duty of seeing quite naturally, the mind is doing its duty at the eye and there's the activity known as 'seeing.' Hence, any seeing is a mental phenomenon. Now, the thing seen is something the mind creates out of the activity of seeing, because outside things can't actually come inside the mind but the mind can create images of them. Compare this to the way a camera produces a picture.

There's nothing happening other than this, it's all mental: the 'see-er,' the seeing, and the thing seen, all are mind. It's the same with the ear: the 'hearer' is the mind, the hearing is the mind, and the thing being heard is the mind too. With the nose and smelling then the 'smeller' is the mind, the smelling is the mind, and the smell is the mind, the 'taster' is the mind, the tasting takes place in the mind, and the taste itself is mind-made, the experiencer of a touch is the mind, the touching is the mind, and the touch itself is of the mind too. With mental matters it's the mind which is the knower, is the knowing, and is the thing being known. Hence when we say that everything is the mind we're making a universal statement.

If this is understood then it's understood, if not then it isn't, and I'll be abused, it will be said that I talk nonsense and don't understand etc. But there's no other way to put this, we don't know how to explain it in any other way.

Consider this matter carefully for yourself and recognize for yourself that everything is mind. The things we experience through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind are all 'mind made.' The Buddha, on a deeper level of understanding, is the mind too, the mind which knows *Dhamma*,

the *Dhamma* is what the mind knows, and knows, until the *Dhamma* becomes the mind itself, while the *Sangha* is composed of all those minds which know what the Buddha knew. See, there's nothing apart from the mind: The Buddha is the mind which knows awakening; the *Dhamma* - that which awakens the mind - is concocted by the mind, in the mind, while the *Sangha* consists in all those minds that have come to know the *Dhamma* too.

Now, if we look at the results which arise from concocting be they 'good,' 'bad,' or whatever, all will be mental, will be states of mind. There's 'bad,' there's 'good,' there's the neither good nor bad, which is known by the *Pali* word *anenjā*, and, there's the *lokuttara*, which is 'above' both good, bad, and *anenjā*. All are mind, are mental states. Hence the mind goes by various names: the *kamavacāracitta*, the sensual sphere mind, the *rūpāvacāracitta*, the fine material sphere mind, the *arūpāvacāracitta*, the immaterial sphere mind, and the *lokuttaracitta*, the mind which is above all of that, which is above worldly things.

There are just four words to be remembered here: 'bad,' 'good,' and the *Pali* words '*anenjā*' and '*lokuttara*.' 'Bad' here represents the mind which is wrong. 'Good' here represents the mind which is right, but on the worldly level of understanding, which is goodness as understood by the ignorant. Then there's the neither 'good' nor 'bad,' which is known as '*anenjā*,' the mind unaffected by the meanings of 'good' or 'bad.' This refers particularly to the *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*, the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, which is *anenjā* deluxe, but applies to the other *ārūpajhānas* too, while some teachers expand the *anenjā* sphere as far down as the fourth *rūpājhāna*. Beyond all of that is the *lokuttara*, which is 'above' the world, above the meanings of the world, above the influence of the values normally ascribed to forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects.

Because the words used are strange or new perhaps this won't be understood too well, so we'll repeat it once more: the most base mind is the 'bad,' the wrong mind, the low mind. Higher than that is the 'good,' the mind which is correct according to the worldly understanding of that word. Then there's the *anenjā* mind, which is neither 'good' nor 'bad' but which is, nevertheless, still *sankhāra*, still concoctable, still under the power of cause and conditions. This *anenjā* mind is hardly ever spoken about, hardly known about, but we can take the *ārūpajhānas* as displaying the characteristics of *anenjā*, of being above but not completely beyond the influence of good and bad, of bitter and sweet, etc. However, if one can escape from the influence of such things so that there's no concocting at all then that's known as '*lokuttara*.' To know these four is to know all without exception.

