

‘ME’ AND ‘MINE.’

Buddhadasa bhikkhu (1961.)

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1 – Strangers to Buddhism.

This pansah lecture will be about Buddhism, in a manner suitable for those who’ve never taken an interest in the religion before, which might include both foreigners and those Thai people who hold Buddhism to be just about ceremonials, and who still, therefore, don’t understand it properly.

The first point to note is that people who are strict as regards their religion while still not having accessed its truths exist in all systems. In addition to their strictness they can be stubborn and overbearing where their religion is concerned. Hence, even though they might have revered a religious system for several generations they’ve yet to penetrate to its essentials. Such are like strangers, or foreigners to their religions, ‘foreigners,’ but not in the usual way.

Those who call themselves ‘Buddhist’ in this country fall just about completely into this category. Hence they have knowledge of their religion which is less than those people from other countries, or less than those with other religious inclinations who may have just recently taken an interest in Buddhism. Given that, it’s thought that a discourse on Buddhist principles that would be understandable for people from non-Buddhist countries could serve equally well for Buddhists in Thailand, meaning that both have yet to reach the truth of Buddhism, which also points out that getting involved with Buddhism in the traditional way, practising in ignorance, even though that’s the way it’s always been done, won’t ever allow a true understanding of the teachings to arise, rather things will just get worse and perhaps new ‘cults’ and systems, that we’ve referred to as ‘Buddhist excrescences’ in other places, will emerge.

A result of this has been to make us move steadily away from the true Buddhism until there has arisen, within the Buddhist community, a pervasive feeling of awe with regard to the path, fruit, and nibbana, resulting in discussion of that subject being discouraged. Anyone who persists in talking about such things is charged with being boastful, or of talking about things which are impossible of attainment and is requested to concern themselves with the more down-to-earth subjects. Thus it all becomes a matter of morality, as it is in any religion. This is the true state of Buddhist study and practice in Thailand, and elsewhere. The result is that we Thai Buddhists have become strangers, foreigners to our own religion. Understand then, that we need to reboot our study and practice of Buddhist principles, we need to go back to the beginning, start again and proceed carefully. Don’t make the mistake of thinking that we know Buddhism better than others do.

Regarding the point made that we're still strangers, or foreigners to the true form of Buddhism, this can be looked at in two ways: There are those people who don't know and aren't interested in the religion, or are interested but don't know what to do about it, that is, they don't know where to study or what method to use in order to try and meet with the true form of Buddhism. And there are those who've become familiar enough to be able to author books on Buddhism but who've grasped the subject wrongly, or, have grasped it rightly but only on a shallow level, or, have coined some new form, some new Buddhist excrescence, which is subsequently portrayed as being the real and original form of the genre, while promoting themselves as experts. Hence in the books produced by foreigners in the early days perhaps fifty or sixty percent of the content wasn't consonant with Buddhism in its true form, which is almost unbelievable. This happened for no other reason than that the authors were uninformed and had betimes introduced Hindoo doctrines into the texts, doctrines which were in some ways quite similar so that someone inexperienced enough might well substitute or use them instead of the real thing.

Some European students made comparisons between the religions, which was a too-great undertaking. Many subjects were prepared for comparison. There was the comparing of this and the comparing of that, resulting in, because of the general lack of knowledge involved concerning the work they were engaged in, something unintended, which has since created new things for people to disagree about, including that of whether Buddhism is actually a religion or really just a philosophy?

Again, some have made a comparison with the god principle, setting up Buddhism as being the opposite of god-based ideologies. That resulted in an anti-Buddhist statement being included in a subsequently published book produced by various priests who were already prejudiced against the religion. Unfortunately, because such people were famous and widely respected the book gained credibility amongst its readers. We ourselves found such a tome, printed forty or fifty years ago.

There are students with a wrong understanding born from the assumption that because Buddhism arose in India during the Upanishadic era then it had to share the same basic principles as other major religions from the India of that time, particularly where kamma and the cycles of birth and death were concerned. Unfortunately when those students sought clarification of those two points they didn't find it in the Buddhist scriptures, probably because although they'd studied the texts they hadn't really understood their content properly, or perhaps because they hadn't studied enough, hence they took the principles of kamma and rebirth as explained in the Upanishadic texts and inserted them in their entirety into Buddhism. Then they called the subsequent book 'Buddhism,' or 'The True Buddhism,' or whatever.

The examples mentioned - Kamma and the cycles of birth and death - are very important matters, hence, taking something to be Buddhist which really isn't Buddhist at all, even without any malicious intent, what effect has that had? If we consider the damage done to Buddhism, the effect has been huge. If we look at the danger it's created for people reading such books, it's

been extreme. And our European friends through misunderstanding certain Buddhist matters which they'd approached with a pure enough intent, have had to waste a lot of time and effort. Thus the examples we've mentioned should be further examined.

Regarding kamma set out as do good, get good, do bad, get bad, plus the understanding that the one who acts is the one who receives the results, is an explanation predating the Buddhist era and was a commonly held belief which could be said to have existed in all the major religious systems in that place at that time. Hence to hold that kamma explained in this way is Buddhist is laughable. It's a fact that Buddhism reveals the law of kamma too, but reveals it in a more complete way, that is, it reveals in the fullest possible manner that the results of kamma as related above are deceptive, cannot be relied on therefore, and, further, reveals that we're able to perform a third kind of kamma capable of erasing the power of both good and bad activities, the kind that will allow us to dwell above and beyond kamma and its results. Practising to develop the path, fruit, and nibbana is this third kind of kamma. In saying this we're explaining in line with proper Buddhist principles, because the highest principle of Buddhism manifests in the intention to help mankind reach safety, that is, to allow us all to dwell above kamma and its results, hence we're not concerned with that childish form of kamma, that do good, get good, do bad, get bad business.

Regarding the spinning around in birth and death? It might be said that this isn't a Buddhist principle because it comes from the aforementioned understanding of kamma, which is superficial, shallow, and which predated the Buddhist era. At that time it was believed and taught that one died and got born again, continually, practically without any end: There was a 'self' an 'atman' which thrashed around in the vattasamsara experiencing repeated births and deaths, and, according to that belief, within that stream, or cycle there was birth into different destinations depending on one's good or bad behaviour. Hence, to say that Buddhism teaches this kind of rebirth is humorous indeed, because the Buddha's awakening involved the discovery of the truth that a person, or a being, doesn't really have a 'self' in the usual sense, but that if ignorant clinging arises into the mind it will cause the wrong understanding that there is a 'me,' then birth and death will become 'mine' too. This clinging causes the feeling to arise that there is a person, a being, there is birth and death, there is this spinning around, which is a huge problem given that dukkha arises in that way too. Buddhism proclaims the truth as well as the method of practice involved which can allow us to know and to access the reality of our situation: that there isn't a 'me' or a 'mine.' Once that's achieved the problems of birth, ageing, sickness, and death, or the spinning around in the 'vattasamsara,' end immediately.

Armed with these facts then claiming that Buddhism includes the principle of rebirth - as was the belief in the Upanishadic era - amongst its doctrines is unjust as far as Buddhism is concerned. Those students had, perhaps, too recently made contact with Indian spiritual trends, and, on hearing about what was for them a new thing, were perhaps excited, and assumed that Indian people as a whole held to this belief, even including Buddhism into the bargain, so that they may not have understood that Buddhism actually taught the doctrine of 'non-self,' and that without a

‘self’ how could there be any birth and death? This is Buddhism’s most knotty and difficult to grasp point, one which has made people pen books which, while called Buddhist, contain falsehoods, of which tomes there have been quite a lot produced over the past twenty or thirty years. These books will include chapters relating kamma and rebirth as being the primary, or major aspects of Buddhism, while the matters of ‘selflessness’ or ‘non-personhood’ along with the practice for the attainment of such, not being clearly grasped by the authors, might be skipped over, or, if they’re explained at all it will be in a sketchy, a vague manner. Hence authors of this kind we class as ‘strangers,’ or ‘foreigners’ as far as Buddhism is concerned.

2 – Grasping Buddhism wrongly.

Grasping the principles of Buddhism wrongly can prevent its true purpose being realized. If one misapprehends the essentials of Buddhism how will one be able to understand its true goal? This kind of thing leads the practitioner into silabbattaparamasa, into superstitious belief, in both the areas of practice and of theory, causing, as it does, attachment to forms of practice more in line with one’s own preferences and opinions, and the belief that a practice has religious relevance while not acknowledging its true purpose.

This gives rise to the sort of practice which is mostly for the sake of appearances, and which is quite pathetic. This can be seen in the way that some people in some schools rush at the vipassana practice in a do or die manner only to emerge at the end of the day with more or less the same lack of clarity as before - or, they end up clinging to some particular form of wrong understanding because of the kind of vipassana being practised. Even with Thai people there’s still the same thing happening, in that there’s arisen the belief in some that if one wants to succeed to Buddhist knowledge then one must practise in a kuti, or somewhere inside, which then becomes just more ‘appearance,’ or, perhaps, the sort of stiff approach to meditation which turns it into a ritual. Hence meditation which is being done ceremonially and without knowledge of any ultimate purpose has given rise to various forms of ‘kammattana,’ of meditation subjects, none of which existed in the Buddha’s time.

All of this is collectively called ‘silabbataparamasa,’ that is, the observance of sila, of moral behaviour, or of monastic routine, but without understanding its proper purpose, so with wrong intent. This wrong intent is present throughout, from the making of merit and the giving of alms, through the maintenance of sila, the practice of austerities, and, finally, through to the development of kammattana meditation. Some supporters cling to the making of merit, to the giving of various forms of alms, giving in this and that way, as actually being Buddhism. Slightly higher-level practitioners attach to the strict maintenance of sila and the deeper understanding involved as being true Buddhism, hence, for such, there’s more clinging involved along with a tendency to ‘look down’ on others. As for the higher-level practitioners they cling to the kammattana forms of meditation, and to methods like the strange and difficult to practice ‘yoga,’ as representing the true form of Buddhism.

The wrong understanding of these people is large, hence they fumble about with the various forms of yoga - a practice which predates and is foreign to Buddhism, although it comes from around the same time - which has been included and firmly packed into their version of the teaching through not knowing that it wasn't really a part of the Buddhist system at all. As it's said: It's not because of sila, or because of clinging to weird and wonderful practices that beings are freed from dukkha, but because they have a proper understanding of dukkha, its cause, its end, and the way to its end. This means that a practitioner must recognize dukkha as being the fundamental problem which needs to be solved.

It's the same basic reason that makes young people ordain in the Buddhist religion, most of which happens because of clinging, by oneself and by others, like the parents for instance, to the form of the ordination, or to tradition, but little or almost none of those who ordain do so because of correctly recognizing the danger presented by dukkha, which would, one would think, have been more the case in the Buddha's time when the reasons for ordaining were probably more genuine.

There's also clinging to the appearance of being Buddhist. Someone, who's regarded as a professor of Buddhism, assures us that true Buddhists are vegetarian, hence he's somewhat disappointed that his wife can't be a Buddhist because she isn't a vegetarian.

Even with Thai people there are still those in some places who refer to themselves as Buddhist yet consider it to be a principle of practice that, at a Buddhist's house, there must be a shrine, a 'guardian spirit house,' where puja can be made, if not then that householder isn't Buddhist. This shows just how much people still misunderstand their religion. If we would compare people now with those who ordained and became Arahant in the Buddha's time we'd see that the Buddhism of former times, while absolutely without style or ceremony, really was what we now call 'Buddhism.' The Buddhism of modern times has style, ceremony, sacred artifacts etc. and, without exception, still doesn't represent Buddhism truly.

Again, in the Buddha's time there weren't the problems and complications which the scriptures and thousands of Buddhist books have brought with them. There are now people, both foreign and Thai, who cling to the idea that one can only reach the truth of Buddhism by making oneself into an expert, into a scriptural specialist. Some people have cited the fact that over two thousand years things have changed a lot, and we now need to study the scriptures in order to connect with the original Buddhism, with how it was then. It's particularly foreigners, they being reason-based so perhaps finding simple belief more difficult, who are likely to cling more to this modus operandii, they, perhaps, assuming that they'll have to read the scriptures complete then extract and organize the various principles themselves because they don't trust in the knowledge and ability of Asiatics.

Therefore, it can be said that the problems associated with studying Buddhist texts and other related scriptures is an important one, and one which, ultimately, can become an obstacle. The

fact of the matter is that we'll need to understand what it is that we need to study, because to say that there's no need to study at all isn't right, while to say that it's necessary to study the texts complete in order to really know Buddhism is even more wrong. The truth is that the true Dhamma can't be transmitted through talks or through books, but through the practice which will allow the mind to know. However, a more important point is that if the mind isn't ready to know, to understand dukkha, then even though there's been a great deal of talking and reading done one will find that it won't stick. More so will that be the case if one clings to what's been heard or read about, then it becomes even more of an obstacle to any increased understanding, until one perhaps becomes book-intoxicated and has knowledge flood the mind in an unsafe manner - because pariyati, intellectual knowledge, if we're not careful, can become something like a poisonous snake, as per the text of the *allakattupamasutta*(sic). Foreigners with good intelligence can become pariyati students of this sort, the sort it's not really worthwhile being, not to mention those Thai students who regularly and monotonously study for results of a more materially beneficial kind.

We don't need to study the pariyati in great detail, because the texts, taken altogether, are many and varied, taking one in many directions, going in many ways and to many places. Among those many tens of subjects there's just one that we should be energetic in pursuing, just one matter alone, that is, how the true quenching of dukkha comes about – or, we can expand it into two subjects: 1) The truth of dukkha itself together with its cause, and: 2) The opposite of that, that is, the ending, the quenching of dukkha along with the method of its quenching. If anyone can kindle interest in these two particularly important points, then in no long time they'll be one who has final and all-around pariyati knowledge, that is, they'll be able to reach the heart of pariyati sufficient to be able to practise and to reach the true end of the road.

We shouldn't forget that in the Buddha's time studying the pariyati took up just a few minutes, or, in some cases, a few days, that is, for the time that the Buddha examined, asked questions and made clear a necessary point of Dhamma so that someone was able to attain to the truth right there in his presence. Many people will say that such an attainment was due to the Buddha himself being present, and how could that possibly be duplicated in this day and age. That's a valid point, but one that overlooks the fact that truth, or the Dhamma, isn't connected to, is beyond, time, and isn't dependent on any particular 'person' to transmit it either. Which means that if one had enough 'capital' one would have been able to attain the Dhamma by hearing the words of, for instance, a woman engaged in drawing water from a public well, as the Buddha once affirmed.

Having enough 'capital' here means having a sufficiently skillful mind so that there's enough 'spiritual' experience and one has come to understand life well enough to feel disgust at constantly being under the power of the defilements, as well as having to bear with the consequent dukkha, with the feelings of oppression, the lack of ease, the lack of real freedom. One thus knows a lot, but there's still something one doesn't know, which, if and when one comes to know it will easily and immediately allow one to escape dukkha, just as switching on a

light immediately dispels any darkness. The ‘capital’ we’re concerned with here isn’t likely to be a possession of those whose main pre-occupation is with seemingly endless material progress. Such people are charmed by the material and, being ceaselessly dragged along in its wake, don’t know the true nature of anything, especially of how the mind is at any given time. Hence, even though they be clever, much studied individuals in the modern sense, they cannot be said to possess the necessary ‘capital’ that would let them access the Dhamma in the style and way of the Buddha’s time. Those who object to this should try to make themselves into the sort of people who have the ‘capital’ mentioned here, then they might drop their objections, and, in good time, their various problems might well be at an end. The Dhamma is timeless, that is, it can appear anytime that anyone practises in the right way.

A Buddha appears after the Dhamma has been realized, so we, at this time, don’t need to talk about the Buddha, rather let’s make a careful study of ourselves, let’s look steadily at life, at the nature of life, then we too might be ready to attain to the Dhamma just by hearing the words of a water-drawer, or, by hearing, or seeing the form of an ant, a bird, a tree, or the wind, or whatever, and thus attaining to the ultimate Dhamma by the simpler method associated with the pajjekabuddha. If anyone should succeed in this way the problems of being a foreigner or a Thai will be gone. On reaching the truth there won’t be any foreigners or Thais, neither will there be the problems of being one who studies much or little, who’s clever or dumb, skilful or unskillful, and so on. Hence it’s a method that dispenses with the problems and the over-complication connected with pariyati study, with the study of diverse Buddhist books, bringing escape from all of the difficulties which arise from such things.

3 - Buddhism is suitable for everyone in this world.

There’s something we ought to talk about at this time, it’s called ‘wrong understanding,’ something which can make people ignore Buddhism, can cause some to be only mildly interested in it, or some to be interested but for the wrong reasons, for the worldly benefits which might be got from it.

A serious misunderstanding lies in the assumption that Buddhism is for those who are tired of the world, that it’s suited to those who want to leave society to go and live in the forest where they can disconnect from worldly things, or that they must be the sort of people who want nothing more to do with worldly ways and means. This sort of thing creates two forms of fear: 1) the fear of having to cast away those attractive, delightful things of the world once and for all, and: 2) fear of the difficulties involved in going to live like a Yogi in the forest. While that one who isn’t afraid and who does take up the lifestyle, may well have more clinging to deal with in the form of attachment to the forest itself, or to the forest-dwelling life as being necessary for one who takes Dhamma practice seriously, that being the only way to succeed. Such fears, and the misunderstandings they spring from, create obstacles, hindrances, which get in the way of a proper understanding of Buddhism.

The truth is that, whatever kind of person we happen to be we will get stuck on the sensual flavour of the household life, of the worldly life, and on hearing that all of that will have to be given up we might well feel both anxiety and regret, and, being unable to grasp the real profundity of Buddhism, will resist, will shirk our responsibilities and may well take up some wrong form of the religion. Teachers, professors, sometimes from big institutions, who have a wrong understanding are bound to mislead their pupils. It's unfortunate for the students if their teacher makes false claims about the teaching because then the true form of Buddhism won't be accessed by them, and any teaching or studying will be done for the wrong reasons, that is, for some career, or material objective. When this is the state of affairs there's no way that the true form of Buddhism can be accessed. Buddhism thus won't help the householder much, and won't produce the benefit that it should.

This is a real enough matter, one that reveals that although Thailand is seen as being a leading Buddhist country there's still misunderstanding here. Buddhism here is falsified, or the people connected with it are. There's no truth emerging because of people and their fears. That Buddhism doesn't reach and isn't beneficial for people isn't any fault of Buddhism itself, rather it's because worldly people are ensnared in the net of kama, of sensuality, being more or less continually bombarded by worldly feelings, so that when they hear about sacrificing their worldly indulgence a degree of agitation sets in. It was this that made, and still makes people into those we call 'foreigners' to Buddhism, which is a sad condition, they being 'so near yet so far away,' having held to Buddhism perhaps through many generations, read through countless libraries of books on the subject, and some were, and are, regular teachers of 'Buddhism.'

Those afraid of the problems involved with forest dwelling, or with the easier life of an ordaine, monk or nun, display similar reactions, that is, one look and they're afraid, they're panicked by their own assumptions, and then misrepresent the teaching when they claim that Buddhism advocates forest-dwelling, which Buddhism does not, it holding to no such fixed principle. All that about monks living in the forest, all that praising of the benefits of forest-dwelling, all the recommending that one goes and sets up one's meditation in a forest doesn't mean that one has to go and suffer in a forest all alone, it's just that the forest environment, being mostly free from the usual distractions and disruptions, can facilitate and promote mental development more easily. If someone can find a place which, though not a forest, yet provides the same benefits, then that can certainly be used.

A monk in the Buddhist religion should be like a 'sanyasi,' like one who travels around and connects with people in the world, not one who lives in a forest and never meets with people during the course of their lives, or doesn't meet with people for over-long intervals of time, because they have the duty to help others in every way they can, especially helping them to live without dukkha, or, we might say, showing people how to eat any sort of fish without being troubled by the bones. The world here being compared to a bony fish the eating of which can produce a great variety of bony problems. Buddhism is beneficial for the world in that it can

help individuals to live in the world without being unduly troubled by any of the bony bits that life usually brings along.