We've been using *Dhamma* language to describe the 'bad,' the 'good,' the '*anenjā*,' the '*lokuttara*,' if it will make it easier to grasp we can take a look at this through more worldly eyes. So, here they are again but this time couched in worldly terms: Hell - the hells are very bad, very base, while on a better, higher level is humankind, higher still are the *devātas*, the gods, culminating in the *Brahma* gods, and even higher is *nibbāna*. If we look at these four as being worlds then the hell worlds are the most base, higher is the human world, which would be akin to the planet surface, then higher again are the gods, the gods of the six levels, the *rūpabrahma* worlds, the *arūpabrahma* worlds, then leaving those behind there's *nibbāna*, beyond the *Brahma* worlds there's just *nibbāna*. This latter explanation is for the sake of an easier understanding, it's not meant to be taken literally. In all of it there's nothing which isn't mind in its various forms.

Whether it's underground, on the ground, in the sky, whether it's 'bad,' 'good,' *anenjā*, whether human or god, all of that is the *sankatādhātu*, the element which is concocted. Now, beyond that is

the void, in *Dhamma* language that's *nibbāna*, the *asankatadhātu*, the element that can't be concocted. All of the elements can be divided into two groups: those that concoct and are concocted, and that which doesn't and isn't. We can group the good, the bad, and the *anenjā* together as being *sankatadhātus*, as elements which are conditioned, which are concocted, while *nibbāna* is the *asankatadhātu*, the element which nothing can concoct, which is beyond concocting. Mind spins around in the mass of *dukkha* because it's a conditioned, concocted element, it's prone to concocting, if that's stopped, if mind isn't prone it becomes the *asankatadhātu* and quenches *dukkha*. The Buddha specified the concocting itself as being *dukkha*, hence putting an end to the concocting is said to be the supreme happiness.

In the *Pali* occur these words: '*tesaṃ vupassamo sukho*'; when any chanting for the dead is taking place these words will be heard: '*tesaṃ vupassamo sukho*,' which tells us that putting an end to the *sankhāras* is happiness; that is, there's no more concocting happening so there's happiness. If there's still concocting there's still *dukkha*. It's all about the elements, those which concoct, and those that don't, about moving from the *sankata* to the *asankatadhātu*, just this much.

Mind is a natural element belonging to the *sankata* group which is continually concocted until it becomes the *bodhi* mind, the wise mind, and then meets with the other side of the coin, the *asankatadhātu*. Hence we can say that, where the mind's concerned, it's all about going from the one to the other, from the *sankata* to the *asankata*, and that's all there is. But if we've never heard this before we might mis-hear so to prevent that we'll put it in another way and say that it's all about going from *dukkha* to the remainderless quenching of *dukkha*. All the 84,000 *dhammas* can be condensed into this one brief statement: from *dukkha* to the remainderless quenching of *dukkha*. And that's it, the matter is then at an end.

This is the message of the '*Little Dhamma Book*,' just these few words. Don't forget, recall what was said in the first place, that from natural elements concocting together comes this or that kind of mind until there arises the *bodhi* mind, the wisdom mind. When there's the wisdom mind *nibbāna* is attained and the job is done, the dragon is slain and the matter is finished with: from *dukkha* to the end of *dukkha*, it's just like this.

Now, how does one practise in order to go from the *sankata* to the *asankata*, or from *dukkha* to the quenching of *dukkha*. I'd compare such a practice to the process of planting and nurturing five 'trees.' We'll take a look at this and we'll do so tree by tree, as it were, that is, we'll look at it from the bare beginnings of practice up until the end, until *nibbāna* is attained.

The first 'tree' is analogous with the body, hence it's called the 'body' tree. We'll plant and nurture the tree of the body correctly, which means both the physical body and those things connected with it. The second 'tree' is the 'mental' tree, the tree of the mind, we'll make the mind correct. The third 'tree' is the '*bodhi*' tree, the *bodhi* tree is comparable to *satipaṇṇā*, there has to be proper *satipaṇṇā*, so it won't be the mind itself that we'll be concerned with, but '*satipaṇṇā*,' the mindfulness and wisdom that the mind will be based on. The fourth 'tree' is the '*mettaya*' tree, the '*metta*' tree.

Just now we mentioned *five* trees, so now we'll add the fifth, which is, or would be, the 'speech' tree, but we don't want to make a separate thing of this because speech is part of the body, speech according to the high *Dhamma* belongs in the body group. If one wants to make another 'tree' out of it then one ends up with five, if it's included in the body group then there are just four of these 'trees.'

So, looking in some detail at the ‘body tree’ : there needs to be physical behaviour, or activity, or concocting, depending on which word we want to use, which is correct, which is right and proper both as regards the body itself as well as those things connected with it. Like the household things we use, the utensils, the house itself, or whatever, such things being connected with the physical side of life. If we look at this from the point of view of the monastic trainings, the *pātimokkha* rule, then there should be proper behavior while travelling to and staying in various places, that is, we need to conduct ourselves properly as we come and go, which must include our interactions with the cultures and traditions we meet with too. If we’re successful in this then we’ll have planted and nurtured the first of the trees successfully, that is, the ‘body’ tree will have prospered, flourished, bringing calmness and stability to the physical side of life. If we take the ‘speech tree’ as another tree apart from that of the body then there has to be correctness of speech and of those things which are used to produce the same or similar effects. Speech is the method people use to communicate with, so that if we were all alone there wouldn’t be any need for us to talk to anyone and speech would come to an end of its own accord, but because there are so many people then there has to be a means of communication, and that’s speech. Hence speech, and those things which take the place of it – written communications or whatever - need to be properly governed so that there’s *kamma* which is skilful, which is correct throughout. This would be to cultivate the ‘tree of speech’ successfully. However, if we don’t make any separation then speech becomes a ‘branch’ of the ‘body’ tree.’

Now, the ‘mind’ tree, the mental system. *Samādhi* is essential to the well-being of the mental tree, developing *samādhi* develops the mind.

The *samādhi* that people usually know is that which involves sitting still without having any thoughts arise, but *samādhi* in its *Dhamma* meaning refers to the mind minus the disturbing *kilesa*, mind which is *parisuddho*, purified, is *samahito*, firm, steady, but is also *kammaniyo*, ready to do its proper duty. This would represent the flourishing ‘mental tree.’ If we look at the fruits, the results of developing *samādhi* then, first, there’ll be happiness, in *samādhi* there’s happiness, and there’ll be the ability to perform miracles - however, it’s better not to talk about that sort of thing because it’s not the main intention, nevertheless it would be a possibility, if the mind is well trained miraculous powers are possible. More to the point, there’ll be full mindfulness so that the mind will be incapable of error, and such a mind would be ready to develop the path, fruit, and *nibbāna*. If cultivating *samādhi* should ever become really popular, should spread out into society at large in a meaningful way, the result would be a strong minded, stable, pure, gentle, cultured people, a society of evolved human beings. This, then, would be mental correctness, the cultivated ‘tree’ of the mind.’

Next is the ‘*bodhi* tree.’ Next, there’s knowledge, the mind arrives at real knowledge.

‘Knowledge’ in the *Dhamma* sense refers to ‘clear seeing,’ or ‘realization.’

Here let’s just look at the difference between three words: ‘knowledge,’ ‘understanding,’ and ‘realization.’ ‘Knowledge’ is acquired through study; ‘understanding’ through thought, through reasoning; ‘realization’ through seeing clearly into the truth of anything, which is knowledge in the ultimate sense. ‘Knowledge’ is got through education in the normal way, ‘understanding’ through the use of thought and reasoning, while ‘realization’ surpasses both completely and can’t be acquired through book-study, or by the use of thought. ‘Realization’ is above reasoning, which has to be surpassed if the mind is to enter into the real. Such knowledge is referred to as ‘*bodhi*’:

knowledge arisen from the clear seeing of things as they really are, not just the learned or reasoned-out variety.