Summarizing: Buddhism doesn't hold that practitioners need to punish themselves in forests and jungles, because wherever one engages in investigation there's study and practice right there. And Buddhism does not teach people to fear and avoid things, neither does it teach them to become intoxicated by and addicted to worldly things and experiences, rather it teaches people to control themselves and go beyond the power of the world and its charms. Hence it can be said that anyone, anywhere in the world, living in whatever system, whether of an elevated or base state of existence will find in Buddhism a suitable system of study and practice useable in the world which can help people to digest life without getting too many bones stuck in their gullets.

But unfortunately in today's world people interested in Buddhism don't look at it like that, don't even try to look at Buddhism in that way, but tend to look on it as some sort of science, or philosophy. Still it can be said that those people haven't yet reached the true meaning, the completely true form of Buddhism, otherwise the religion would display the signs of having been robbed and plundered. It's good that teachings like anatta and sunnata are too profound for those unwilling or afraid to give up the world, because Buddhism thus is essentially still the same, original Buddhism at its heart. Hence it falls our duty to propagate, to teach henceforth, putting right those parts that have been wrongly taught through certain people assuming that they could fathom the deeper dhammas. Although, in truth, it's all just nature, it is the mental side of nature, and is, therefore, something strange and novel, like another country.

May we all see the truth of this and be able, therefore, to eliminate the obstacles blocking people in this modern world from accessing the true form of Buddhism. It would be appropriate for us to understand this. There are shortcuts by which we can access the details.

4 - Living life without dukkha.

So, in looking at that Buddhism appropriate for 'foreigners,' or those we've called 'strangers to Buddhism,' then we, first of all, should talk about the aim of practice, because any aim, purpose, or intent has to be true and right, otherwise results will be wrong.

It's often misunderstood that the aim of Buddhist practice is to get to a place called 'heaven,' or to a place called 'nibbana,' or something of that sort, which we might compare to, in those religions which have gods, to becoming 'one' with our God. This kind of thing happens because, in the Buddhist system, nibbana, or the lokuttara, is misunderstood as being a place or a country somewhere which people hope and desire to reach - something like, although not quite the same thing as, the 'promised land' of the Jews - and that hope and desire spills over into the next life, and the next, and so on, until the desired result is, hopefully, finally achieved. People, generally, don't want the end of dukkha here and now, which should be the true aim of any practising for nibbana, and this represents the first important obstacle preventing people from achieving the true purpose of Buddhism.

It should be understood that heaven or nibbana described as a city or a country to be gone to involves taking an essentially mental experience and turning it into something concrete, into something material. But put in that way it provides a preliminary understanding appropriate for those without the ability to grasp the true meaning of nibbana. Thus people are allowed to, firstly, cling to the idea that nibbana is, for instance, a city of jewels, or a city where death doesn't exist, something which has much the same character as the 'land of bliss' some Chinese believe in. This 'land of bliss' in it's true meaning doesn't mean what it's usually taken to mean by those people, rather it refers to nibbana in its true form, that which should be the true aim of any practice. The 'land of bliss' isn't some beautiful country somewhere out west where the Buddha Amitaba rules and resides, a place where one experiences happiness and contentment to one's heart's delight, and where one, surrounded by beauty, experiences that ultimate happiness, a happiness like that of the gods, which, again, involves taking something essentially mental and turning it into something material.

If we're to grasp this properly we'll need to understand the word 'amitaba,' which means immeasurable, or infinite, light (amit = immeasurable, or infinite + apa = light = amitaba.) Or, perhaps, we could use the term 'amitayu,' which means incalculable, or infinite age (amit = immeasurable, or infinite + ayu = age = amitayu.) That which is infinite light or that which is infinite age wouldn't add up to being any sort of a person, or, indeed, to being connected with the material in any way, but would imply a particular condition, or nature which, in one sense, would be most bright, or lustrous, so able to shine or to illustrate in a way that even the sun could not do, that is, able to shine, penetrate through the curtain of ignorance. Being of infinite age, being eternal, would imply the same sort of thing but looked at from the angle of being free from time, of being ageless, unaffected by the passage of time, existent but eternal.

But in the end this gets turned into a 'person,' a person called 'Amitaba buddha.' However, when it becomes necessary to produce an illustration of this Amitaba, the artist, being without proper knowledge, doesn't know what to do so has to produce a picture much like all the other illustrations of Buddhas. Further, when it becomes necessary to illustrate this Buddha's heavenly dwelling the same problem arises, and the best illustration of a heaven that the human mind can imagine is produced, as can be seen in the shrines, in the religious structures of those who worship the baser form of the Mahayana. Zen practitioners won't accept this understanding of Amitaba, preferring to take the word to mean the mind in its original form, as per Wei Lung, or, as with Wang Po, to mean 'voidness.' When understood in this way the baser understanding of 'Amitaba' becomes something infantile.

The Zen people hold that which is infinite light, or knowledge, or is of incalculable age, to be emptiness, or that which is known as 'voidness' - although it might be called by other names, like 'void mind,' 'Buddha,' 'Buddha nature,' or 'Dhamma,' etc. This brings up what seems to be the unavoidable necessity of turning something profound, difficult of understanding, a true namadhamma, into something material, of personifying it so that people generally can come to know and place their faith in it, and which will then allow them to do good in exchange for a

better or higher spiritual state. When they hold to that ideal they're able to make the mind strong and be without the heat of dukkha up until death intervenes.

Thus there's a problem when it comes to understanding what, exactly, is the objective of Buddhists, or of Buddhism? In response it can be said that it's attaining to the land of bliss which is the residence of Amitaba, or, it's freedom from 'self' belief because the mind is freed from clinging to anything at all as being a 'self' or 'self's' possession. Both are true in their own way. If it's believed that nibbana is a jeweled city or a place where there's no death, as the generality believe, or that it's a land of bliss as those Chinese believe, then it's only correct for those particular people and not a generally correct Buddhist principle. Or, even, finally, if we understand nibbana as being freedom from 'self' belief and therefore freedom from dukkha too, then even that won't be completely correct, in that it will mean just knowing what the end of the task will be but without knowing how to achieve it.

Hence, to be correct, when it's asked what the aim of Buddhism is the answers ought to be: to solve the everyday problems of life for everyone, to render life in the world dukkha-free, or, to be able to dwell within the mass of dukkha without having to experience it, or, to live in the world without having to experience the bony bits of life, or, to, metaphorically speaking, dwell in the midst of a fiercely blazing blast-furnace yet feel completely cooled. Whatever - to sum up: Buddhism aims to eradicate dukkha from our lives here and now and not to conduct people to a city called 'nibbana,' the whereabouts of which isn't known and which can be gone to only after death, and after who knows how many subsequent lives have elapsed too.

Some might argue that Buddhism is multi-layered so that the aims of Buddhism must be so too, like the aim for prosperity in this world, in the next world, and in the world beyond, or, as it's said: manussasampatti, devasampatti, and nibbanasampatti. This happens because it's not properly understood that these three phenomena are really three levels of mental attainment that have to be developed in this world here and now, in this one life. It's not that there's a place called heaven which is posterior to death, or a city called nibbana existing a few tens of lives beyond that. In the proper meaning 'manussasampatti' means acquiring the fullest possible benefits that ordinary human beings can achieve through the sweat of their brows, as is the way with ordinary, everyday people. 'Devasampatti' refers to those benefits appropriate to one who has mindfulness and knowledge, who has accumulated merit, authority, who is especially fortunate, and who, without having to sweat for it, experiences life amidst wealth, honour, fame, and is replete with sensual pleasures. As for the 'nibbanasampatti,' that refers to the coolness which arises because loba, dosa, and moha, lust, aversion, and delusion, aren't around to disturb the mind anymore, which is one benefit that the first two people types can't access because they're still afflicted by the defilements, by the three 'poisons.' Nevertheless we should consider these three as being benefits existing on different mental levels that we should be trying to attain here and now, and which Buddhism holds in store for all those willing to make the effort.

Now we come to consider just which of the three samapatti represents the true aim of Buddhism? Or, to put it another way: which of manussasamapatti, devasamapatti, or nibbanasamapatti can be compared to bony, and which can be compared to boneless fish, and which will provide the means that will allow us to eat the fish of life, bony or not, without being unduly bothered by the experience?

Regarding this anyone can see for themselves that experiencing the manussasamapatti and the devasamapatti are like eating fish which is obviously bony and eating fish which isn't so obviously bony, that is, they display coarse and fine characteristics. Because of these two levels of experience then people, still unable to know dispassion, must alternate between laughter and tears, must experience dukkha repeatedly: they must know dukkha directly when seeking after anything, and know it not so directly, not so obviously once the desire is fulfilled, as when consuming, or when protecting their gains. For so long as the third, the nibbanasamapatti, is absent there must be dukkha to bear with whilst one wallows in the midst of that experience deludedly understood as happiness. But when the nibbanasamapatti, has been attained then the poisonous pressure created by the other two is released, and one dwells free, above and beyond their influence, at which time there's no more mental heat because of raga, dosa, and moha, of the greed, aversion, and delusion which once derived from them.

Consider: acquiring which of the samapatti could be said to be good? Out of the three which is the important one? Knowing this will allow us to recognize the true purpose of Buddhism.

5 - The sunnata which is a support for every level of society.

A misunderstanding which obstructs development, especially in Thailand, is the often met with opinion that the principles of sunnata and anatta mayn't be taught to ordinary, everyday people, rather they're the province of higher level practitioners, those ascetics who dwell in caves and forests and who aim to attain the path and its fruit comparatively quickly. Hence it's become the rule that there's another level of Buddhist teaching appropriate for the generality, for lay people and householders, for those who understand manussasamapatti, devasamapatti, and nibbanasamapatti in a materialistic way, and whose purpose is, therefore, attainment only of the first two. As for nibbanasamapatti as the ultimate attainment, people generally aren't considered to be in any position to connect with that, or even to hear about it, hence it's not thought necessary to talk about practising for the attainment of nibbana. People, generally, are thus still far from hearing about the true form of Buddhism, that which includes sunnata and anatta, being expected to busy themselves with the making of merit and the giving of alms, etc. so that they'll meet with good fortune in this life and be born beautiful and rich in the next one, perhaps, in some heavenly abode somewhere. Messing around with such things allows nibbanasamapatti to become something indistinct, like a place in a dream, something obscure, incomprehensible, even fearsome, because it might seem to some that attaining nibbana could be akin to being thrown into a bottomless abyss. Even so nibbana can't be completely rejected because there's the belief that it is the highest thing in Buddhism, so, instead, talking about it is discouraged,

even in temple circles. Hence householders are far from hearing the true Buddhist tale, that which the Buddha meant for, and kept for everyone, for all classes, to help all people live in the world without being overly bothered by the bony bits of life.

That people are somewhat afraid of sunnata is mentioned in the Pali texts, in the Samyuttanikaya and other places, thus: A group of wealthy villagers went to attend on the Buddha and, having paid respects, explained that they were householders with wives and children, users of perfumes, etc. who worked in the usual way, and could the monk explain a dhamma suitable for such as they. The Buddha then proceeded to recommend sunnata as being of benefit to them. However, those householders demurred, pointing out that sunnata was too elevated and could himself recommend something more down to earth, upon which he introduced them to ‘sotapattianga’ or the practice of preparing oneself for attainment of the stream, that is, practising for sotapana, for entry into the stream of nibbana. Such a practice consists in developing, or having, unshakeable faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, accompanied by that sila admired by the noble, the kind that is beyond reproach. Those householders were satisfied and having paid respects, departed, saying that they were already practising in that way.

This we should give some close attention to, if we want to understand the true purpose of Buddhism. The first thing we need to be aware of is that the Buddha, in response to their request, revealed sunnata to those householders as being useful to them, which some today might disagree with. But we have to accept the fact that the Buddha wanted the laity to take and make use of sunnata for their benefit. As for the second thing, that ‘more down to earth’ matter, the practising for stream entry, for sotapana, this is about preparing oneself for the attainment of nibbana and is seen as being a more indirect approach to sunnata, being, ostensibly, about making merit and giving alms in an endless pursuit of both the manussasamapatti, and devasamapatti, however, it’s not just about that, which hasn’t, unfortunately, stopped it from being explained and propagandised as if it were, so that what was supposed to represent the first rung of the ladder leading to nibbana, to sunnata, got increasingly buried until there was no way for the laity to connect with it and thus to bring the true form of Buddhism to treat their everyday dukkha problem. It’s a real human problem that we, because of this, are far from understanding the heart of Buddhism.

That the Buddha would reveal sunnata to those householders must have meant that it was the cure for their various problems. The everyday life of those people needed to be controlled, and through a proper understanding of sunnata they could avoid making the mistakes that brought dukkha. Because they would have knowledge of sunnata they could then steadily learn to govern their lives, otherwise they’d have to continually oscillate between laughter and tears, thus dwelling in a pitiable condition. So, to allow those householders to avoid that the Buddha told them about sunnata, about something beneficial for such as they.

Just how beneficial sunnata will be for laypeople will be examined in detail when we come to look at the actual practice involved. At this time we’ll begin by acknowledging at the outset that

the highest Buddhist principle is sunnata, and that this sunnata can be beneficial in the lives of householders, its purpose being to put an end to dukkha so that those who now dwell in the midst of that problem become those who aren't affected by it at all. If there is nibbana it will be here, that is, in the fact that one is unsullied, so undisturbed by dukkha. If that should permanently be the case one would then be arahant. If just a lessening of dukkha is involved then it's nibbana on the level of a lesser kind of noble person. Or, if such a situation occurs only occasionally then one is a good person, a kalyanamitta in the worldly sense, the sort of individual who displays faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, and possesses that sila, that moral behavior, praised by those noble individuals.

As for sotapatiyanka, it's firm faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha plus 'ariyakantasila,' that sila beloved of the noble ones. These four prepare one for the attainment of sunnata, or nibbana. The explanation goes like this: Saddha, that faith which will not be quite complete until it's realized that the Buddha was enlightened through knowing sunnata as the ultimate and true quencher of dukkha - and, through knowing that the Dhamma isn't anything other than sunnata explained as the teaching, the practising involved and the result arising from practising non-clinging to any and all things - and, through knowing that the Sangha contains those people who have practised and attained the fruit of their labours. When these are finally acknowledged saddha will be truly firm.

Regarding 'ariyakantasila,' it means sila, moral behaviour, which is so unblemished it's become ariyakantha, that is, it's become that which the noble people admire. Once that sort of sila comes about through having recognized sunnata in all things, even if not completely, there must then be freedom, that is, it will, at the least, be seen that nothing at all should be clung to, or that nothing can really be clung to, so that one will then be a person who has no intention of doing anything that will break sila, regardless of which strand of sila it is. Being specific, it's pleasant feeling, sukhavedana, and those things and experiences in the world that give rise to sukhavedana that cause clinging, and also cause us to ignore sila in full awareness even though we're trying not to ignore it, yet the harder we try to resist the urge to do wrong the worse the pressure becomes until we can't deny the impulse any longer. If we, through constant knowledge of sunnata, and by keeping sila pure, possess the way to relieve the pressure, then that sort of thing can be easily avoided. Submit and there will have to be many sila violations and much struggle and strife. So, attain sila purified to the level of that admired by the noble ones.

Altogether it can be seen that this sotapatiyanka and its four clauses - even though the Buddha declared it to get around the opposition to sunnata displayed by those householders - is still connected with sunnata, it doesn't escape its orbit. If we put it in ordinary terms there was a sort of trick played here which was designed to give those people sunnata but 'under the radar,' as it were, in a way that they couldn't avoid, and which would then allow knowledge of sunnata to flourish in their lives of its own accord. If we're to have true faith and true morality, it must be that saddha and sila, that faith and morality, based in knowledge of sunnata.

The saddha and sila rooted in the desire for heaven, for instance, although strong must find a firm enough basis or it won't satisfy the noble. Hence when it's emphasized that there must be firmly established saddha and sila one will be drawn towards those which are rooted in sunnata, because if rooted in anything else there must always be a struggle. It's when that struggle becomes too severe and one becomes fed up, or disillusioned with that sort of faith and morality that one will strive on until meeting with the saddha and sila rooted in sunnata. Hence, plainly put: the Buddha had set a trap in advance for those laypeople so that they couldn't escape sunnata although they'd already actually firmly rejected it.

In conclusion: amongst those with highly developed satipanna and those who are householders it's true to say that, as a rule, both will need to hear about the same dhamma, the same Buddhist principle, but on the appropriate level, as with sunnata explained on such a level and in such a way which is appropriate for people on that specific level. However, the fact is that people generally won't want anything that would be appropriate to quenching their own particular level of dukkha, they'd rather wander off the path and seek after their own idea of happiness.

To sum up: Buddhism aims to allow all beings to be able to dwell in the midst of dukkha without having to experience it, because of being able to live and to practice with knowledge of sunnata.

6. One's relationship with religion.

Having looked at the purpose of Buddhism we should now look at what it is people want to get from it. Getting to grips with this will help us to understand why, in this day and age, people get too little benefit from their religion, given what it has to offer, and given what nature has prepared mankind to receive. This, in the final count, is the cause of the lack of peacefulness in the human world. Humanity is, after all, the highest thing around, above all the other animal species, yet it has to be said that the animal world generally is a more peaceful place than the human, something it's hard to argue with.

Concerning what people who get involved with a religion want to get from it? We should take a good look at this. There are two main categories: where religious involvement is ancestral, or traditional, and where there's involvement because there's a special need, or desire.

Regarding the first of these, where involvement with a religion is ancestral, this can have an effect depending on the traditions and culture connected with a national religion, like, for instance, how much those influence the population. In this case, there'll be a greater influence on society than on the individual. However, if the original traditional approach to practice changes to become one done correctly in accord with reason, with wisdom, the results will also be correct. So, we should give attention to the fact that the survival of the popular, traditional understanding of any particular religion represents, perhaps surprisingly, a continuance of that religion, which, even though it might have gone astray still exists as a belief system which can be corrected. Thus the traditional form of religion is useful for people of a certain understanding, in

that it will keep them performing good deeds, and while that can't be said to be the desire of any one individual it can be said to be the unconscious desire of a nation.

As for the latter form, that is, where there's a particular desire, or purpose involved, then it's necessary to, again, divide this into two, into the societal and the individual. We have to allow that as far as society is concerned results will be slow to appear and won't be that far-reaching, whereas, with the individual, they might extend until the limits of an individual's mental abilities are reached.

Peace would be the desired result for a society, as we already know. But that societal peacefulness would differ depending on the individual, and especially would it differ from that peace Buddhists would get from a proper use of their religion. The majority of people, children included, will understand that peace is, well, peace, it's always the same no matter what, be it worldly peace or peacefulness in its Dhamma meaning. This understanding has made people negligent so that, now, there's nobody capable of understanding peace as it truly is, the end result being an inability to create the real thing. Hence we need to form a clear understanding of this thing called 'peace.'

Here, we'd like to mention the phrase 'ahimsa paramo dhammo,' which means that 'ahimsa' is the supreme dhamma. 'Ahimsa' means 'non-harming,' 'non-harmful,' the condition of being harmless. Some might say that this is a Brahmanic principle, something from the Hindu religion, and that's correct, this was known in India before the Buddha's time, but as knowledge developed over time the meaning of the word 'ahimsa' changed, developed, until the Buddhists came up with 'nibbanam paramam vadanti Buddha,' which means 'all Buddhas say that nibbana is the supreme.' This meant that the supreme dhamma now had two names: 'ahimsa' and 'nibbana.' However, the two can be reconciled in that 'ahimsa' is the supreme dhamma as regards a society, while nibbana is the supreme for the individual.

Regarding what any individual wants from their religion? Well, that changes and develops continually. This is why one comes to understand the meaning of ahimsa on an ever-deeper level, until finally realizing that the most fearsome forms of violence are those directed against oneself. This, in turn, brings the discovery of the 'enemy within,' the enemy within the mind, which leads one to realize that the most terrible violence first occurs within oneself and then brings about external acts of violence, that is, from one person to another. If we don't have the enemy within, that is, the defilements, there won't be an enemy, or any violence, externally either. The defilements create separation, create the enemies within and without. This is the sort of vision that grows and develops until a Buddha, one able to eject the internal enemies completely, appears in the world and goes on to teach about the peacefulness that we should want, that peace which is true and real, which is defilement-free, which arises with the defeat of the greatest of our enemies, the defilements. One who escapes from the defilements is known as 'one who has gone away from the enemy,' which, in the Pali language is expressed as 'ariya' : 'ari' means 'enemy,' while 'ya' means 'to go away from.' This word 'ariya' was known before

the Buddha's time so reveals that, pre-Buddhism, there were people who knew about, feared, and wanted to escape from the kilesa, from the defilements. However it was only with the advent of the Buddha that such knowledge reached its fulfillment, and, to this day, hasn't been superseded.

The desire of one who connects with Buddhism, should be to put an end to the defilements, to completely defeat the enemy within, nothing more, nothing less than that. But that's not what happens, there's desire for many things, but nobody much, it seems, is thinking about putting an end to the enemy within, about putting an end to the defilements.

Some Buddhists, even those in Thailand, hoping to get something sacred or magical from their religion, to have good fortune, be rich, or escape from the ever-burgeoning self-created enemies, seek out some sacred objects and hang them around their necks until their necks can hardly bear with the weight, all the while not knowing what that sort of behaviour is really about. But those things that people think will help them actually help the enemy within, because they're born from their own wrong desires, so from the defilements. This is also the case with those who use religious knowledge as a tool, as something to make a living from, or for some other personal benefit, they all the while just go along encouraging the defilements. In the end there's no real result in the true Buddhist sense, and people don't get that which it's the purpose of Buddhism to supply, either because they don't want it, or just don't know about it, having needs which don't coincide with the goal of Buddhism.

Fear, it can be said is the true reason behind the arising of every and all religious systems. Those who fear the power of ghosts and spirits and of all those gods need a religion to curry favour with their god even though it's just a product of their own ignorance. Those who fear hardship, fear poverty, bad luck, and so on, will pursue a religion as a means of placating those fears. Religion is a tool used to combat fear. As for the fear of true Buddhists, that's fear of dukkha, or of the harmfulness emanating from the enemy within, they having recognized this as the greatest of all dangers. Human beings, once born, experience fear, and will do so for the rest of their lives if they don't adapt so that it instead becomes the tool which can be used to eliminate the problem once and for all.

Hence true Buddhists, those who wish to attain a real result from Buddhism should hurry up, solve this problem. Just feel the need, the necessary desire for that which it's the purpose of Buddhism to supply and which is what the whole world needs: peace, true and eternal peace, peace beyond any doubt. One must look within, search within until one finds the root cause of all enemies, both within and without, both material and spiritual, and dispose of it by some means. Be one completely free from that fear which causes dukkha then one can reckon that one has received the highest reward that Buddhism has to bestow, and will have proved that there's no higher endeavour than striving to create peace, both for oneself and for others in this world.

7. Trusting in Buddhism.

Today we'll look at another general principle, one we should know, which, if well grasped will help us to more easily comprehend true Buddhism, or, at least won't allow the sort of misunderstanding that can bring fear and confusion into study and practice at the advanced level.

When just glanced at the sort of wrong understanding concerning Buddhism could arise that might make people give up on it, because it would seem to be all about sunnata, voidness, anatta, non-selfhood, about everything being dukkha, and about nothing whatsoever being clung to. Some, who've chanced to hear this, or who've only studied some parts of the teaching and been told that this, in the main, is Buddhism, will then suspect that it's pessimistic in nature, and more so, negative too, in that it seems to deny everything, doesn't believe in anything at all. When people hear this they might well form wrong opinions, go the wrong way, go the way of micchaditthi, of wrong understanding, and, likely, of nattikhaditthi, or nihilism too, assuming that Buddhism is that sort of a teaching even though it has nothing whatsoever to do with nihilism and considers such a view to be a wrong understanding of the worst kind.

Thai people go in the same direction, although unconsciously, in that we cheerfully accept that when the Buddha taught something then it has to be right, it is that way, and we're happy to accept, to live with that every time. Even though we may not feel satisfied we have to bear with it because we believe in the Buddha. So we quietly fall into micchaditthi, because it's understood and accepted that when something is already seen as being correct then there needn't be any further studying done to check on it. Hence there are many who fall into accepting things without anything solid to base their acceptance on, but accepting nonetheless because they have the firm belief that such and such is a principle of the Buddha's teaching and, therefore, is always going to be correct. Because a person's ancestors revered the Buddhist religion that person might not feel at liberty, or have the courage to demur, to disagree, so they fall into a micchaditthi too, one which is, in a sense, concealed within Buddhism itself and which has yet to be detected and denounced as a wrong understanding, that micchaditthi which manifests as accepting anything as being true and right without going to the trouble of investigating, of checking it out first. And such people are praised, lauded as teachers because they teach about these difficult to understand subjects everyday, when, really, they have wrong understanding and view Buddhism through a glass darkly, as pessimistic, as the religion of those who reject everything, so as negative too.

Then there are those Buddhists who aren't learned, or who might not be able to learn, these people have only faith to depend on and the resolution to make merit, to give alms, firmly believing that that's enough to bring happiness and prosperity both in this world and the next, requiring nothing further. Those who fall into this category see Buddhism as optimistic, as clearly and openly receptive, and all about getting that, getting this, being that, being this, hence of a positive character. We should be aware that these trends are common to all religious systems, to see them as being peculiar to Buddhism wouldn't be correct. The remaining question now is: what's the true Buddhist approach?

Well, Buddhists don't see things as being either positive or negative, rather they, simply put, take the middle way, being able to see that all things can be understood as good or bad depending on the viewpoint adopted, they might therefore avoid clinging to any satisfaction arising towards the good or to any dissatisfaction towards things seen as being bad, thus being those with void minds who remain aloof. Hence seeing the world as being either positive or negative is micchaditthi, a wrong understanding. Therefore one who wants to be fair and just won't claim that Buddhists see things as being positive or negative, but will understand that the Buddhist aims to know all things, external or internal, including the most profound namadhammas, mind objects, as they really are, and will try to relate to those things in the way appropriate, that is, in a way that doesn't produce dukkha. Hence there's no sticking to the good or rejecting of anything because it's bad, for instance. How that's to be done will be explored later in some detail, and should be deemed to be the principal and true form of Buddhist practice.

As for Buddhism being positive or negative, that's like saying that Buddhism is optimistic or pessimistic. Buddhism isn't positive or negative, that is, it doesn't say that anything exists or doesn't exist, it just teaches that nothing should be clung to as being 'me' or 'mine,' hence there's the denial that there's a 'me' or a 'mine,' which doesn't mean, however, that we don't have, or get, or don't consume, because we should have, should get, should consume, that's as it should be, but there shouldn't be any clinging to anything as being a 'self,' or as a possession. We should do this in order to get something else, that is, a cool mind, physical ease, equanimity with regard to experiences during the time that we're connected with them. Such things then become our servants, our slaves, providing comfort and ease, and nothing more than that. Possession and non-possession thus become the same as regards having any value. But, most importantly, the mind isn't anxious, doesn't have dukkha, doesn't jump about because of any getting or not getting that might happen. This mind, having become quite normal, doesn't need to accept or to deny. Buddhism teaches us how to have such a mind, a mind that's free, that's above getting or not getting, a mind that can't be said to be either positive or negative. When thus mind resides in the middle way, beyond both positive and negative, and is said to be 'above' the world, or to have escaped the world, it's then unaffected by worldly situations, above all the forms of dukkha while engaged in thinking, speaking, or acting, because freed from the kilesa, the defilements.

It's true that Buddhist explanations mostly appear negative in form, that is, they won't necessarily follow the general pattern. There's a reason why almost all of what had been taught before the Buddha's time needed to be rejected. Even so that doesn't mean that Buddhism is a negative religion, even when it's taught that nothing should be given attention to, or should be possessed. In truth Buddhism admits that, certainly, there are those things that should be given attention to and that should be obtained, but in such a way that dukkha doesn't arise, which will be the case if one can avoid clinging to anything as being 'me' or 'mine,' even clinging to life itself, or to fame and fortune, to anything that people generally cling to, because, in a nutshell, the mind will then be free, dwelling above all worldly things, which is called liberation. When

it's asked: what are we liberated from? We're liberated from those things that would normally dominate the mind, that would take the mind captive.

Liberation isn't in any way positive or negative. However this needs to be studied particularly so that it can be understood that Buddhism doesn't display either characteristic. Those people who assume Buddhism to be negative display a mental bias and unconsciously misrepresent the system. They're so used to seeing things in just two ways that when something doesn't turn out to be positive then just has to be negative, thus they, never having developed the ability to go deeper, have yet to realize that those two concepts form the cause of clinging and dukkha, and they've yet to meet with something more, something new, something which doesn't result in dukkha.

Regarding this here's a brief example: a child will see that day and night are different so will have feelings during the day which are different from the way they feel at night, hence they create a problem which is almost insoluble, in that they'll see one as positive, one as negative. Now, if looked at from the Buddhist perspective it can be seen that day and night are really one and the same, that is, they're both just intervals of time, then something else can be seen, something which isn't time, which isn't concerned with time, which is above the domination of time, which doesn't take the form of day or night, or of positive or negative. Positive and negative are concerned with the passing of time, opposite those is something which is above and beyond time, hence both nibbana and sunnata are beyond the reach of time and shouldn't be made into the positive or the negative.

Ordinarily people are too used to feeling that something is positive or negative and are always ready to see things that way, so that when they hear the word 'nibbana' they hear 'not! not!' And it's immediately, and completely, negative. Even more is that the case whenever the word 'empty' comes up, 'empty' being a poor translation of the word 'sunnata,' which itself is then presumed to be negative in the ultimate sense. Then, further, Buddhism gets classified as a micchaditthi, as a wrong view, being accused of 'negativism,' which Buddhism considers to be a wrong view too, as it does that of 'positivism,' for the reason that, if still being snared by, or dominated by the positive and the negative there's no chance of escaping dukkha. Positive and negative are just two amongst the myriad forms of attachment which Buddhism seeks to eject, to eliminate, so that one can escape and be one who doesn't cling to anything.

To sum up: those who wish to access the true form of Buddhism both in the way of study or of practice, will have to prepare themselves to be cleansed of the diseased thinking that if something isn't pessimistic, it must be optimistic, or if something isn't negative it must be positive. Develop a new mental approach, one ready to study in such a way that there's no way one could connect with those concepts. When the mind has been so prepared it will be very easy to access the true form of Buddhism, which we'll look at henceforth.

8. Preparing the mind to fight the defilements.

When we talk about preparing the mind, or preparing our views in order to access the true form of Buddhism we ought to know what it is that we need to do and how to go about it.

For the most part Buddhism is active in character, hence it requires that one be ready to work. But Buddhism might be misunderstood as being passive, and some have invented new methods of practice which involve different techniques, shortcuts, etc. so that one who doesn't fully understand what's actually required might see it in this contrary, passive, way.

To see Buddhism as essentially active means that we, too, need to be active, we need to act, not be passive, or acted upon, so that we might have the means available to succeed. In the past we've been passive, that is, we've been acted upon by the defilements, but now we've connected with Buddhism, and with a tool-set that will let us do the acting. Hence there has to be activity, and because of the nature of the task ahead we're going to need mindfulness and wisdom, so we'll need to be smart, cautious, careful, sensitive, wide awake, or as the Buddha said: Be 'like a wise Mahout well able to use the gaff to control his elephant,' or be like a master craftsman, a maker of arrows, and sharpen the arrows, temper them carefully, oil and straighten them again and again until they can do their job, until they can hit the target; or be like a smart and wise farmer who knows how to manage irrigation properly. These are metaphors for the delicate work that's going to be necessary if we're to deal with the defiled mind, which requires that we possess the most difficult to develop and delicate of skill sets involving mental strength, fortitude, patience, intelligence and the application of the greatest care and attention, and which is in no way a passive process.

Now, regarding the ways that wrong understanding can arise: some people might think that being still, motionless, or that lying in a mosquito net so that one doesn't slap mosquitoes, doesn't allow one any opportunity for breaking the silas, the precepts. Some might consider that making the mind passive, without thought, but dull, listless, represents samadhi. Some might think that seeing aniccam, dukkham, and anatta in a way that makes one feel bored, weary, and too weak and exhausted to cling to anything is nibbana. These are some of the forms wrong understanding can take.

As for those strange sects, some of which have teachings that people can't comprehend at all. In particular there's the Zen branch of the Mahayana, whose teaching can be briefly summed up as being still, not feeling the need to do or to think anything, not allowing anything to stir up any thinking, and that itself is the 'void' or 'original' mind. That surely will present an opportunity for the dimmer amongst us to misunderstand in a big way. Some go further than that, teaching that one should see the defilements as anatta, or as void of 'self,' and the task will then be completed, finished, because when the defilements are seen to be void that's seeing anatta, the work of getting rid of the kilesa is done and there's no need to do anything more. This sort of thing if linked to Buddhism might make some see it as being passive in character. None of the foregoing accord with truth because they contain a misunderstanding. Acting in these particular ways isn't sila, isn't samadhi, and isn't panna, wisdom in the Buddhist sense. However, they

might represent wisdom for others. As for Buddhism, one must be active, but active in a skilful way.

Now, we'd like to consider how to act against the kilesa, the defilements, or against the defiled mind, so that we can better understand how to behave so that both the study and practise of Buddhism will be active experiences, because up to this point the kilesa acted upon us, but now we want to act upon them. Although the Buddha's utterance 'make the 'self' the refuge of 'self'' has this kind of meaning it might be difficult to understand how the 'self' can act towards the 'self.' The word 'self' refers to the one who acts, as it does to the one who is acted upon, as well as to the instrument used in the action. One who clings too much to logic might have a problem understanding this. But in Buddhist practice we have to be prepared to work in this way, that is, to be the actor as well as the one acted upon. Those intellectuals, those debaters might be confused as to how one can be active and passive at the same time? Whilst one who doesn't listen properly might think that it involves a sort of suicide, which would be a great misunderstanding, one that might - because of not knowing how the 'self' arises into the mind, how to put an end to that, or what effect it meanwhile is having on our lives - might cause rejection, condemnation of Buddhism as being a crazy sort of a system.

'Make 'self' the refuge of 'self'' is a saying used in the beginning of one's involvement with Buddhism to encourage one to be self-reliant and isn't ultimate truth or anything of that sort. In reality the 'self' needs to be completely destroyed, but if we say that sort of thing straightway then people just beginning to study won't be able to understand how it is that we can fight with and take refuge in the 'self' at one and the same time. However, for the true student such a statement will be reconcilable, in that it will be the false 'self' which is composed of defilement, the ignorant 'self,' that will need to be destroyed. There won't, however, be anyone able to come and help us do that, it will have to be done by one's 'self,' that is, by that wise, undefiled 'self' which will have been gradually developing over time as a result of us coming to realize, and trying to do something about, the foolish way we've been living in the world, or, perhaps because we've just become smarter over time. Either way, this is the 'self' helping the 'self,' something which happens of its own accord.

Even though we'll receive much teaching from the Buddha we'll still have to do the practice ourselves, then the result will arise that will destroy ignorance. However, it's possible that, sometimes, because this might happen quickly, there might be the wrong understanding that it's due to something the Buddha said. But in this instance it will be because knowledge from the various bouts of clear-seeing having accumulated in the mind of a person, then, on hearing hints and suggestions that knowledge can come to fruition. But, in reality, it's the 'self' being a refuge for the 'self,' the 'self' helping the 'self' which brings success.

Therefore we can see that being 'active' in this case is different in meaning from that usually met with, and, perhaps, hasn't been met with before, but one must be active, must act until the feeling of being 'self' is finally voided and there's the realization that one has escaped, or that, there

being no feeling of 'self' or of any attachment to it remaining in the mind, nibbana is attained. Practising properly on this level means that there shouldn't be anything remaining that could be a 'self,' nothing at all that could be called 'self,' not even a purified, or transcendental type of 'self.' All that should remain should be mental activity. Before, although there was the desire for it, there couldn't be any activity in this particular sense, one could only try to struggle and strive as best one could but without freeing oneself from the kilesa. That kind of behaviour can't be called 'active' in the final count, there being still too many things binding and dominating the mind, restricting its freedom of movement and forcing it to be a mind which is acted upon, hence that mind, being often depressed, could not find the freedom to be truly active. When the mind 'escapes' in the Buddhist sense it meets with freedom, and once free it's fully and completely activated.

Hence, as mentioned, in practising this form one must be active from beginning to end. So prepare the body and mind to act, and be actively involved with life at all times until there's success, until there's freedom, until there's release. In practising the Buddhist system we need, more than anything else, to be active, that is, we need to be actively involved with the operations of the body, speech, and the mind constantly. We should give this some attention. One interested should give it some close consideration.

In this case we take it that any activity done in ignorance shouldn't be thought of as being activity in the true sense, because it still won't produce the desired effect, hence it's akin to inaction. Therefore activity of any kind, if done in ignorance, can be considered to be a form of passivity, even if the activity is somewhat on the wild side. Now, if activity has knowledge as its basis, even if the activity involves being still, being at rest, it will be activity in the true sense: think of a huge dynamo which spins silently yet produces enormous power. Mental activity in the Dhammic sense is like that. Although there's no visible movement yet there is activity. So don't think that because someone is sitting still and silent they're necessarily being passive.

When we understand the meaning of the word 'active' in the Buddhist sense then it becomes somewhat easier to generate the enthusiasm necessary to fight the defilements, for the 'self' to become the refuge of 'self' and completely destroy the ignorant 'self' through that 'self' which is wise. If this is still difficult to grasp take it to mean the scale of activity we need to generate in order to reach the true and essential form of Buddhism. We must have courage, perseverance, patience, matched with intelligence and carefully applied attention if we're to be able to produce the level and form of activity sufficient to take on this task and succeed. Don't take this dhamma principle to be something easy, something simple only for the use of people who lived thousands of years ago.

To sum up: Looked at in whatever way Buddhism is dynamic in character, while those involved with it, those who reap results from it must, without exception, display the same qualities. We ask just one thing: Don't let it be the dynamism of ignorance, of the defilement of tanha as is common in today's world, rather let it be dynamism rooted in knowledge, in wisdom, in the sort

of right understanding that goes to lead the world into purity, into true peacefulness and light. This 'dynamism' then has value, and it's appropriate for us, even in this present time, to value it highly so that we don't lose out to those who lived during the Buddha's time. There are two paths we can walk: that which leads to freedom or that which leads to confusion.

Let's make the proper meaning of the word 'active,' or 'dynamic' sufficiently clear. This is about thoroughly preparing ourselves to reach the essential Buddhism, as will be investigated anon.

9. 'Me' and 'mine' form an important Buddhist principle.

Today, we'll talk about a common confusion existing with regard to Buddhist principles which forms a major obstacle preventing people from reaching the true form of Buddhism, particularly where those from other countries are concerned. Even in the Thai sangha there's confusion with respect to certain matters, that is, different people take this or that dhamma to be important principles of Buddhism, which is, in the end, alright, no one is actually wrong, but it doesn't help us to escape from the confusion, we aren't able to practise Dhamma and meet with regular success, instead we swing back and forth, back and forth, between this and that dhamma, this and that teaching, and, in some cases, have done that from the beginning.