Knowledge reaches its climax with the clear understanding of *nibbāna*: when the mind is well trained it knows, knows, knows - knows until it knows the cessation of clinging to any and everything, which is clear knowledge of *nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* is freedom from *dukkha*, freedom from the defilements, whenever there's such freedom, even temporarily, then there's the temporary experience of *nibbāna* too, something which will happen naturally without anything having to be done to make it happen, it's just that, sometimes, the conditions are appropriate for the non-arising of the defilements, then there's no *dukkha* and the mind is naturally cool. This is quite easily obtained, for some, through the simple expedient of sitting somewhere where there's nothing to provoke the defilements, or, it can happen that sometimes the mind just wants to stop, to be still, to rest, it doesn't feel like dealing with anything so it just naturally becomes still. When the defilements don't arise, when there's no *dukkha*, there naturally occurs a temporary experience of *nibbāna* which we, all of us, experience often. If anyone shouldn't experience this kind of peaceful and cool mind they'd go mad, they'd surely become insane and, perhaps, even die. Hence the mind possesses the natural ability to relax.

During the course of one day and night, of one period of twenty-four hours, how much of that time is the mind hot with the defilements and how much of that time is it cool and free from their influence? Try to develop a preference for the undefiled mind, even if it is a temporary experience, get to know the flavour of both defilement and the absence of it, and make the comparison. When the defilements are present there's heat, the mind is like a hell, so get to know how that feels. When something delicious, something like a heavenly experience is happening, get to know how that feels, and the times when there's no defilement, nothing disturbing the mind either way, get to know how it feels then, compare, compare, get to know the difference between the defiled and the undefiled mind.

Observe, study and get to know the cool life; we should try to make it into a customary form of practice, into something cultural, so that, for instance, each member of a family can be cooled because they live together in such a way that makes it difficult for the defilements to arise. When the defilements hardly disturb life then it's correspondingly cool. This represents the natural form of *nibbāna*, the occasional, naturally occurring *nibbāna*. If, however, we should practise *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, train the mind until it attains to the complete end of the defilements, of the inflows and underlying tendencies, that would be true and perfect, full *nibbāna*. But whatever kind of *nibbāna* it is it will be no more than a natural element.

The temporary form of *nibbāna* is called *sāmāyikanibbāna*, true *nibbāna* is called either *sa-upādisesanibbāna* or *an-upādisesanibbāna*, all three forms are natural elements, thus even *nibbāna* is an element, just a natural element which can't be looked on as being 'self.'

Thus our 'bodhi' tree mind is trained until there's the attainment of *nibbāna*; the *bodhi* tree is nurtured until it buds, blossoms and brings forth the fruit - *nibbāna*. Then, for such an one, the matter is ended. But it isn't ended as far as society is concerned, because *dukkha* isn't limited to any one person, there's the *dukkha* of society to consider too.

We can't live without society because Nature has arranged matters in that way. We can't exist all alone, we have to have society, we have to live in a society. Hence it's our duty to act for the benefit of society at large. This much remains to be taken care of, hence we'll need to plant and nurture the final tree, the 'metteya' or 'mettrāya' tree.

Every religion has this *mettraya* concept, and although others have their own names for it the basic meaning will be the same: *mettā*, friendliness, amity. We still need to plant this tree to put a final end to all human problems. Our individual problems may have disappeared but society will still be beset by disturbances which have to be dealt with too, hence we need to cultivate the tree of ‘*metteya*.’

‘*Metteya*’ is about being supportive, helpful, being friendly, about encouraging friendliness, encouraging amity. There’s a reason why we need to plant this tree, a reason that to some extent is selfish, that is, we need to display *metta* where others are concerned because we can’t live in this world all alone, hence we have to bear in mind the good, the well-being of others so that we can live comfortably together, which is why the *sīla* teachings exist. If we put that in the language of ultimate truth then we might say that the cultivation of *metta* is a necessity because we’re all comrades, comrades in birth, ageing, sickness, and death.