If there was a test carried out amongst students and graduates designed to discover what the heart of Buddhism was considered to be, there'd be many differing responses, with each person considering theirs to be right. It would be akin to many blind people touching one and the same elephant but arguing as to what it was they were touching, because they're each coming into contact with different parts of the same creature. This happens even in this case, which, in truth, it shouldn't do, the Buddha having already made matters quite clear. But, because of the profundity of the Buddha's teaching and the subsequent plethora of commentaries with their many additional explanations, then all of that becomes somewhat like a too-big elephant, in that there's just too much information for one individual to take in all at once, hence there's subjective adherence as to the importance of certain Buddhist principles which differ depending on the individual.

Again, there's confusion because of some previous adherence to certain views. When one has some previous belief or clinging one will be inclined to seize onto a particular Buddhist principle, which is just one particular aspect, just one part of the whole, as a basis for further research, study, and practise. One will focus on that which is compatible with one's original understanding and overlook, or skim over, anything else. This is the reason why some principles can be obstinately taken to be true, something seen more in those with previously held religious beliefs - as has already been discussed - which forces the conclusion that the majority of people will tend to study new and different things just to provide support for their own opinions. Persist in going this way and, because Buddhism has so many aspects, there'll be complete confusion

and those aspects which aren't too important will become important because one's original knowledge isn't enough to take in the whole of Buddhism.

Even within the narrow yet learned Buddhist circle there's still the condition we called confusion, because there's only the intent to grasp the tenets of those who, themselves, don't know what they need, what they should get. This is like a person going into a store where there are all kinds of things on sale and not buying anything at all because they don't know what it is that they need, there are all kinds of things on offer so that they keep looking but it only creates confusion. There are a great many graduates, scholars, and philosophers in Buddhism vying to tell their listeners that this or that is a different Buddhist principle, and that this or that is true, correct, until it puts those listening into a whirl, even though the listeners be scholars too, even excellent students, so how, then, can it be expected that everyday people, be they supporters of Buddhism, won't be put into a whirl too? Hence it's right to say that even today we Buddhists still can't grasp the true nature of Buddhism.

What we mostly see are the important dhammas, like the ariyasacca, the tri-sikha, the tri-laksana, paticcasamupada, and so on, or that which is held to be the real heart of Buddhism, the three components of the ovadapatimokkha, that is, not doing any evil, doing only good, keeping the mind pure, but all looked at as being different, not as one item, so that the people don't know what to study.

Another source of confusion which should be looked at is that some dhammas contain words that can't be understood, either because their meaning has been wrongly grasped or because some particular word or phrase has been wrongly interpreted, that is, there's been deviation from its original meaning. The more puzzling anything is, the more people will write explanations of it, and the more explanations there are the further away they'll go from the true meaning. But because any new explanations are listenable, or seem more sage, those who meet with them might grasp them, thinking that the more difficult to understand something is then the better, the more important a Buddhist principle it must be.

This has happened with the teaching of paticcasamupada, an explanation of which is much respected and widely studied, but which, in the final count, has no use as a principle of practice capable of producing benefit in line with the Buddha's original wishes. The abhidhamma explanation of the same teaching goes much further than just paticcasamupada, because it includes many matters, each of which has its own and different profundity so that it can exceed the ability of the student to understand thoroughly enough to be able to use it successfully in their practice, not to mention any supporters and their practices.

Considering the various obstacles which obstruct and don't allow us to get true benefit from Buddhism, well, there's really just one, that is, we're still to grasp a principle, still to come up with a clear, appropriate, understandable, method of practice suitable for everyone. Hence we think that we should remove this problem and find something which can be generally used, both

by those who want to practise on their own, or by those who want to rely on Buddhist patronage. The results can be the same because at this level the practice (dhamma) will be natural, not a matter of the morality that people themselves enact according to circumstance. But to do this it's still going to be necessary to take care of basic principles so that it's acceptable to all Buddhists, scholars as well, and easy to understand, even for those Buddhists who lack education because they haven't been able to study much.

With this in mind it's necessary that we modify our use of language, that is, we make it simpler, clearer, so that although the essential import will remain the same as in the texts it might be immediately grasped by anybody, and, more importantly, will be practicable for all people, for those with little education, for the elderly, for those in a critical condition of health, those close to death, all will thus have the opportunity to gain understanding. Hence, if this explanation is different from anything one has heard before, please, don't be so surprised that you stop reading, or that you continue to read but without giving proper attention. Please admit the intention that it's a necessity that we relate this to solve the immediate problems of our Buddhist world.

This most important thing here gathered together and presented is, briefly, that we don't need to study anything other than those two words 'me' and 'mine.' We as yet don't need to think about the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, or take into account this or that dhamma, this or that category, or whatever it might be, including any history of Buddhism, we must forget about all that, we don't need to worry about it right now, but begin our studies by looking at the words 'me' and 'mine,' words that everyone knows the meaning of. Every language contains their equivalents because the mental feeling that causes their utterance is the same in people of all nationalities as it has been in all ages. In the Pali language there are the terms 'ahangkara' and 'mamangkara' which carry the same meaning. So, let's take a look at that mental feeling which gives rise to 'me' and 'mine.' This is the thing, the main thing that we need to study, and study properly, so that all the forms of dukkha can quench away and the ultimate fruits of Buddhism be attained.

This course of study mightn't be done from books, although the scriptures do discuss it in a general way. However, we have to study what we call 'me' and 'mine' within ourselves. When we can observe and understand it we'll be able to understand the scriptural references to it also, and be able to clearly see for ourselves that all of them agree with our own observations. Hence it will be better for us to first put the scriptures aside, not to worry about all of that which would, because of their many difficulties, otherwise sap our energies in vain. Instead, we'll focus directly on the investigation of 'me' and 'mine.' Even so, be aware that this 'me' and 'mine' still has many nooks and crannies that will need to be studied, hence we'll have to be wise and not waste time investigating unnecessary things. Thus we'll restrict ourselves to the study of 'me' and 'mine' as it pertains to 'dukkha' and to 'the end of dukkha.'

The Buddha is said to have said: 'Before, as now, I teach dukkha and the remainderless quenching of dukkha.' Therefore, whatever we consider we'll consider it in the light of these two

matters. Now, when we're concerned with 'me' and 'mine' we must take into account how it is that those two cause dukkha as well as how dukkha can be managed by using the 'self, or the 'me,' of the person whose concern this is, going through the different levels of study and practice, from that level which destroys the bad 'self' sense while leaving just the good 'self,' then gradually moving up to reach the level which reduces clinging to the good 'self' too - that is: we develop that 'self' sense which is popularly known as 'good,' and we then reduce that by degrees until the final stage, at which point there's no feeling of 'self,' of 'me' or 'mine' remaining in the mind. The business is then at an end, as will be the usefulness of the tripitaka or anything else in Buddhism come to that.

But, as mentioned, we avoid thinking about scripture, or about this or that nationality, or this or that religion, we brush all of that away and focus just on the fact that people in the world are of the same mind, that is, they're brim-full of the feelings of 'me' and 'mine.' How dangerous is that? So, hurry, focus on finding a way to rid the human world of this problem, and help people to develop a cleaner, a better feeling of being 'me' up until there's no more attachment to 'me' or to 'mine' at all, at which time this world and everyone in it, no matter what their condition, will meet with lasting peace. Let's engage with Buddhism to just deal with 'me' and 'mine' as set out here, without having to give attention to other matters which might affect the ability of the mind even a little.

But considering the anxiety and lack of self-control of some people there's the worry that the invitation relayed here still won't be enough to persuade them to study and practise in order to escape their predicament, they, for instance, still being concerned with matters like the noble truths, the eightfold path, dependent origination, and so on. Now, though, we have an easier, quicker way to develop our understanding of those subjects, in that we don't have to worry about them directly because they'll be included in this same mode of practice, that is, in dealing with the 'me' and 'mine' problem completely so that nothing of them remains, we'll automatically be fulfilling those other matters too, they'll be included.

For example: the noble truth of dukkha is experienced because there are the feelings of 'me' and 'mine.' The cause of dukkha is a 'me' and 'mine' affair too. Dukkhanirodha, or nibbana, is the experience of the complete quenching of 'me' and 'mine,' while magga, the 'eightfold path' is the method used to eliminate them, which is achieved by developing the bad 'me' into a good 'me,' and then developing the good 'me' into the gradually disappearing 'me' until 'me' is completely gone, extinguished, and there's freedom: no feeling of being 'me' or of anything being 'mine' remaining. Hence the noble truths aren't anything more than the arising and quenching of 'me' and 'mine,' or, to put it another way, of dukkha and the quenching of dukkha.

Regarding paticcasamupada, which explains how the 'me' arises and how it does down, this is, if explained in detail, a long, drawn-out and many faceted affair. The way of practice is to control phassa, sense contact, so that vedana, feeling, doesn't arise, or, to control feeling so that tanha, wrong desire, isn't concocted, that being the way the 'me' arises. This is the true core practice of

Buddhism which will be considered in detail as we go on. At this point we'll just sum up paticcasamupada as being a clever and most acute method designed to overcome the problems associated with 'me' and 'mine,' and nothing more than that. Just this much will alleviate the anxiety of anyone worried that there's something more, or better than this to be studied, so that they might not display full interest in this one matter.

10 – The significance of 'me' and 'mine.'

Today we'll talk about the significance of 'me' and 'mine,' and at the same time answer the question as to why we take these two words to be the head of the matter we're involved with - and why are we being asked to study just this one matter, having been assured that it will be enough because it's said that we'll then be studying Buddhism complete at the same time, which is something interesting, indeed surprising.

The significance of 'me' and 'mine' is that they're the cause, the source of all the forms of mental dukkha. However, before we come to their significance we should get to know them well enough.

As mentioned 'me' and 'mine' are known as 'ahangkara' and 'mamangkara' in the Pali language, these being ethical or religious useages, while if we use more straightforward or psychological terms we'll call them 'atta' and 'attaniya' - 'atta' means 'self,' or 'me,' while 'attaniya' indicates something connected with 'self,' that is, 'mine.' 'Ahangkara' would be the 'actor,' while 'mamangkara' would be the action it performs. Therefore, take it that, in this instance, both 'atta' and 'attaniya,' 'ahangkara' and 'mamangkara' mean 'me' and 'mine.' We should be aware that these are 'namadhammas,' that is, mental matters, and as such are mere feelings, just particular states of mind that don't exist in the material sense.

Now we'll take a look at how 'me' and 'mine' are expressed in other languages. From the realm of ethics, or philosophy, comes the Latin word 'ego,' which has the meaning of 'self,' or 'me,' then there's the Greek word 'centrikon' which has much the same meaning except that it's usually taken to mean 'centre.' Here it can be seen that the Latin word 'ego' has the same meaning as the Pali word 'atta,' while the meaning of the Greek word 'centrikon' also points in that direction, meaning the centre or the heart of a person, that which the Hindoos call 'atman,' and which the worldly might refer to as the 'spirit,' 'soul,' or whatever. All the foregoing are taken to be one's 'centre of being,' the import being that we create such a 'self' or 'centre' so that we can avoid taking the body, the outer shell to be 'me.'

Now arrives the feeling of clinging to 'self,' or the extreme selfishness called 'egoism.' This term, in one sense, implies that selfishness which is a kilesa, defilement. But in another sense it's just a feeling that makes us do something in the hope of getting something useful. Thus 'me' and 'mine' at this point should be taken to have the same meaning as egoism in the above sense. One who knows the meaning of the word 'ego,' or 'egoism' well would know at once what is meant by 'me' and 'mine.' Most importantly it should be clearly understood that these are just

feelings arising in the mind, or are states of mind concocted through interaction of the senses with their objects. Some people, however, might call these feelings or mental states the 'soul,' as is their wont. The important thing is to get to know them well enough.

As far as Buddhism is concerned they can't be called the mind itself, they're just kilesa, defilements engaged in dominating the mind for a time, and as a rule are referred to as 'cetasika,' or 'mental factors,' but they aren't the boss of anything, the mind is the boss, is the governor, the cetasika can concoct or dominate the mind causing it to change in this or that way. As with a monkey, we can dress it up in any way and we'll see a certain kind of monkey, like a foreigner monkey, or a chinee monkey. Hence the words 'me' and 'mine' imply the mind under the domination of ahangkara and mamangkara, or of egoism, which we take to be the mind. Therefore, to be clear, it's necessary to say that, in this instance, 'me' and 'mine' imply the mind oppressed by ahangkara and mamangkara, oppressed by selfishness and struggling to do its bidding without any thought of morality or conscience intervening. We'll need to study this further as to whether it be the cause responsible for creating all the forms of dukkha apparent in this world.

When we've come to know 'me' and 'mine' to some extent we can then continue on and consider their significance.

Narrowing things down somewhat: 'me' and 'mine' in the Pali language is referred to as 'upadana,' which means clinging, mental attachment, as when there's clinging to the five aggregates, the pancakhandas, or to the body and the mind as 'me,' and to anything connected to the body and mind as 'mine.' Or, being a little more detailed: There's clinging to the mind as being 'me' and to the body, to feelings, perceptions, and thoughts, as 'mine.' At any time there'll be clinging to anything as being 'me' or as being 'mine,' that we call 'upadana.' This is the cause of dukkha.

An essential Buddhist principle is expressed in a saying of the Buddha, thus: 'In short, the five aggregates affected by clinging are dukkha.' So, essentially, the five aggregates, that is, the body and mind of an individual, being clung to as 'me' or as 'mine' are dukkha, that is, they reveal symptoms of being 'hard to bear with,' which, generally speaking, once realized is awful, tiresome, intolerable. The aggregates when free from clinging aren't like that. There's, as yet, no need for us to talk about the aggregates of an arahant, we'll deal with just the aggregates of an ordinary, everyday person which, when they're not affected by clinging to 'me' and 'mine' aren't in any way dukkha, even though the body be injured or the mind is experiencing some form of torture. If clinging to 'me' and 'mine' doesn't happen there's no dukkha to be found. On the other hand if the body isn't harmed and the mind undisturbed, yet if one should cling, should attach to anything, then dukkha would immediately arise. Hence it can be said that whenever there's clinging to 'me' and 'mine' there's dukkha.

As for the arahant, dukkha might not arise because their aggregates aren't being clung to, and won't be clung to, ever. We say that those aggregates are purified, there's no upadana, no clinging involved with the body, the mind, or with any of the individual aggregates. Regarding the actual body, no matter whose body it might be, it will be without dukkha, but the mind, of whoever it might be, if it suffers the asava, the inflows, the defilements to invade and dominate it, there'll be clinging to 'me' and 'mine' and it will become depressed, unfree. Hence the words 'purified' or 'escaped' indicate freedom from that depression, that is, from clinging to 'me' and 'mine.' Whether one clings to the many and various things or clings to some power, it amounts to the same thing, hence it's said that all beings can be liberated through non-clinging. If one still clings one hasn't escaped from the dukkha trap. The things called 'me' and 'mine' form the trap that ensnares all beings in dukkha. If we can't beat this trap then we must experience dukkha, be it individually or in society as a whole. Hence we should recognize the importance, the prime part played by 'me' and 'mine' in causing the arising of dukkha.

'Vimutti' means 'escape' and, in Buddhism, is the object of the Brahmachariya, the pure life - as it's said: the Brahmachariya isn't about acquiring good fortune, being worshipped, praised, getting sensual happiness of the heavenly sort, or dwelling like a Brahma god in the Brahma heaven, it's about escape, about freedom. Hence vimutti, here, actually implies escaping from the domination of good fortune, praise, etc. Now, when we think about it, we might see that 'me' and 'mine' are prime actors in drawing us towards those kinds of experiences, because it's the desire to get, to be, regarding those things we see as meaningful, that, if there's any clinging, upadana, involved, we can expect to meet with dukkha every time. Once clinging is removed any wanting, getting, or being won't involve dukkha.

Essentially there's getting anything, wanting anything, or being whatever in whatever way which happens under the power of clinging, of upadana, and then there's getting, wanting, and being whatever it is happening under the power of satipanna, mindfulness and right knowledge, satipanna, here, not being bound up with upadana as is generally the case. Even though it might be believed that there's the most advanced education system in place still any satipanna will be submerged, sunk under the power of upadana. People, however, will be fine with that, so how could their satipanna ever be pure, clean, unblemished and consonant with the Buddhist understanding. People don't therefore enjoy a life under the control of satipanna pure and simple, but always under the control of upadana, of clinging to 'me' and 'mine.' Hence the world we experience is generally and increasingly unhappy in character because of their poisonous influence, which makes for a very dangerous problem so that some find it hard to sleep, even while they go around boasting about growth, about development in education, inventions, industry, etc.

In this world we can't shake off dukkha because of the power of 'me' and 'mine.' Therefore, although one does however much of this or of that it will be the sort of activity that repeatedly lands us in the vattasamsara, in the mass of dukkha. Hence there's no part of us that can approach nibbana and meet with ever-lasting peace, rather, we're always going farther away

from it. Thus we can see that, in this day and age, we do act wrongly - and why would we want to do that? We ought to take 'me' and 'mine' out of the equation then the world would produce right action, the right activity we should seek.

This being rather important we should study 'me' and 'mine,' something which can be interesting, even alarming - and, please, recognize it as being the single most important object of investigation for anyone studying Buddhism. However it having a universal importance its study shouldn't be limited to just Buddhism or to any other particular religion, because all beings no matter where or when and regardless of nationality or religion have the same problem to deal with. The human world is boiling because of 'me.'

11 – 'Me and mine' - getting rid of the world's problems.

Today we'll talk about the important subject of 'me' and 'mine' a little more, to make a clearer understanding, and to make it easier for us to access the true form of Buddhism.

People new to Buddhism shouldn't be interested in it just because it's different, or for the sake of making religious comparisons, because that won't help them to access the true Buddhism. It will, however, give rise to a lot of talk, and an endless miscellany. The more interested one is in God, in heaven and hell, the further away one will be from true Buddhism. Buddhism aims to deal with that which disturbs society and prevents the individual from finding true peace. We need to comprehend and to eliminate the true and prime cause of that disturbance, not that which we, because of some belief, assume to be its cause. Hence we'll need to study, to investigate until we discover what it is, which, be assured, will turn out to be 'me' and 'mine.'

We need to understand that it's not God who makes us have this or that religion, this or that tradition, it's dukkha, our dukkha, the trouble and strife that comes from the dangerous influence of 'me' and 'mine.' When we have troubles we seek for a way to eliminate or defend against them, hence we've discovered various methods we can practise to that end, together with creating the object of faith and respect that causes one to follow a practice properly, like a God, for instance, which promotes belief, allegiance, and attempts an explanation to keep faith strong. Hence, it can be seen that we've created God along with our customs, traditions, and religions because of the pressure exerted by those things called 'me' and 'mine.' However, in reality any proper knowledge, any true understanding which arises can be seen as a manifestation of the true 'God.'

We will need to see clearly that the destructive power of 'me' and 'mine' really is so. Buddhism aims to eliminate the dukkha which is the poisonous offspring of 'me' and 'mine,' hence there's a method of practice designed to deal thoroughly with them. But we don't want to cross anyone as regards God, Hell, or Heaven, rather we'll let those things be as they are, or as they're believed or desired to be. If we're to involve such things it will be to help those who are just beginning the practice, or to assist those who've held such beliefs previously, to encourage them to avoid wrongdoing and enable them to eradicate 'me' and 'mine.' Hence we don't consider

such things to be truly Buddhist, for the simple reason that, even if we were to finally arrive in Heaven we still wouldn't escape the pressure exerted by 'me' and 'mine,' we'd still have to laugh and cry even in heaven.

Hence we'll need to have another, higher, form of practice, one capable of eliminating the power of 'me' and 'mine' completely, one that can be generally used whether in the human or 'heavenly' realms, but especially in the here and now. Therefore, those who are new to the religion should take up Buddhism with the aim of accessing its true form, giving perhaps only bare attention to things peripheral.