As far as we know all religious systems have one particular component in common - the ‘messiah’ to come. In the Buddhist system we have ‘*mettrāya*’ who will appear at some point in the future, in the Hindu systems they have their *avatars* who will come but who have yet to appear, in the Semitic religion, that of the Jews, Christians, and the Islamists, they have their messiahs too. Jesus referred to himself as the ‘messiah’ and was killed for it, because there were those who didn’t accept him as such. However, in all religious systems there’s the equivalent of a ‘*mettrāya*’ to come at some future time, because the human duty isn’t yet completely fulfilled.

Therefore, even though we do our duty personally we’ve still to fulfill it towards our fellow human beings. This is the final tree we need to plant and nurture, the ‘*mettrāya*’ tree.

However, it’s believed that the cultivation of this tree, as yet, remains far off in the future. Now, we’re going to break with the conventional understanding and say something new: no, it’s not far away, it’s right at the end of our noses, the religion of *mettrāya* is right at the tip of our noses, just let everyone love everyone else and it will immediately emerge. But we’ll need to train, teach, explain, publicise, or whatever to bring people to the point where they can love each other, so that people, feeling only love and generosity towards each other, are, wherever and whenever, ready to give, ready to help. This would represent a worldwide, full blossoming of the *mettrāya* tree.

No political system could bring about such a state of affairs, all such being based in and on selfishness. If there’s really going to be a *mettrāya* religion then it must be based in love for our fellow human beings, so the harm inherent in selfishness and the concomitant and constant increasing of the defilements and of *dukkha* has to be recognized first of all. People unable to open up in this way, who can’t open their hearts to others, only injure themselves with their envy and jealousy, their possessiveness, and their ever increasing *dukkha*. Loving others, sharing with others leads to happiness.

So we’ll still need to plant the *mettrāya* tree, that is, train our minds to have love for others. When everybody loves everybody else the world of *mettrāya* appears and then, wherever we go, we’ll meet with people ready to give a hand; people will always be looking out for others in this and that way. This is a human duty that can’t be skipped. Hence let us who are Buddhists remember that when our own goal has been achieved then we need to think about the good of others, this is what binds us all together.

There are three benefits to be gained: the benefit to ourselves, to others, and the benefit which arises for everyone when the human race becomes one. All three are connected, we have to realize all three.

So, it's all about the mind, it's a matter of training the mind, developing the mind. Cultivating the four, or the five, trees is all about cultivating the mind, about mental development. Planting and cultivating the trees takes place in the mind and thus is what allows it to develop and to receive the fruit of its development. Hence it's the mind that accomplishes everything. Life, the body, our 'self' image, happiness and distress, anything at all arises in the mind, not anywhere else, realizing this we don't take the mind to be 'me.' And, because the mind must depend on the body so the body has to be made correct too. We don't just focus on the mind or on the body alone.

We call that 'Dhamma-ism,' or the 'middle way' - paying particular attention to the *Dhamma*. The Buddhist system is *Dhamma* focused: there's the mind with the body as its foundation, here we can use the words '*nāmarūpa*,' however, note that *nāmarūpa* cannot be separated into two components, into *nāma* and *rūpa*, the mind and the body cannot be separated, if they are there'll be death and no possibility of action: '*nāmarūpa*,' 'mind' and 'body,' the mind being the important component.

This is somewhat like a machine where there's one important part that leads the whole. In life the mental leads the physical, but, really, neither is more important than the other, they must operate in tandem, however, because the mind can do more and is able to lead the body then it's taken to be the more important. After all, anything and everything is accomplished through the mind, and although the body rises with the mind it dwells under the power of the mind.