We mustn't forget that there's still one thing which keeps society as a whole from being happy and individuals from being cooled and peaceful, which, if we don't deal with it, well, it might almost be said that we were born to experience dukkha and not to get what a human being should get from being alive. Hence we ought to make the effort and find out what we need to do to acquire the best thing a human being could have. And make sure that it's then achieved through our own efforts, don't leave anything to God or to some belief system, because the more we do that the farther away we'll go from that which can get rid of all human dukkha.

It needs to be mentioned that someone with faith in God, or in some religious system, even in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, who's interested in and comes to deal with 'me' and 'mine' successfully, once that's done then God, religion, or the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, or whatever it is, will be 'with' that person always, will be revealed in their activities, because the unblemished purity that comes with being free from 'me' and 'mine' is the manifestation of the true Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, or the true God. If that's not the case then any God, or the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha will be mere appearance and will just provide the base for more clinging to take place, so that 'me' and 'mine' will arise again and again bringing more quarrels and disputes, etc. When that's the way things are then instead of mankind dealing with 'me' and 'mine,' 'me' and 'mine' deal with mankind, and bring more deception, more dukkha, so that there's no real peace in societies or religious systems, in any temple or monastery anywhere.

This is something we should sympathize with – the necessity that we understand each other more correctly, and recognize that all people in this world have the same basic problem, are in the same boat, as it were, we having a common enemy which needs to be got rid of, that is, 'me' and 'mine,' 'egoism,' or, as it's known in Buddhism, 'asmimana,' which, once disposed of, nibbana, the final end of dukkha, will be met with.

Asmimana, then, means 'I am.' 'Mana' being 'determination,' or, perhaps perception, while 'asmi' means 'I am,' and has much the same meaning as ahangkara, in that it's the subject which experiences every feeling, whether good or bad. More correctly it's the centre of activity doing whatever is needed, decreeing what will be good or bad, the criterion being whether something is worth or not worth doing, is desirable or undesirable. Hence, good and bad have the same

meaning for the selfishness of *asmimāna*, *ahankāra*, and even for the selfishness called ‘egoism’ too.

For that reason the abandonment of *asmimāna*, or ‘egoism,’ if it’s to be final, complete, must involve the abandonment of both ‘good’ and ‘bad.’ In other systems, or in modern societies, abandoning the ‘bad’ while still being attached to doing ‘good’ might be seen as the final abandonment of ‘egoism,’ however, in Buddhism that won’t be the case, it being understood that abandoning the hateful while still clinging to the loveable means that the ego survives. When it’s really a complete abandonment there’s no more clinging to either good or bad, then it’s the complete abandonment of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ also. If this principle is understood then Buddhism will be easily and immediately grasped.

However, owing to the practice for the abandonment of *asmimāna* being most difficult certain rules are laid down, thus: keep attachment to the ‘self’ as well as one can to a minimum, and maintain only the good ‘self’ while trying to avoid the bad version completely. Buddhism accepts the following principles which form the heart of the teaching as enshrined in the Buddha’s words: ‘Avoid evil, do only good, and purify one’s own mind, these are the teachings of all Buddhas.’ So, in brief: Avoid the bad, do the good, and make the mind nice and clean.

As regards making the mind clean we find that there’s something more, something higher needed, because even doing the utmost good still won’t do that completely. Hence dropping egoism of the bad sort and being a good person won’t be enough to completely abandon self-belief, there has to be another, higher form of practice undertaken, and to clean egoism out of the mind completely it’s necessary that one eliminates ‘me’ and ‘mine’ completely. Be aware that the word ‘egoism’ in the Pali language is ‘*asmimāna*’ which just means ‘I am,’ hence there’s really no need to talk about good and bad, we can say that there is a ‘me’ and that it will be the source of *dukkha* one way or another, it doesn’t need to be divided into good or bad, it just needs to be eliminated, the mind will then be fully cleansed, away from *asmimāna* or egoism complete.

To facilitate study and understanding we might divide the ‘me’ into its various classes, or levels: There’s the bad ‘me,’ the good ‘me,’ the less selfish ‘me,’ and the ‘me’ that doesn’t feel like ‘me’ – altogether four classifications; this gives us the aim of practice as regards three of the classifications, that is 1) eject the bad ‘me’ completely, 2) encourage the good ‘me,’ and 3) make the less selfish ‘me’ less selfish until it 4) disappears altogether. It will depend on the individual as to who practices at what level, but they will be Buddhist practitioners practising in accord with the three principles at the heart of Buddhism.

We’re relating a new approach to practice to avoid using words that are difficult to understand or foreign-sounding, by using words which in themselves reveal the sense nicely for people of all classes, all ages, for people generally no matter what religion they might espouse. Buddhism is for everyone, for every human being, not just for Indians, Asians, easterners, or westerners, or even any particular teacher.

The understanding that Buddhism belongs to the Buddha, to Siddhartha Gotama is a great misapprehension, the Buddha would deny being the owner of the Dhamma or of the Buddhist system, and would point out that the Dhamma pre-exists all things. The Buddha was the human being who discovered the Dhamma, and did so out of a desire to find that which was most necessary for mankind, that able to put an end to dukkha once and for all. He showed respect for Dhamma and invited people to respect and to attain it too, declaring that what was to be achieved and respected was the Dhamma, not himself.

All of this is in the way of a declaration to the effect that the Dhamma is for humankind, and that true Buddhism must be concerned with the pure Dhamma. Dhamma isn't the property of any one person or any one teacher, which might tend to make it into a 'me' and 'mine' affair all over again. Although Buddhism is called 'Buddhism' that just means that it's the teaching of the awakened one, the fully enlightened one, which could be anyone, anybody, and that which was discovered and then taught is the Dhamma. Hence recognize Buddhism and Dhamma to be one and the same. Don't allow the Dhamma to be monopolized, or to become the right of any particular person, or to belong to any particular part of the world, so that it can be universally used to eject 'me' and 'mine,' the world's one great enemy.

Those new to Buddhism should look at the teaching as set out here in order to meet with its true form, then they'll understand that we should focus in on this 'me' and 'mine' problem alone and, perhaps, be able to get rid of the world's problems and reach the true Buddhism at the same time. There's no need to bother with other dhammas, other approaches which aren't concerned with 'me' and 'mine.'

12 – That cause of 'me' and 'mine.'

Today we'll look at the arising of 'me' and 'mine,' which represents the uncontrolled mind, the mind gone astray, gone wrong. This sort of mind should be studied carefully. The Buddha said that the uncontrolled mind brings danger, and is more of a danger than any enemy or vicious bandit could be. On the other side of the coin, the mind which is right, which is correct will bring one more benefit than anything else could ever do.

This allows us to see what happens when the mind is out of control, it producing greater harm than anything else. Looked at as being dangerous then it's something we should fear, it being more dangerous than anything else it should be feared more than anything else, and not just by the individual, or society at large, but by the human world generally. However, we'll find that among the things people in this world are afraid of this problem won't be included, people still not knowing about it because they've never given it any thought, hence they go about in fear of things which, in truth, aren't in the same league as this. It might be said that all the dukkha in this world comes from the uncontrolled mind.

The things people in this world are afraid of - war, poverty, recession, etc. – are the things which claim the most attention being seen as problems of the first order which frighten people, ruin

their peace of mind and bring dukkha both day and night. This happens when there's a lack of understanding due to the mind being out of control on two levels, then there can, for instance, be unwise policies created which bring poverty, persecution, recession, etc. which is one level. The second level is that, when such things happen, people don't look for the real reasons why they occur, there's more misunderstanding and any remedies attempted tend to go astray because the actions undertaken are based in fear, people not having the dhamma knowledge capable of controlling their fear so that they could deal sensibly with undesirable events. Fear is held to be a product of a wrongly established, uncontrolled mind. Hence it can be seen that the mind goes wrong regularly and on several levels, that it's still prone to sink into misdirected mindsets, which means that it isn't being maintained correctly.

'Me' and 'mine,' or the uncontrolled mind, is everywhere in this world, even so there's no interest in it or in how it comes to be. It's something perpetually ignored causing this world to dwell under the spell of avijja, of ignorance, of darkness, of chaos, and to be beset by problems and difficulties, by dukkha. But because this dukkha is of the hidden, the concealed variety, and is maybe even seen as something fun to be involved with, people are thus faced with the problem of always having to deal continually with that dukkha which seems to be enjoyable, by trying to be, for instance, skilful, and to use the brain, develop intelligence of a new and different sort, which, although it can't cure the world's dukkha, knowing new things and developing new abilities is enjoyable and tends to act like a contrivance which is continually tricking one into seeming ease and comfort. This sort of thing thus hides, conceals, doesn't allow interest to develop in the true cause of crises and problems both personal and collective, and most especially prevents any interest developing in the wrongly established mind, that is, in the misperception of 'me' and 'mine.' The stream of 'me' and 'mine' thus flows on continually and, because of the power of worldly ignorance, can do so without any resistance. Hence we can see that the point of origin of 'me' and 'mine' is nothing other than avijja, ignorance.

Now, that called avijja, or ignorance, what's perhaps surprising is that there are people who try to set themselves up as knowers of avijja and who thus interpret its meaning in a way that suits them. Such people might appear to understand ignorance well, but then it's amusing that their knowledge produces no benefit at all, and, more than that, doesn't square with the meaning of avijja as declared by the Buddha, because, of course, it's avijja being explained by people who still have it. This is why people are unable to defeat dukkha. It's like someone who's drunk or crazy not knowing that they are drunk or crazy even though they behave like that and are a danger even to themselves.

People who live under the cloud of ignorance are that way, in that they won't admit it and will argue the point, because while under the power of ignorance there is a sort of knowledge, but it's ignorant knowledge, the sort of knowledge that stops beings from actually seeing things as they really are. Hence ignorance here doesn't mean knowing nothing at all, because the ignorant know an almost endless load of things, but all of their knowledge is really wrong knowledge, they understanding in a contrary manner, as when taking what is actually dukkha, unpleasant, to

be sukha, pleasant, something which is akin to seeing a nasty, dangerous, spinning disk-type weapon as a lotus flower. Thus people don't see what dukkha really is, or what the true cause of dukkha is, they don't understand what the condition of being undeceived and thus truly free from dukkha is like, or how to practice so that the dukkha-less can be attained.

There are generally respected teachers, even in this country, who translate avijja in Buddhism to mean 'things which we cannot know.' This is their own, their preferred interpretation, one which doesn't correspond with the Buddha's intention. It can't be of use in quenching dukkha, neither is it consonant with the meaning of avijja within the cycle of dependent origination, of paticcasamupada. Even though it's clever it doesn't escape the shell of ignorance, hence we'll skip this interpretation, even though it sounds good and could be used in other instances, as far as the quenching of dukkha is concerned it's of no use.

If ignorance is said to be not knowing it must actually mean that one still doesn't know what one should know, that is, that which can truly quench dukkha, which would involve knowledge of dukkha itself, of the cause of dukkha, of the end of dukkha, and of the path of practice that leads to the end of dukkha, also known as the four noble truths. We should limit the meaning of right knowledge to mean the sort that we can use as a device to truly put an end to dukkha, then it can be called vijja, wisdom, or right knowledge. Only when there is this kind of knowledge can it be called the escape from avijja, from the overcast of ignorance.

Regarding avijja, in the Pali language there's still another way to look at it, in that avijja can mean knowledge which isn't really knowledge, or wisdom which isn't really wisdom. Thus: 'a' means 'not,' 'vijja' means 'knowing clearly,' when the two are combined we have 'not knowing clearly,' that is, vijja which isn't really vijja at all. Taking this meaning to be compatible with the Buddha's explanation, that is: not knowing the four noble truths is avijja, it means that we can have as much knowledge as we like but if it isn't knowledge of the four noble truths it's vijja, knowledge which isn't really vijja at all, it's avijja. Hence, it's clear to see that the human world is dominated by knowledge which isn't really knowledge of the sort that can actually help us, which, even though it be great and advanced, in the final count is the sort of knowledge which floods, inundates the mind, but doesn't save us, which doesn't really help us, rather it drowns us, we perish because of it, that sort of knowledge having become dominant overwhelms us. The wrongly established, uncontrolled mind, that is, 'me' and 'mine,' arises full and complete under those conditions.

Hence we conclude that 'me' and 'mine' come from ignorance, avijja, or from vijja which isn't really vijja at all. This, then, is the short version, a more detailed analysis of how the problem arises will follow, but don't forget that, although there will be details, conditions, connections with many other things, the true cause will be ignorance, avijja.

We're concerned with the true, the real cause here, not just some condition or accessory. Take the making of a pot, for instance: if it's asked what the pot is made from? The answer would be

from clay. If it's asked why is it made? The answer would be because someone might buy it. Here we need to see that the clay, the tools etc. involved in making a pot, and the person who comes along and buys it aren't the real cause underlying the making of the pot. The real cause lies in the potter loving himself and his family, his wife and children, he not wanting either himself or his family to starve, which is why he makes pots. The clay used, the tools, the person who eventually buys the pot, these are conditions, 'paccaya,' or are in the way of being accessories, as it were. Here, because even if there's clay, or a person who buys a pot, but there isn't the selfishness, the 'me' and 'mine' feeling of the potter, the pot won't appear. Hence the real, true cause lies in there being that called 'me' and 'mine,' the selfishness of the one who makes the pots. Here, we first need to grasp the proper meaning of 'cause' so that it doesn't get confused with a 'condition' or whatever, then we can safely and easily make a study of the real cause of that called 'me and mine,' which is ignorance, avijja. We'll study it in detail, and, if we're successful we'll then be able to remove 'me' and 'mine,' or 'egoism,' from life once and for all.

13 - The arising of 'me' and 'mine.'

Today we'll look at the arising of 'me' and 'mine.' As it's been said avijja, ignorance, is the cause of this problem and today we'll look at whether avijja relies on anything as a condition in order to concoct 'me' and 'mine' into existence.

According to a noteworthy Buddhist principle everything arising into the mind has to have something called an 'object,' an 'aramana,' to act as condition, rather like a potter who makes a pot has to have some clay to make it with. Hence, the student will need to have a thorough understanding of these objects first and foremost.

Regarding the word 'object,' or 'aramana,' it means something which, when attached to, produces feelings. According to the books it's 'a source of pleasure.' However, the true meaning is that it's something which, when clung to, will give rise to an experience of either pleasure or displeasure. If it's a source of pleasure it implies the experiencing of a pleasant sense contact.

Regarding the things which interact with the human mind, we should recognize two distinct groups, one is the inner senses, the other the outer senses, the inner group acting as the conductors, or receivers of the outer sense objects, the aramana. According to Buddhism and to similar systems this inner group consists in the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind itself. These inner sense organs are collectively called 'doors' in that they act like the doors which open to admit their objects. The eyes, ears etc. are equipped with nerves in order to feel, thus the eyes, ears etc. of a living being are primed to receive sense objects, and it seems as if there's pleasure involved in their reception. It's the outer sense objects that we call 'aramana.'

When there are the six internal senses, that is, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and, as mentioned, they pair with the objects, or the six external sense bases, that is, the eye with

forms, the ear with sounds, the nose with smells, the tongue with tastes, the body with touches via the skin, and the mind with dhammas or mind objects, feelings and thoughts arise into the mind. Any significance lies in the fact that there has to be these two sides involved, the inner and outer, if one of them is missing the other will be meaningless, of no value, but when the two are present there will and must be sense impacts. Subsequently the outer sense will reveal its power, its qualities, resulting in the arising into the mind of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. If it's satisfaction it will mean one thing, if dissatisfaction another, that will depend on whether and how the mind has been trained, whether it's a wise or an ignorant mind. The eye receives a form, or the ear receives a sound in much the same manner but the mind having received different forms of training there naturally will arise feeling of different, or even opposite qualities. But although feelings differ, in the final count they will give rise to 'me' and 'mine,' unless, that is, the mind has put an end to ignorance. If there's still ignorance then there'll be the feeling of 'I' see, or 'I' hear, so arises the 'me' who sees this or that, or hears this or that, immediately there's the 'see-er' and the 'seen.' The person who sees is immediately 'me.' This is a rough explanation to facilitate an understanding on the beginning level, that ignorance, avijja, causes 'me' and 'mine' to arise in dependence on there being an object, this thing called 'aramana,' acting as the necessary condition.

Now we need to consider the value or meaning inherent in that aramana. Aramanas are forms, sounds, smells, tastes, etc. which have value, which have some meaning, those values or meanings being the significant elements involved. 'Value' implies a quality capable of causing a more physical reaction, while 'meaning' here implies a feeling arising into the mind which is bound up with the kilesa, and acts as the lure, or 'bait,' of avijja, ignorance.

This is easily seen in the eating of food, for instance. There's 'value' in that the food will nourish the body and satisfy hunger, while any 'meaning' will come from the experience of eating something which has been concocted into this or that kind of food which one finds to be tasty. We should separate the two, the 'value' of the food being one thing, while the 'meaning,' i.e. the tastiness, or likeability of the food, being another. The second of these two needs to be dealt with carefully because dukkha can arise in dependence on it, this being the aramana, that which becomes the focus of attention. Foodstuffs if concocted into something one finds tasty become a good aramana, if concocted into something not tasty, or repulsive, become a bad aramana, while the nutritional value of the food involved remains the same. We thus need to be able to discriminate 'meaning' and 'value' even though there is already some meaning inherent in any value we ascribe to anything, yet we need to be able to separate 'value' from 'meaning' in order to grasp the essence of the aramana, that which causes the arising of vedana, feeling, tanha, desire, upadana, clinging, etc. then we'll be able to control the arising of 'me' and 'mine' too.

The student should observe and understand that when one is experiencing an unpleasant aramana there's displeasure and the 'me' who's displeased will arise. When a pleasant aramana is met with the 'me' it gives rise to will be a pleased 'me' in accord with the experience that caused it. All aramanas cause the feeling of being 'me' to arise, any aramana then becoming 'mine.' When

the feeling of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ has arisen fully and completely it’s called ‘birth,’ which then gives rise to the appropriate form of dukkha.

This is a general explanation for ordinary people, for those still mixed up with the avijja of the world, to reveal how the feeling of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ arises. As for the arahant, that one who’s put an end to ignorance, they travel by the straightway and don’t cling to any meanings or values. Regarding values, as mentioned, there’s no problem, value being quite natural there’s nothing that would lure the mind into clinging, into upadana, unless any meaning the value might be seen to possess should be seized onto. Nothing has meaning for the arahant, nothing can cause the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, there’s no concocting of an aramana with the meaning of either good or bad so that ‘me’ and ‘mine’ has no opportunity to arise. Because ignorance isn’t allowed to get involved there’s only right knowledge, then any impacting of the eye, for instance, is just a simple sense impact. On knowing ‘what is what’ it’s finished and there’s no ignorant feeling or desire being concocted. The feelings of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ can’t appear because the stream of arising has been cut off at sense impact.

This demonstrates that because there’s avijja, ignorance, any sense object, can be meaningful. The mind combined with avijja will cling to that meaning and concoct the appropriate feelings of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ into full existence. If free of ignorance the mind isn’t deceived by any meanings, it doesn’t see meaning in anything.

What are the details, the characteristics, of aramana arising by way of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind? All are the same in that they have value and are meaningful experiences, hence they provide the basis for the ignorant mind to cling and give rise to ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ An aramana which makes a strong and lasting impression is a significant, or major experience, one making a small impression is an insignificant, or minor experience, and those which fall in between are called ordinary, that is, they create common, ordinary experiences. One’s various kammic activities are measured by the energy of the aramana that instigates them, be it major or minor, big or small.

An aramana which is the cause of a lot of kammic activity naturally has enough energy to make the body and mind shake and tremble, meaning that it makes a great impression giving rise to much cetana, much intentional mental activity, and resulting in the arising of the sort of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ which brings a deal of confusion and dukkha. If the aramana has only small power it will possess little meaning and produce small confusion and dukkha. But don’t forget that, as described, big or small there must be the arising of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ To sum up: there must be avijja as root cause, an aramana replete with meaning to act as condition, and the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind itself, here referred to as ‘gates,’ which will allow the concocting of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ in different forms depending on differing objects, or aramanas, hence there’s the ‘me’ of a human being, the ‘me’ of those in hell, of those in the animal realm, and so on – or the ‘me’ of those in the Brahma realms.

And we can be still more detailed in the case of ‘me’ of the human kind, which might differ endlessly depending on the feeling being experienced, like, for instance: a father or a mother, a son or daughter, a nephew, a niece, a grandchild, a child, a wife, a husband, a rich person, a poor person, a slaver, a slave, someone pretty, someone ugly, a winner, a loser, someone taking advantage, someone being taken advantage of, someone who’s stupid, someone who’s clever, someone who’s fortunate, someone who’s unfortunate, someone who’s good, someone who’s bad, someone who’s happy, someone who’s unhappy, and so on. This is the ‘me’ that’s conjured from ignorance in many and various forms, all of which must experience dukkha because of the clinging involved. There must be selfishness befitting one who believes that there’s always a ‘self.’ Here, even though this ‘me’ is always different still it comes from the same source: ignorance.

All of these are states of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ arisen from avijja, ignorance, and supported by various surrounding conditions.

14 – The world of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’

Today we’ll continue to look at the arising of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ As mentioned ‘me’ and ‘mine’ must arise from ignorance, the sense objects, or aramana, which arise through the six internal senses being the significant conditions, that is, they, being ‘meaningful’ provide the basis for clinging to occur. At this time we’ll look at how a meaningful experience causes upadana, clinging, to arise.

For clinging to arise there must first be tanha, craving. Tanha translates as desire. When such desire, on any level, arises towards anything then upadana, clinging will arise too, because within that desire there will always and automatically be the feeling of ‘I’ desire. An aramana which is liked will ordinarily give rise to one kind of desire, one which is not liked will give rise to another. Although one form is the opposite of the other both are called desire. When there’s desire, no matter what kind it is, there’ll naturally and automatically be the feeling of being the desirer too. The feeling of being the ‘desirer’ here is ‘me,’ while the thing desired becomes ‘mine.’ Both sides of the equation are referred to as clinging, or upadana. There’s clinging to ‘me’ and there’s clinging to ‘mine.’

One might have a notion that tanha and upadana are rooted in ignorance, in fact one might see for oneself that it’s because of wrong knowledge that one falls into desire and clinging. This is absolutely correct, hence we should take the opportunity of making the understanding here that any and all wrong feelings are rooted in ignorance, as, for instance, when we feel greed because we don’t know that we shouldn’t feel it, or feel anger because we don’t know that we shouldn’t, or experience infatuation because we don’t know any better. This shows that the defilements of greed, anger, and delusion are rooted in avijja, in ignorance. Although we may give them many different names, like love, or hate, or anger, or fear, and so on, they’ll all come together as the defilements of greed, anger, and delusion. Therefore all wrong feelings, all that are ‘miccha,’ no

matter what name they might bear, will come from avijja. Avijja, ignorance, it seems, is capable of transforming into any of the various defilements in accord with the intention displayed towards an aramana.

So, the kilesa have the capacity to behave towards those aramana as avijja created in any form. Hence we can divide the kilesa into different types: the lustful desire that makes one pursue an aramana we call lobha, while the aversion that makes one retreat from an aramana we call dosa, and the uncertainty as to whether to pursue or retreat we call moha, or delusion. These, then are all avijja. Therefore tanha, desire or greed for something is really avijja in action, that is, it's avijja in the guise of tanha, or it might be avijja performing the function of desiring something, or avijja acting as the cause of desire. Avijja is the prime mover in the arising of 'me' and 'mine,' or, as the Buddha put it, 'avijja is the birthplace of dukkha,' which, within the four noble truths, is called dukkhasamudaya. Hence we should get to know this 'tanha' in detail.

Tanha translated as desire has three meanings, that is, as the desire for sensuality, kamatanha, the desire to get, which is the sort of desire which is easily known and can be met with everywhere. There's the desire to exist, to be this or that, even to not want to die, this is called bhavatanha and isn't sensual. The last kind is the opposite of bhavatanha, it's the desire to not exist, to not be, to not be like this or like that, even to desire death. This is vibhavatanha, the desire to not be.

Making a clear understanding of these three is most important, if they're confused one with the other it will be hard to understand the Dhamma, or one mightn't understand it at all. Hence we'll need to consider, to break them down somewhat as per type. For instance: kamatanha is directly related to sensual lust, if it arises it arises from sensuality, if arisen it's arisen for sensuality. As for the other two types they aren't related to sensuality at all, but to existence: If there's the desire to exist, the desire to be, it will be called bhavatanha, if there's desire to not exist, to not be, it will be vibhavatanha. One should study them carefully until it's clearly understood that this is the same desire, tanha, operating in three different ways. That will be enough to allow continued Dhamma study and to see clearly that tanha in the Pali language has a broader meaning than simple desire, as is used in the Thai language translation, or even in other commonly spoken languages too. Respect this as being a word with particular meanings and which should be used in its original format, as tanha, that would be better than translating it into one's own language in a too-narrow way, as simple desire. This word is the equivalent of the Sanskrit word 'trishna' which translates into the Thai language as lust, lascivious desire, so don't use that translation because the meaning would be too narrow. This leads us to realize that we, sometimes, use the word tanha in the Thai way, giving it the meaning of lust, of carnal desire. Tanha in the Thai interpretation isn't broad enough in meaning and falls short of both its Pali and, especially, its Dhamma meaning, because it only implies lustful, carnal desires.

If we would understand the three meanings of tanha we should follow the commentarial approach which points out that kamatanha emerges from sensually-based feelings, as with the seeing of something pretty, beautiful, or delightful. Bhavatanha, emerges from sassataditthi,

eternalism, the belief that things are ever-lasting, ‘permanent.’ Bhavatanha, the desire to exist is a higher level desire than kamatanha, thus it’s more elevated, as it was said the Brahma gods are more elevated, are superior to and more splendid than those gods in the kama heavens, or, in the language of truth: ‘creatures in the rupavacara exist in a higher manner than those in the kamavacara.’ As for vibhavatanha that’s based in ucchedaditthi, that is, the view that nothing exists, or natikaditthi, the ‘extinction’ view, which involves a wrong understanding of anatta and sunnata so that one might give up hope and entertain the desire, the inclination to, through the power of that wrong understanding, end it all, destroy oneself. If depending on the aforementioned premise the three kinds of desire involved will never intermingle, while all being desire they represent three different forms of it so can’t be understood as just one form, but we collectively call them ‘tanha.’ All three are the cause of upadana, of clinging to the feeling of being ‘me’ or ‘mine.’

Here we can see straightway that the ‘me’ exists on a lower or higher level depending on the sort of tanha underpinning it. As with ‘me’ of the everyday type, together with those gods in the kama heavens, in both cases the ‘me’ is stuck in the kama realm. Next up is the ‘me’ of the Brahma realms, this one is above carnality, thus purified and more elevated, more splendid, it’s the ‘me’ which has gone away from the carnal and is bound up with purified forms on the rupavacara level. More elevated than that is the ‘me’ of the arupabrahma, it’s that ‘me’ which is bound up with the formless, with the purity of the formless realms, this is ‘me’ of the arupavacara, which is the highest status that a still ignorant human being can attain. Thus there are three types of ‘me’ in accord with the forms of desire.

Therefore, we need to recognize the pride, the feel-good factor of the ‘me’ existing in dependence on each of the three types of tanha: the ‘me’ of the kama kind displays the pride of the kama realm, while the ‘me’ of the rupabrahma kind is proud of being more elevated than those existing on the kama levels, and the ‘me’ of the arupabrahma variety, they finding satisfaction in experiences which are formless will be proud of being more purified, more elevated than those on the rupa levels. Hence they all experience pride, all have prejudices. There isn’t any group that escapes the net of pride and prejudice, (sic.) so take it that there’s always going to be ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ and there’s always going to be dukkha. The more one understands oneself to be elevated, or noble, the more there’s clinging to that status, hence, although not concerned with kama there might well be dukkha which is stronger, deeper than that arising from kama, because of one clinging to higher, more purified, more splendid forms of experience.

In the language of ultimate truth, all of the forms of tanha, and all the kinds of ‘me’ are present in us at some time or another, as when the mind goes away from straight kama into the fame and fortune scenario, or to some experience which isn’t connected to carnality at all but has this or that more elevated meaning, that would be bhavatanha dominating, or suppose that there’s a brahma experience, so producing a ‘me’ of the ‘brahma’ variety which won’t be concerned with sensuality. Now, some people, sometimes, will go to the higher realms, so that the mind won’t

be concerned with sensuality, or with fame, or whatever, but with such subtle abstractions as real knowledge, real goodness, and, even though no one will know this it's still worth mentioning that the mind can go to a yet higher level, that is, can develop a 'me' based on the 'formless,' the aforementioned 'Brahma' variety. We may understand this more easily by making comparisons with those with a passion for doves, or bonsai, or topiary, these people naturally have purer minds than those infatuated with sensuality, that is, with sex, such people can find satisfaction in or feel pride in their involvement with such things, which goes to show that those form higher bases for clinging than does ordinary carnal sensuality. Hence, dividing into levels there's the kamavacara, the rupavacara, and the arupavacara available to beings, depending on which ignorance is pulling the mind towards what at any given time. However, in the final count it needs to be clearly understood that all of this is just tanha rooted in ignorance, avijja, and that there must always, therefore, be dukkha, although arising in different forms.

When we know tanha clearly we can consider how tanha arises towards any aramana, so giving rise to upadana, clinging, and to 'me' and 'mine.'

As mentioned, the significant element of the aramana is its 'meaningfulness' more than in any value it might possess. This is so because 'meaningfulness' is the immediate lure or 'bait' for tanha. Any value won't be of interest unless it comes to have some other meaning. Hence we might say that meaning derives from value but doesn't need to derive from it. On condition that we broaden the meaning of the word 'value' so that, for instance, having benefit and not having benefit are both seen as valuable, then even a penalty or a punishment will have some value, which would mean that everything becomes potentially valuable, and any value might also cause a meaning to arise and become the base for clinging, or for the lure, the bait, of tanha.

For example: when we see a picture of a beautiful flower feelings might or might not arise that could become the bait for tanha, if fascinated by the colours then the seeing of the form here would become the base or the lure for tanha. However, if that seeing creates an opposite feeling, as might happen when the flower is looked at as a nature study, or as something more intellectual, then the feeling could be the cause of indifference, as it would if there's the recognition that what's being seen is really the aniccam, dukkham, and anatta scenario which is usually concealed beneath the apparent beauty and fragrance of 'things' like flowers, then, because ignorance hasn't mixed with the experience one won't see any extra meaning in the picture and it won't become the base, or the bait, for tanha, instead there's knowledge so there's no meaning involved and just the original value remains, tanha then doesn't arise and, because 'me' doesn't appear, there's no dukkha. This is the way things work when a meaningful object (aramana) impacts the eye. It works the same way with objects impacting the ears, nose, tongue, body and mind too. If the mind is combined with ignorance some meaning will be created and become the basis for clinging, the mind will then rush after any perceived meaning and tanha will be produced.

Any meaningful experience can create tanha in more than just one form because there are those three kinds of tanha covering all eventualities. If there happens to be enough satisampajanna, mindfulness and right knowledge, then the power of avijja will be checked and vijja, knowledge, will be present instead, then the various aramana will be received with knowledge in attendance and won't be meaningful experiences, so there'll be no clinging. As for 'value,' it's considered and dealt with in the appropriate manner. Dukkha then has no way to arise, instead there's benefit and what should arise does arise. In this way one is able to control tanha and avijja. Any aramana then is just a sense object, contact is mere contact, feeling is mere feeling and doesn't create tanha and upadana, meaning that there's no dukkha, there's freedom from dukkha. And satipanna grows in a way that will enable one to take care of any future dukkha. To sum up: tanha seeks out the meaning, the lure contained within the aramana, and not the pure and basic value of the sense object being experienced, which meaning arises from a wrong assumption born of ignorance.

There's one more thing to consider, that is, meaning associated with the opposite sex. As mentioned those aramana are divided into forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, which are material or rupadhammas, and one mental, or namadhamma, which isn't material. These six aramana are meaningful when associated with avijja, ignorance, and form the lure or bait for tanha, that is, they produce tanha. Now, if those six are connected with the opposite sex their meaning will increase, becoming twofold or more. An aramana which has little note will immediately become one of great significance, just as meeting with a beautiful and fragrant flower will ordinarily provide the base for clinging, but if there is some sexual symbolism involved, or there's some other meaning associated with the opposite sex, the influence exerted by that flower will go from being slight to great immediately. This happens with a form, but it's the same with the other sense objects.

Now, as stated, if those aramana, that is, the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, etc. come from the opposite sex they will influence, or dominate the mind all the more, creating, as they do, greater tanha and upadana, greater desire and clinging for those beings in the sensual realm. This is so because the opposite sex, being what it is, creates an instinctual reaction in sensual creatures, and problems therefore increase because the meaning associated with sex is added to the more down-to-earth meaning of the aramana involved. In this respect adolescents have greater problems to deal with than children who've yet to encounter any meaning associated with the opposite sex. This tells us that 'meaning' here has differing levels.

It will be necessary to eliminate 'meaningfulness' completely, something which must depend on us knowing what we're dealing with, what level of meaning it possesses. This will require the development of satisampajanna, mindfulness and knowledge, concerning any particular aramana. To sum up: tanha arises from meaningful sense objects, or aramana, which can become more meaningful when connected with the opposite sex.

15 – The realm of 'me' and 'mine' (renunciation)

In today's talk we'll continue to look at the arising of 'me and 'mine.' Previously we've looked at tanha as being dependent on an aramana, on a meaningful mind object connected to the opposite sex, which would represent sensuality in the grossest sense. Tanha arisen in this way can be classified as being of the 'householder' type, and is called 'kehasit' in the Pali language: no matter whether arisen from a visible object, a sound, a smell, a taste, a touch or a mind object, whether in the past, present, or future, it's that tanha, that desire, common to all beings in the sensual realm, to those people who are still under the power of sensuality, and is considered to be the most popular form.

Now comes that form of tanha which is different, special, in that it's not based in sensuality neither is it related to the household life, and, what's more, is based on feelings of aversion towards the sensual. This kind of tanha is referred to as 'nekkhammasiti.'

Tanha of the nekkhammasiti kind is tanha based on the views of eternalism and nihilism. This means that we, some of us, sometimes aren't interested in sensuality but are obsessed with those things which have the power to attract the mind in the same way that sensuality does, which for the ordinary person will be desire for fame and fortune, honour and distinction, for the meritorious, the good, the fine, or whatever, in accord with what we find desirable while under the power of that avijja which causes the mind to cling. Sometimes we want to be alone and not troubled by anyone, sometimes we might want to travel afar, or go relax in a quiet place near the sea, go sit somewhere alone, we finding satisfaction in such experiences so the mind experiences tanha.

Tanha of this sort shouldn't be considered part of the kama, the sensual group, neither is it the aforementioned kehasit, rather it's an example of nekkhammasiti. Going beyond that kind of desire there are those who find contentment in the happiness born from absorption concentration, who, if they truly seek the happiness born of jhana and not of sensuality then it's nekkhammasiti.

But some people have different beliefs and intentions, that is, some believe that sacrificing and performing various austere practices will bring them the happiness arising from connection with the opposite sex after death, as when reborn into a paradise replete with sensual pleasures. The tanha of such people is of the kehasit variety. This we might compare with those who pursue honour, distinction, even true goodness in the expectation that it will lead to some sensual experience, or to some involvement with the opposite sex. The tanha of such people is kamatanha rather than the more elevated bhavatanha. As for those yogis who believe in the eternal soul, such as the Brahmas, the tanha of such is nekkhammasiti, not kehasiti, so not kamatanha but bhavatanha.

If they're of the nihilistic persuasion so believing that everything is illusion, that there isn't any point in being alive, they might well be tired of themselves and want to not exist, but being unable to get rid of 'me' and 'mine' there'll be confusion, and the desire to be the 'me' who doesn't exist will arise, that is, they'll try to 'be' in that particular way, so that some, perhaps,

might go so far as to kill themselves hoping to make an end of it that way, while some might try to remove any feeling, that is, they might try to become like something neither dead nor alive, thinking that by being that way there'll be no existence, but that's still wrong because they'll yet have the desire connected with that particular kind of a 'me' so still have *tanha*, but in a form which will be subtle and difficult to understand.

We generally hear about the human realm or the heavenly realm, sometimes called the *kamaloka* and the *rupa* and *arupa lokas*. The *kamaloka* can be thought of as being the world of ordinary beings, the *rupaloka* as the world of those who overlook the sensual and take pure forms as objects for contemplation for accomplishing *jhana*, while the *arupaloka* implies a world higher again because more subtle, being the world of those who find satisfaction in the formless, which they take as their object for the attainment of the appropriate *jhanas*, which meditations, once accomplished, bring greater enchantment.

There can be *tanha*, craving, in these three realms, or worlds: *kamatanha* in the *kamaloka*, *bhavatanha* in the *rupaloka*, and *vibhavatanha* in the *arupaloka*, because '*vibhavatanha*' means the desire to not exist. '*Vibhava*,' which is '*bhava*' with the negative prefix '*vi*' meaning 'not,' or 'no,' attached – although '*vi*' here can also mean 'wonderful,' thus: if the '*vi*' is placed first it means 'not,' as in the desire to not exist, if placed last it indicates craving for that which is the most wonderful of existences. However, when carefully considered there is a way to reconcile these two by realizing that 'the most wonderful of existences' isn't really *bhava*, existence, at all. However, regard this as something that needs to be studied in order to be clearly understood.

Regarding *tanha*, no matter what kind it is it will be based on the six *aramana*, the six sense objects, that is, on forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects. All should see clearly that these six are the world we experience. Be it the *kamaloka*, the *rupaloka*, or the *arupaloka*, as a rule they will either directly or indirectly be based on these six. Hence we need to observe until seeing that forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, are *rupadhammas*, or material sense objects. If those are associated with *kama* then they'll be *aramana* of the *kamaloka* and will be material in nature. If not connected with *kama* but with pure form then they'll be objects, *aramana*, belonging to the *rupaloka*. As for the sixth kind of *aramana*, the *dhammaramana*, those mind objects, if associated with *kama* they'll also be *aramana* of the *kamaloka*, if not they'll be objects of the *rupa* or the *arupaloka*, as is the case. Hence we see that the world isn't anything more than the six *aramana*, and that all occasions of *tanha* depend entirely on them, so that it can be said that whenever *tanha* arises or quenches it always does so in dependence on these six *aramana*.

Now there's another thing to consider, that is, that these six *aramana* aren't restricted to the present time, because although an *aramana* may have passed away those forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches which have already happened can still be objects of present craving through being connected to ongoing experience by way of recollection, as when we experience embarrassment, or mourn for some person, for instance. As for any future *aramana*, any form,

sound, smell, taste, or whatever that we might hope to meet with in the future, they will very much be objects of craving. This hope, or expectation, as it's called, is more of a problem than anything else because we might hope and expect endlessly, which, in itself will be a source of encouragement, something which keeps us enthusiastic, as it were, hence it could be said that we live in hope. So, we're beset by problems from the future, the past, and the present. If there happens to be hope for some future result then we meet with either kamatanha and bhavatanha, if, however, hope recedes, or languishes, we meet with vibhavatanha. From just this we can see that future aramana are more of a problem for humankind, they being the most wide-ranging and bothersome. Finally, even today's problems and difficulties, the crises big and small including the problem of possible world annihilation, are all based on tanha, on desire for some future aramana.