This 'Little Dhamma Book' can be summed up in just three short phrases: from natural elements comes the mind; from the mind comes the *bodhi* mind; from the *bodhi* mind comes *nibbāna*, and that's it, the story ends, the dragon is slain, that is, the defilements are defeated. The story ends with the slaying of the dragon, with the killing of the defilements. If the mind reaches *bodhi* and then attains *nibbāna*, the evil, the defilements, die, *dukkha* dies and the matter is brought to a close. We need to develop the mind through the various stages, here individually represented by 'Hell,' the underground world, the most base; by the human world, represented by the planet surface; by the deva worlds, represented by the sky; and, going beyond the sky, well, don't be stupid and say that beyond the sky is more sky, because beyond the sky is space, the void, which here represents *nibbāna*.

Now we, metaphorically speaking, can dwell in underground mode, or we can live on the planet surface, or, sometimes, up in the sky, because the mind cycles around in these places and does so with great rapidity, repeatedly experiencing a form of birth known as '*opapati*.' The '*opapatika*' mode of birth is the instant form of birth for which the presence of a father and mother isn't required, it's the birth of something fully developed. The mind can and does experience this form of 'birth,' and all the time. Hence, we, here and now, can be born in Hell, in the human realm, or in one of the *deva* heavens, even perhaps in the *brahma* world, and that sort of thing will keep on happening until the *bodhi* mind arises, the mind which doesn't want to be born, mind which has destroyed the 'self' delusion so that it can't be 'born' ever again, then there'll be freedom.

Being free of the defilements and free of *dukkha* is *nibbāna*. Concerning this the Buddha said: *nibbānaṇṇparamaṇṇsuñṇaṃ*, which isn't what he actually said, rather it's a summing-up of his words on the subject: *nibbānaṇṇparamaṇṇsuñṇaṃ* means *nibbāna* is voidness supreme, that is, it's the ultimate freedom from 'self' belief. When there's no 'me' there's no defilement, and when there's no defilement there's no *dukkha*, hence it's said that *nibbāna* is the voidness supreme, being the end of all that spinning around in the *vaṭṭasaṇsāra*.

It's to be hoped that when this business is well enough understood then people might want the void, the stillness, and not want to continue spinning around, because even spinning around in goodness

doesn't quench *dukkha*. In fact, what finally solves the *dukkha* problem is being above the good and the bad, not spinning around in the *kamma* stream, but living above and beyond the performance of good or bad activities. Buddhism doesn't teach people to spin around in good *kamma* but teaches the escape from both kinds, the 'good' and the 'bad.' Practising for the attainment of path, fruit, and *nibbāna* is *kamma* in the Buddhist system. Baser systems only teach about doing good, and then spinning around in goodness, and, through misunderstanding, going to some good place, going to dwell there in heaven, or in some god realm, or whatever, which is full of goodness. But true Buddhists don't want to go and spin around anywhere, they want to dwell above everything, that is, have the mind free from the 'self' delusion, free from the clinging to 'self.' That's to dwell above all things, to dwell above *kamma*, both good and bad varieties, above all the forms of *dukkha*. That's the ultimate aim of life, the final destination: to get out from the binding, to escape the things that bind the mind. Beware of the 'good' because it binds more tightly than the evil, the 'bad.' The 'good' can be a very bad thing. Whenever there's sticking to anything as being 'good' there'll be *dukkha* involved. Hence be above the 'good,' escape from the binding, escape from all the things that bind, experience *nibbāna*. But don't call *nibbāna* 'good,' that would be to go against its meaning, because *nibbāna* is the unbound, so to describe it as 'good' isn't proper. If there's still binding to whatever that's not *nibbāna*, if it's *nibbāna* there's no binding of anyone to anything. Hence *nibbāna* is above being 'good.' It's the release, the escape, the getting out into freedom.

It's to be hoped that everyone will aim for the right target, that is, to escape, to get out from the spinning, to not have to spin around bound tightly to the many and various things we experience, and which represents a life full of defilement, craving, and *dukkha*.