To sum up: all aramana, be they based on past, present, or future experiences are problematic in their different ways, we can't just focus on one particular kind, hence one has to be sufficiently knowledgeable in order to be able to deal with whatever comes up.

For ease of understanding and remembrance we might map out craving thus: tanha is of 3 kinds, that is, kamatanha, bhavatanha, and vibhavatanha. These 3 find their sources in the 6 kinds of aramanas, that is, in forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects, so multiply these 3 by 6 and get 18. These 18 occur in the past, present and the future, the 3 time periods, and 18 multiplied by 3 equals 54. In these 54 one group pertains to householders, that is, 'kehasit,' one group to the renunciate, that is 'nekkhammasiti,' so 2 types, and 54 multiplied by 2 equals 108, just saying which creates some trepidation: '108 kinds of tanha,' means that beings must fall under the power of tanha of one sort or another, it being difficult to avoid because of there being so many opportunities.

But that can be reduced to just three: kamatanha, bhavatanha, and vibhavatanha, as set out in the four noble truths. But then all three can be reduced to just one, to that 'tanha' which the student will now see has a much wider-ranging meaning than 'desire' in its everyday sense. Hence if one is to understand Dhamma, or understand 'me' and 'mine' truly one must keep this wide-ranging meaning of tanha in mind at all times, don't take it to be a small matter, it's not just simple desire.

The 108 kinds of tanha are just the basic forms, if one takes everything related to tanha into the calculation it becomes a matter of thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, even millions of tanhas. That's a problem we're unable to do anything about unless, that is, we've acquired enough knowledge through having relied on the Buddha's enlightenment, then we can get rid of the single source of tanha, that is, avijja, ignorance, at which point all the forms of tanha will lose their potency, 'me' and 'mine,' in any of their manifestations, will cease to be concocted, and the resultant mind won't meet with dukkha at all. The arising of 'me' and 'mine' is, as has been related, connected with tanha.

16 – ‘Me’ and ‘mine’ as related to kama.

Today’s lecture will deal with the differences between the ‘me’ and ‘mine’ arising from kama and arising from that which isn’t kama.

From what’s been said the student will have noticed that, of the three kinds of tanha, kamatanha, bhavatanha and vibhavatanha, the first is sensual and the other two aren’t, hence we can separate them into two groups, that which is connected with kama, carnal sensuality, and those which aren’t, or, that which is ‘kehasiti’ and those which are collectively ‘nekkhammasiti.’ Hence we have to say that there exist ‘enemies,’ or serious dangers for humankind on both the mental and ‘spiritual’ sides of things, and that two of them are kama, ‘carnal sensuality’ and bhava, ‘existence.’ In reality there are three such: kama, bhava, existence, and vibhava, non-existence, but existence and non-existence can be grouped together, put into the same category, that of ‘existence,’ which leaves just kama, carnal sensuality, and bhava, existence, as mentioned.

A short and pithy saying of the yogis and munis went something like: ‘Hateful and fearsome to behold are carnal sensuality and existence,’ yet these two, if approached with diligence, will show us the way out, the escape from their influence. For people, especially in this day and age, true knowledge of them is almost non-existent, neither is there much interest shown in them, there’s only the desire and unflagging effort to fulfill our desires without us ever knowing what it is we should actually be desiring.

In truth what people want is kama and bhava, we want to ‘be,’ to ‘exist,’ and to experience sensual pleasure into the bargain, nothing more. Because we’re so caught up, so preoccupied in pursuing our desires we have no time to stop and study, no time to try and understand kama and bhava, so we don’t see them as being dangerous when wrongly dealt with. Intoxicated with desire, following the writ of desire, competing with each other we connect with things in a wrong way, there’s too much ignorance around so we fall, as it’s said, into ‘seeing a snake as a fish’ and then cling with upadana, cling to the feelings of being ‘me’ and of something being ‘mine’ without realizing that we’ve fallen for something very dangerous. To be more exact: what we do is to take something quite natural and turn it into something extremely dangerous. Finding infatuation with fish is reprehensible and dangerous enough, but then taking a snake to be a fish is even more reprehensible and dangerous. We, ultimately, need to live without finding infatuation with anything, that is, we need, eventually, to dwell with a mind that is pure and free, without the feelings of ‘me’ or of ‘mine,’ and to be able to perform our various duties with a pure mind.

Regarding carnal sensuality and existence, when we know them well we’ll also know that the desire for carnal sensuality causes clinging to ‘mine’ more than causing clinging to ‘me,’ while desire for existence is opposite, giving rise to clinging to ‘me’ more than to ‘mine.’ We shouldn’t forget, however, that if there’s the feeling of something being ‘mine’ there must also be the feeling of ‘me’ hidden within it. Now, in some instances the feeling of something being

‘mine’ precedes the feeling of being ‘me,’ while sometimes the feeling of being ‘me’ precedes the feeling of something being ‘mine,’ although, in reality, both are always present. We thus misunderstand and fall into thinking that some aramana, some mind objects, only cause feelings of being ‘me,’ while some cause feelings of being ‘mine,’ hence we should study and observe carefully to avoid letting these things add another level of deception.

The ‘me’ arises from kamatanha, carnal desire, and in that moment mind is focused only on the flavour of kama, of sensuality, the mind then experiences intense clinging to kama. Hence the obvious feeling arising at that time will be of something being ‘mine,’ while the feeling of being ‘me’ will be hidden but be ever ready to take over when the opportunity arrives to do any contesting, defending, or whatever needs to be done. When the enjoyment of carnality reaches its fulfillment without there being anything to disturb the experience the feeling of it being ‘mine’ will persist until there arises something like pride, ambition, shame, or anger, or whatever concerning that experience, then the feeling of ‘mine’ will change track to a feeling of being ‘me,’ hence there’ll be a change from being sensually-based to being existence-based.

All of which reveals to us that we, in this world, have a hard time each and every day because of kama and bhava, because of carnal desire and the desire for existence. That called ‘me’ and ‘mine’ are, in truth, actually the same feeling: if based in kama it will be a matter of ‘mine,’ if in bhava there’ll be the feeling of being ‘me,’ they’re always related because they form the condition one for the other, depending on which way the ignorant mind concocts at any time. Beings fall under the power of avijja, of ignorance, all the time so aren’t capable of putting the problems of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ right. If we say true people don’t have knowledge of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ at all, but exist in just one way, that is, they fall under the spell of, and become slaves to the deception of ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ and without having even so much as an inkling that they have.

That satan, or mara always comes, or exists, in a such a way that nobody knows him, is basic knowledge amongst those who understand. To put that another way: knowing oneself wrongly is to not recognize mara, to not recognize the enemy. By being ‘me’ we allow mara to do as he wishes and wreak havoc, but with the arising of true knowledge mara will disappear immediately. This, then, is about wisdom, it’s about the ignorance that will come to be ‘me’ and about the purified mind being freed from being ‘me.’ However, we, not acknowledging mara have only the ‘me’ which brings heat, the ‘me’ which seeks fun, and which is quite willing to live that way on an almost endlessly repeating daily basis until it gets heavy, difficult, and one cannot find an answer to the question as to just why one persists in living this way? All this is the penalty for not knowing about kama, sensuality, and bhava, existence.

Human beings have to experience dukkha in this world, and even to this day it has its origins in desire for kama and bhava, for sensuality and existence, just as it did in ancient times. It doesn’t change, there’s just kamatanha and bhavatanha provoked by the aramana, those external sense objects. Although the aramana will change in whatever way kama and bhavatanha remain the same original, defiled mental functions. This means that ‘me’ and ‘mine’ haven’t changed their

nature either, they're still the problems they were millennia ago, hence the basic principles underlying the arising and quenching of kamatanha and bhavatanha are always the same, so that there's no doubt that we're going to have to change the way we behave towards them. People, even in this day and age, should be interested in acquiring knowledge of this affair, be it knowledge from the Buddha Gotama or from any Buddha, because it will be the same knowledge, that capable of eliminating the power of kamatanha and bhavatanha no matter what age it gets exercised in.

This present-day world we must accept is an increasingly materialistic, consumer-based world, which means that it's increasingly a world of kama, of sensual desire, a world made subtle, refined, pleasing to the eye so that there's no way one can be safe from the influence of kama, one can only become more and more a slave to the deeper, more refined and subtle forms of sensuality because lacking mature knowledge of just what kama and bhavatanha really are. The enslavement by kama and materialism has had only an expansion, it's never contracted, which means that before this time there existed a not inconsiderable number of people who hadn't fallen under the power of materialism, which, as a percentage of the whole would have been impressive, but now that percentage has declined by degrees as materialism has expanded into even the temples and ashramas of the religion, which were once considered to be like fortresses able to resist, but which have gradually succumbed too. This has been the expansion of materialism, or consumerism, that which used to be called kama, carnal desire, which has been able to spread out until covering the entire human world, or almost the entire human world. This world has become a kama-dominated world, there isn't any one group of people who haven't fallen prey to the lure of materialism, no matter how we divide or classify people into whatever categories - like, as we might say, the capitalists, the workers, and anything in between, householders, monastics, all are consumers. When this is the case who will provide the refuge that will make one safe from the dangers of materialism, or the dangers of, as it was originally called in the language of Dhamma, kama?

When falling under the influence of materialism, or kama, it must be coupled with bhava, existence, there being no way to avoid that, it being closely related to 'me' and 'mine' as mentioned. When there's sensual desire, kama, one becomes the owner of it which brings the meaning of 'distinction,' or 'being,' or 'existence.' When there's a 'desirer,' or the indication that one is so, several, or just two opposing sides will manifest, and the 'me' which is bhava, which is actually desire for existence, will gather strength feeling now that there is competition. When there's competition the bhavatanha 'me' will grow stronger as it changes from being the 'me' which is dependent on kama, or raga, and comes to be increasingly dependent on bhava, or dosa, until kama loses control, that is, 'me' becomes inebriated with its own existence and acts under the power of dosa, of aversion, negativity, so that that which had kama as its cause now transforms as bhava takes over. It can now be said that 'saving face,' or honour and distinction have become more important than life itself, even more important than the experiencing of kama, of carnal sensuality. There's more and more intolerance amongst people regardless of what's

wrong or right because they're only interested in not losing 'face,' which is all about bhavatanha, desire for existence. This is what makes people sometimes behave like savage animals which bite each other almost to death regardless of what they might get from it, because the power of bhava has come to dominate, to overwhelm. Now even if kama tempts, lures one, although it was a source of love and satisfaction before it can't now be used to prevent the spread of bhavatanha. We can kill off kama alone, changing it into bhava being more than enough to do that. This is kama and bhava dominating beings, dictating the way we live, the way we perform our various activities. The 'me' which arises from kama and the 'me' which arises from existence, how are they related? How is it that they arise from the same source?

We consider and we study this matter, the duty we have is to, first, prevent the stream of kama from dominating the mind, or, once that's happened, to not allow it to become bhava, that form of existence connected with kama, with carnality, because that's what makes people lose control and do what they want regardless of being civilized, cultured, or religious individuals. This is a matter of kama and the existence related to it. As for the existence which isn't related to kama but which has an influence deeper than the kama-related version does, that we'll look at anon.

17 – 'Me' and 'mine' connected with bhava, existence.

Today we'll look at the form of 'me' and 'mine' which arises from a different source. Previously we've looked at that bhava, or existence, which has its source in kama, that is, there's clinging to 'me' dependent on the desire for kama. Today we'll talk about that form of existence which doesn't depend on kama. However, saying that something does or doesn't depend on kama presents a particular problem which needs to be considered, one which we should give careful attention to, hence we'll look at this a little more.

Regarding that which isn't due to kama, for ease of understanding it's important that we understand as clearly as possible that which is kama-based, if not it's going to be difficult to understand that which isn't. Comprehending this is particularly needful, being something undreamt of by ordinary people.

With regard to things which are due to kama, we should look at the work of some more modern-day individuals, like Sigmund Freud, for instance, who tried to explain every kind of human activity as being due to kama, carnal desire, a theory which is thought to be the most correct as regards people generally, although there are those who disagree. According to Buddhism it can't be said that everything is due to kama. However, before we go any further we want to make the point that, regarding the things we say aren't due to kama Freud's followers might argue for the opposite, claiming that it isn't just about the desire for kama, but also the desire to avoid it, because of being averse, or bored, or afraid of it, which would be based in kama too, as would practising for nibbana because of being fearful of the harmful effects of indulgence in kama. It's a matter which must be carefully considered otherwise there'll be a mess and not much good or benefit will accrue.

As regards the Freudian approach - that it's all due to kama – this needs, first of all, to be thoroughly considered and clearly understood. This because even most Buddhists fall into this kind of dogma, in spite of having other, even opposite, beliefs, and it's this that will, because of holding to wrong principles, or because of misinterpreting certain words, provide the ground for one to misinterpret one's religion.

At the outset we'll have to concede that everything is based on kama, whether that comes from Freud or someone else, and must first see that as it really is, just as any ordinary person, or as someone living their life in the kamavacarabhumi would see it, anything other than, or higher than that and it will be something studied, gleaned from a book, or whatever, and won't be truly felt, won't be truly experienced.

That anything we do has its root in, or is done for the sake of kama, can first be looked at in our everyday life. Like the various forms of business indulged in, all of which will be done in the hope that there'll be some sensual result, or will have kama as the controlling influence, so that any benefit got from one's efforts will naturally transform into kama. Hence we have to accept that people today don't work just to obtain the things necessary to life, rather they work for something more, because they've extended their horizons so that things like toothpaste, cigarettes, cosmetics, refrigerators, wirelasses, motor cars, attractive buildings, etc. become necessities. Even though one would acquire all of that and more it still wouldn't be enough of what's deemed to be necessary. When this is the way things are kama itself becomes life's necessity, that is, forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches which aren't necessary for the continuation of life become necessities. Hence people today have become those who really do do everything for the sake of kama, carnal desire.

Regarding this we want to say here that we should go along with the Christians when they say that those who seek, who desire more than is really necessary for the continuation of life do wrong, because they, being enslaved by kama, forfeit the opportunity of carrying out the work of God, and of performing more wholesome activities. If we seek what's really necessary for life we'll have time and the energy a-plenty to perform useful deeds for others and to do the work God assigned to us. Now we aren't loyal servants of God, rather we've become willing slaves of Mara because of our attachment to kama.

Now, some people might say that they don't earn money just to buy kama-based things, but to acquire the sort of prestige associated with wealth. The Freudists, however, and even the Buddhists, might point out that fame and prestige, etc. are still associated with kama, while the Buddhists might make the particular point that fame and prestige are forms of kama, of carnal desire, that is, they're objects of the sixth sense we call 'dhammaramana,' or mind objects, and as such don't escape the kama realm.

Some might say that because they're poor people they work in order to survive. One might respond to that by saying that the desire to maintain life exists because there's kama in the world,

that's why one wants to go on living, and, even if someone dies and gets reborn the hope will be that they can go on pursuing kama in the next life because they won't have had enough in this one.

Some people might say that they really work for the good of their spouse and children. So, then it needs to be understood that, according to Buddhism, one's spouse and offspring still form a base for kama, for carnal desire, although not in an overtly sexual way, rather in a more general manner. It's considered that one's spouse and children are still objects of the senses, in that they're basically forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects which are productive of happy, pleasant feelings of a worldly or somewhat romantic nature which can be called kama, although kama of a more refined sort, not of the obvious, vulgar variety.

Some people may say that they work to raise money for charities. However, one ought to look carefully at that claim and recognize that the charitable acts of these people purpose kama in the future, both in this life and the next, something that can be inferred from their wishes, they generally wanting rebirth, not nibbana - or, if by chance they should call that nibbana then it would be nibbana as they understand it, that is, kama on the highest and richest level, which, even though it wouldn't be about sex it would still be the sort of object which gave satisfaction of the kama sort, as with prettiness, beauty, comfort, getting everything that one desires, etc. this being how they understand happiness, or understand the best thing human beings could get. Hence nibbana for these people isn't about escaping from kama, from carnal desire.

Even those who wish to become one with God do so through some hazy feeling that that will be a full-on experience of kama, the pinnacle of sensual desire. The more it's godly kama the more one will believe, or trust in its being the most precious. Such never wish for the complete quenching of 'me' and 'mine,' which is too high a dhamma for them, and they never will want to be the 'me' which is pure, which is freed from kama because of the power of that desire which manifests today as the thirst for carnality. When one gets bored with one level of carnality then one will need some higher level of the same sort, but one won't change to some other form of desire, one not concerned with or opposed to kamatanha.

This means that all the activities of ordinary people have sensual desire, kama, as their cause, which then leads them to seek out more kama, as Freud pointed out. And if that kama is the bait nature uses to lure living beings to accept the dukkha which arises from procreation then the tenets of those Freudians would apply even to plants and animals, which all join the struggle to reproduce, any result serving to preserve kama indefinitely.

To sum up: all the activities of living things are driven by kama, by the power of kama, and are for the acquisition of kama alone. The little which remains to be judged, like those who work to study and research, the majority of whom work for the benefit which, when acquired, is used in the normal way, or for the support of spouse and children in the way people do. As for those who are on the level of genius, of prodigy, they still don't escape that desire for fame and

prestige which is a supporting condition of kama. Although it might be said that such people work to acquire knowledge still they don't escape the desire for fame, and we cannot be sure as to their true feelings. And even if they do work to seek knowledge or seek for the benefit of humankind as, for instance, with the bodhisattva, they still don't escape the influence of kama, but experience it on a level which is very refined, difficult, therefore, to detect, and which, lying outside the limits of judgement, cannot be classified as being the kama of the man in the street.

Hence, that being said, people or things which have life on the ordinary, everyday level do everything to acquire kama, or do everything because of kama arising through any of the six senses, and without exception, so including even sages, hermits, those who perform austerities to acquire the results in the way they've been taught to do. Thus it can be said that the 'me' or the 'mine' of ordinary, everyday people is rooted in kama, even if it changes into bhava, existence, as when one is arrogant, stubborn, proud, or whatever, still it all comes from kama either directly or indirectly, either obviously or subtly, and causes that dukkha for all living things which ordinary, worldly people still haven't recognized, or may have somewhat recognized but not well enough to control it. Falling into and becoming enslaved by kama has resulted in endless fighting and killing right up to the present day, at which time it's become commonplace. All of this is the province of that 'me' and 'mine' which exists because of kama and bhava, that is, the bhava that comes from kama.

When we know kama and the bhava that comes from it well enough we'll see for ourselves that Freudian knowledge ended right there. As for the Buddhists, and those who advanced oriental thinking, especially in India during the upanishadic era, they went further, and, although it was initially based in inference, resulted in the transcending of the power of kama. The single cause of this was the clear recognition of the problems associated with kama, which was achieved by completely surpassing its power, or through training the mind so that it was able to see kama as the source of dukkha and therefore as an abomination.

It was these people who began to recognize the opposites, the good and the bad, etc. in the same light. Even in the early stages there was enough power to halt infatuation, at least on the ordinary level, thus classifying kama as something undesirable, and even that called merit-making, which was much venerated, was shunned as being a condition for both human and divine kama, causing a seeking after that genuinely skilful deed able to cut off the lure of kama. Finally a new level or condition of mind was discovered which wasn't associated with kama and which was something existing quite normally but which had been overlooked. It's already been pointed out that the mind goes away from kama from time to time and is happy to be free of it for an interval, but people weren't interested in that, and didn't generally see it as relieving, restful, unless, that was, it happened to that someone special, that one, finally, who was already inclined towards seeing kama as loathsome. If, perchance, there should be such an one, then it would have to be accepted that there were different beings, or different realms of existence. This was the origin of the 'sensual realm,' the 'realm of pure forms,' and the 'realm of the formless.'

The Freudians only knew of the sensual realm, so never studied the rupa, form, and arupa, formless, realms, and if anyone should have mentioned these it would have been argued that they were due to kama as well, that is, kama was the cause of one intending escape from the sensual to the realms of the form and the formless. If there had been that kind of an explanation put forward then anyone could have seen that it was just an excuse, or just an attempt to prevent one's theory being shown up as insufficient, or as a failure.

To say that those who advance the eightfold path to attain nibbana are motivated by kama is humorous, and cannot be entertained. If it's believed that the fear of kama makes one behave in such a way that they then seek out nibbana, that isn't correct, because one truly able to practise for nibbana would naturally be on a higher mental level where fear or even aversion towards kama wouldn't exist, for the reason that by then one would have experienced various things higher than fear and aversion, and, anyway, just having those feelings wouldn't be enough to quench dukkha, hence one will try to seek out something which will be more likely to do the job. Saying that if there is desire it will be completely motivated by kama is absolutely wrong.

The desire which is sensual must have its origin in 'me' and 'mine' and be rooted in avijja, in ignorance. As for desire which isn't associated with kama that will be rooted in the opposite, that is, in vijja, in right knowledge, which has the power to block clinging, upadana, to things capable of being clung to, so denying the arising of 'me' and 'mine' too. Hence desire for nibbana, no matter how intense, isn't sensually based.

In truth we don't need to look so high as nibbana, which is of the lokuttara, because even desire for the realm of form or for the formless realm can't be conjoined with kama. Those two realms, or existences, aren't connected with kama even though 'me' and 'mine' are still around, and this, itself, is the border line between the lokuttara realm, attaining which is the aim of Buddhism, and the various lokiya realms which aren't in any way its aim.

This straightway reveals that even the higher levels of the lokiya, the worldly, that is, the rupa and arupavacarabhumis, weren't understood by the Freudians, so how could they understand the lokuttara which is devoid of 'me' or 'mine' and isn't connected to either kama or bhava? Hence everyone should know that just going beyond kama isn't enough if one is to understand the lokuttarabhumi, but bhava must be fully transcended too, only then will one be in a position to understand the lokuttara, which is the true aim of Buddhism.

Again: Buddhism is for the attainment of the lokuttara, and not for the attainment of the kama, rupa, or arupavacarabhumis, if these are mentioned please understand that it's only to point out that these kama and bhava-based forms of existence are actually obstacles which need to be surmounted so that there isn't any form of existence remaining whether connected to kama or not. This affirms that the lokuttara, or nibbana, doesn't involve any sort of existence, hence is truly devoid of 'me' and 'mine.' We need to step up to this level to meet with true Buddhism.

To briefly sum up: If there's still bhava, even if it's completely dissociated from kama, one still hasn't escaped the clinging to 'me' and 'mine,' and is therefore still an ordinary worldly person like all the others, that is, there's still 'me' and 'mine' full on, it's just changing its place of origin from kama to bhava and back again.

18 – The nature of the quenching of 'me' and 'mine.'

Today's lecture takes in the quenching of 'me' and 'mine.' As mentioned the arising of 'me' and 'mine' happens because the mind has been wrongly established, hence, establishing the mind rightly will provide the basis for their quenching. All the time that the mind remains correctly set the quenching will be ongoing regardless of whether it's happening coincidentally or through some particular form of activity, like the application of samadhi, for instance, which would serve to block the arising of 'me' for a time - or it's happening because of that vijja, that right and final knowledge which will cut the root of 'me' and 'mine' completely. All that said, at any given moment there will be the quenching of 'me' and 'mine,' but happening differently. In that first form the quenching will be superficial, the second will persist for as long as control is exerted, while the third quenching will be complete because the root of the problem will be totally destroyed. The form of quenching we want is the third kind, but to reach that level we should first create a sufficient understanding of the first and second forms to prevent any misconception or confusion from arising.

The non appearance of the 'self' in the first instance is due to coincidence, meaning that at a particular moment there is something being seen, or heard, or being read, or perhaps some object being experienced which causes a mental pause and doesn't create the sort of thinking which allows the feeling of 'me' or 'mine' to arise. This can happen to people generally, and quite unintentionally, although it will be more likely to happen to someone who chooses to live in the kind of place where the surroundings, the society, and even the weather are more appropriate, in short where everything is more 'spiritually' supportive. This can be called 'tadangavimutti,' that is, one escapes the power of 'me' and 'mine' by chance. Those people whose habits and behaviour make them naturally and easily freed from 'me' and 'mine,' that is, those for whom the feelings of 'me' and 'mine' are hard to create, must be included here. Hence, we can see that this form of quenching has nothing to do with right knowledge, or the power of samadhi, but is a more opportune, or co-incidental experience.

As for the second method of quenching the 'me' which happens because of mental activity, although not because of panna, right knowledge, in this case, rather the meaning is that while using one of the many meditation techniques the mind will be fixed on some particular object of meditation. The mind is then in a condition comparable to that of a bull tethered to a post which doesn't have the opportunity to run after some other more pleasing object, hence the feeling of 'me' and 'mine' cannot arise at that time. It can be seen that the absence of 'me' and 'mine' in this instance isn't due to coincidence, to chance, but to fixing the mind firmly on a pure object, that is, one which won't cause the arising of 'me.' And, even if the object should lead to the

feeling of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ arising through accidentally being clung to, what arises will be on the good side of things, that is, there’ll be a good ‘me’ and ‘mine’ arisen so there won’t be any real danger - and there’ll be an opportunity to take them out through properly practising the next meditation step.

For example, in the early stages of the practice of anapanasati the mind having been successfully brought to samadhi then happiness arises as a result, now, if there’s enough *satisampajanna*, mindfulness and clear understanding present there’ll always be right actions taking place and the mind won’t cling to the object being experienced in such a way that ‘me’ and ‘mine’ can arise, instead there’ll be that ongoing, gradual scrutiny which is the form of practise in the second anapanasati group, that is, the consideration that even that *sukha* which arises from *jhana* is *maya*, illusory, and that *vedana*, feelings, generally, are uncertain, are *dukkha*, and are *anatta*, selfless, so that ‘me’ and ‘mine’ won’t arise.

In the event that one is unmindful, or does something wrong, which would probably involve finding satisfaction in *sukhavedana* or feeling proud because of having met with success in the spiritual sense, then ‘me’ and ‘mine’ will arise strongly. This will harm any arisen samadhi, or harm its quality, because at that time, even though one had begun to concentrate the mind, it won’t continue to build. But if one is able to maintain mindfulness until *jhana*, or full concentration arises, it’s power will then be continually present and there won’t be any opportunity for ‘me’ and ‘mine’ to appear. That we call ‘*vikkampanavimutti*,’ that is, escaping the power of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ through reliance on something firm and wise which is able to block their arising.

Trying to do something to cover over a bad mood, as when chanting to control an emotional response, this, if successful, can be included in this second group, and is an example of one of the small things people can do to protect themselves, even teaching children to count from one to ten to forestall the arising of anger, and to then keep on counting until it can no longer arise, can be included in this category. Here we make an effort and don’t leave things to chance, hence this second category differs from the first in that one relies on the power of mental activity. Although one uses clever tactics the methods are still intellectually promoted so aren’t yet *panna*, wisdom.

As for the third quenching of ‘me,’ this is done through applying wisdom, meaning that a much more ingenious method is made use of, one which doesn’t involve coercion but is concerned with uprooting and completely destroying the problem. To make this clear we’ll compare it with the removal of grass: if we cut grass with a machete the grass will be immediately gone but will grow back again. If we cover it over with something the grass will also be gone but will reappear once the covering is removed. However, if one digs up the roots of the grass and burns it all then it will be permanently gone. When we substitute ‘me’ and ‘mine’ for the grass then practising the third method, that is, applying wisdom to the problem of ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ is akin to digging up and burning the grass roots.

We already know that avijja, ignorance, is the root of ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ so destroying ignorance equals the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ And, because we employ panna, or vijja, right knowledge, as the destroyer of avijja we don’t use the whole power of the mind as in the second method, we thus call the third method ‘action through the power of wisdom,’ while we call the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ here ‘samudacchedavimutti’ - the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ by completely extracting it’s roots.

When comparing the different stages it will be seen that the first or the most basic stage relies on chance, on coincidence, the second, or middle stage, relies on the power of a mind which has been developed in the right way, while the third, or the highest stage, relies on the power of panna, of right knowledge. Hence they differ and can’t be mixed up. However, they might still be connected up as a device, or as factors which support each other as is appropriate, or, if looked at in another way then they might be seen as a ladder allowing one to go progressively higher. Hence: in the first place we know to choose a place which will be appropriate, that is, an environment in which the most beneficial opportunities are likely to occur, even therefore including certain things which will help to make our surroundings more suitable for quieting the mind and which won’t easily cause feelings of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ to arise. This is the most basic stage. When we’re in this kind of a set-up, one in which bad moods will find it difficult to arise, then it will more easily allow us to encourage the second stage, which is to train the mind in samadhi. Once we’ve succeeded with the second stage it will be easier for panna to oversee the activity of digging out the roots of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ completely. Hence it can be said that all three stages are related, in that they form the condition one for the other. As for the details of the practice involved, these will be looked at in the section dedicated to the methodology.

Here the aim is to just point out that the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ has these three steps, or levels, which we should be aware of and should consider carefully. So, firstly, understand all this clearly, then it will be easy and convenient to practise.

One thing worth noting here is that though people meet with the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ by chance, that is, by the first method mentioned, and meet with it often, nobody is much interested, or even recognizes it as important, as something we should be interested in. The general interest is focused only on what people want, that is, on what’s fun, and not on being free from desire, or on the times that the mind is free from desire, or even on the flavour of a mind freed from desire. Hence people don’t get the opportunity of experiencing the mind without ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ or, to put it in another way, of experiencing the coincidental quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ People therefore overlook this form of quenching, which, in truth, happens often and is scattered about in life here and there. When one isn’t interested because one doesn’t know that it happens it’s as if it doesn’t happen at all - as when a chicken, walking on a pile of jewels, doesn’t recognize any value so doesn’t take an interest, but will straightway be interested if even one grain of rice happens to be included.

This sort of thing exists even amongst lay followers as well as amongst the monks and has become habitual. Hence the practice for the quenching ‘me’ and ‘mine’ can’t be established because people want to go in the opposite direction, that is, in the way that will give rise to ‘me’ and ‘mine’ continually, thus there’s not even the most basic quenching - the coincidental variety - of ‘me’ taking place. If people remain chicken-like the jewels of Buddhism will remain sterile. By ‘jewels’ here we mean the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha. We hold that quenching of ‘me’ is the pinnacle of the Dhamma, the highest dhamma, the most excellent because it’s about not harming oneself or others in anyway whatsoever.

Therefore, the best way of dealing with this is to turn our attention to the selection of a particular type of jewel, that is, that particular method for quenching ‘me’ which will be appropriate for us, so that we can then progress step by step towards the ultimate.

19 – What appears instead of ‘me’ and ‘mine?’

Today we’ll look at the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ to create a better understanding.

The quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ doesn’t mean the end of the body or of life. It actually refers to the quenching of the feeling of being ‘me’ or of something being ‘mine,’ or the quenching of attachment, of upadana. We, for the sake of brevity, call that the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ ‘Quenching’ here means the prevention of any future emergence while protecting an already existent act of quenching. Essentially, it means the mind without any feeling of being ‘me’ or of anything being ‘mine.’ Whenever the mind is like that it’s called the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’

There’s another shade of meaning, in that when ‘me’ and ‘mine’ quench away it doesn’t mean that mind is then completely empty, or that the mind itself has quenched away entirely. Know, however, that whenever ‘me’ and ‘mine’ do quench away the true void appears, the true freedom from ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ which is a combination of great mindfulness and wisdom.

While ‘me’ and ‘mine’ are still extant, or are still boiling away, the mind experiences only turmoil. When ‘me’ and ‘mine’ quench away the mind experiences the opposite, that is, freedom from all of that. When ‘me’ and ‘mine’ dominate the mind is dark. When ‘me’ and ‘mine’ quench away the mind becomes bright. When ‘me’ and ‘mine’ exist the mind has only foolishness fuelled by avijja, that ignorance which is their birthplace. When ‘me’ and ‘mine’ quench the mind transcends foolishness and becomes natural, then, being composed of knowledge full and complete, it knows freedom, knows the dukkha-less. Those feelings of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ aren’t Dhamma, they go by another name: ‘adhamma.’ When free from ‘me’ and ‘mine’ the mind is the Dhamma. One more thing: we should know that when the mind has the feelings of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ it completely loses its true nature, that is, it’s not the original true, pure, and clean mind, it’s now a ‘maya,’ an illusion, just thought, just an idea concocted from the aramana, from an object which caused that feeling of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ to arise. When the mind is without concocting, without ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ it returns to its original, natural purity.

Summing up: when ‘me’ and ‘mine’ have quenched away something else is revealed, something which doesn’t need to be born, that is, the mind assumes its true nature, becomes free from the turmoil of ignorant concocting so that it’s bright, Dhammic, and, most importantly, it’s replete with mindfulness and wisdom.

To sum up briefly, again: to whatever extent there’s the disappearance of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ there will have been the appearance of satipanna, mindfulness and right knowledge, hence the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ represents the arising of full satipanna. The quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ isn’t anything to be afraid of, it isn’t without value, it won’t make us impotent, just the opposite in fact, it will make us potent, full with mindfulness and wisdom, thus incapable of making mistakes and able to live with peace and happiness as the end result.

Those who hear this won’t understand, or will half understand so that a serious problem arises, they seeing the extinction of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ as harmful, that is, if one quenches the feeling of being ‘me’ or of something being ‘mine’ one won’t then be able to do anything, or that lacking the motivation one would be rather like a stone and do nothing there not being the necessary impulsion. And, even if one wanted to act there wouldn’t be the enthusiasm. A misapprehension like this arises because the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ isn’t properly taken in, and because people are so used to their presence. Whenever ‘me’ and ‘mine’ arise there’s often some kind of happiness, some delight, some stimulation involved, so that, as time passes, people fall increasingly for ‘me’ and ‘mine’ until they become indispensable. It’s characteristic of worldly people that they, because they’re continually seeing snakes as fishes, make understanding the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ very difficult, hence the word ‘worldling,’ which means ‘thick,’ or ‘dense,’ that is, there’s a thickness or denseness enveloping the mind so that panna, wisdom, can’t illuminate it, ‘me’ and ‘mine’ doing the ‘illuminating’ instead. Hence things have been completely turned around. Worldly people not being interested in quenching ‘me’ and ‘mine’ wrongly understand that it would mean a devastating and complete loss, thus introducing the level of Dhamma teaching that would get rid of clinging can’t be done with such people, so, for the time being, it’s best to introduce them to a teaching which will allow them to cling to that level of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ which won’t be too dangerous, although they’ll then have to continue with the laughter and tears scenario, it not yet being possible for them to get beyond those.

Now we come to another kind of person, that is, the good worldly person, or ‘kalayanaputhujjana,’ which means one who isn’t enveloped by ignorance, isn’t too dense, or too thick, that is, one who has only a little ‘dust’ in their eyes, so that they, being capable of seeing clearly, when given the right advice are able to remove the dust from their eyes, the ‘dust’ here being ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ Those who have little dust in their eyes means those who, by chance, get the right kind of teaching from the start, and who have the right kind of disposition, that being the fruit of good kamma, good deeds done previously. Such people are naturally endowed with the sort of intelligence that might allow them to know all things as they really are, they feeling the desire to know truly and esteeming true knowledge, their respective lives proceed with that

kind of intelligence throughout, and even though they be just at the base, at the beginning of the practice they display what's necessary to, in time, advance to high levels, that is, they're those who are always ready to acquire more real knowledge, those who, being observant, begin to recognize the harm in 'me' and 'mine,' which is something difficult to discern by oneself, as is recognizing the harm which arises from an excess of selfishness. Such people on getting a detailed explanation of 'me' and 'mine' seize it immediately, and, what is especially good, they don't fear the quenching of 'me' and 'mine,' instead seeing it as something that should be done because it will bring happiness, rather than feeling that it would be the fatal loss espoused by those of a thicker disposition.

Summing up: such an one will have the certain knowledge that quenching 'me' and 'mine' will allow us to do everything better than before, to be without mistakes, and, in the end, the human world will experience a state of true peace - because the world now is in turmoil, is almost without any rest, so that accidents are on the increase, moral degradation is spreading more and more, and this is happening because of the destructive power of 'me' and 'mine.' If 'me' and 'mine' could be controlled, or completely eradicated, then all the undesirable elements of human behavior would disappear, even those events we call accidents.

Things called 'accidents,' such as car crashes, or those that happen in factories when people lose limbs, even everyday things like accidentally falling over, all happen because of 'me' and 'mine.' Drunk driving happens because of some specific wrong behaviour involving 'me' and 'mine.' A driver falling asleep at the wheel of a car happens because of wrong behavior involving 'me' and 'mine.' A driver showing off while driving, or driving under the influence of lust, that's wrong behavior involving 'me' and 'mine' of the worst sort, as is driving aggressively, or driving to show off one's skills to attract the opposite sex, etc. All will be motivated by feelings of 'me' and 'mine.' There aren't any accidents which aren't due to 'me' and 'mine' either directly or indirectly. Therefore, let's look at this properly, as it is: if we, all of us, were to study and then practise controlling the 'me' completely, that would mean fortune and well-being for us, even in the event of a road accident.

These more common examples reveal that the destructive influence of 'me' and 'mine' is found everywhere, because they have the power to create greediness, boastfulness, recklessness, carelessness, foolishness, and so on and so forth, in fact, they act rather like an evil spirit. If we can get rid of them this world will be a safer, more attractive place, which won't be any small thing. In some countries there's a car crash every two minutes of every day, so try to calculate the damage accruing both bodily and property-wise for the individual, and for the nation.

Even just one accident, if we consider well we'll see that it presents a danger we shouldn't have to deal with at all, however, there are many such events because the useage of vehicles and machinery has advanced without pause while, because of us not recognizing avijja, ignorance, and upadana, clinging, any control of 'me' and 'mine' has gone in the opposite direction. Hence there's more wrongdoing than meritorious development on our part. This especially concerns

accidents, that is, matters which aren't directly intentional, which are based in ignorance and attachment.

If the people who caused those accidents had full *satisampajanna*, that full mindfulness and clear comprehension which accords with Buddhist principles, their feelings of 'me' and 'mine' would have been calmed down, brought under control and the incidents mentioned here might not have occurred at all. Those manifestations which are the work of the malevolent force known as 'me' and 'mine' wouldn't then have destroyed our peace and contentment, or at least their influence would have been considerably reduced, which would have provided an example of the fruits arising from the quenching of that 'me' and 'mine' which almost everyone in this world overlooks, even though it's something that we should recognize first and foremost. Despite there being the energy, the procedure, the organization, the collective purpose of which is to protect against the dangers arising from accidents caused by humankind, that's yet to meet with success. All of these events occur because we tend to overlook the real cause, which is like some evil force out to destroy humanity, which we, however, see as our friend.

20 – Quenching 'me' in the form of 'sakkayaditthi.'

Today's discourse is concerned with the quenching of 'me' and continues on from the previous part.

It's been pointed out that the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' has value when it comes to the removal of undesirable elements from human society, those things we consider to be wicked, or evil, and even things which aren't directly intentioned that we call accidents. When something isn't directly intentioned it still emanates from 'me' and 'mine,' which means that something which is directly intentioned will be even more rooted in that malevolent duo, so can be got rid of by eliminating 'me' and 'mine' from the mind. Some statistical models reveal that in today's world in some countries a woman will be raped on average every thirty four minutes, a burglary will occur every thirty nine minutes, and violent death every fifty minutes. Just these three examples reveal that, in this world, disgusting and evil activities are increasing faster than the human population is, which simultaneously shows that the subjection of the human race to 'me' and 'mine' is increasing in proportion to the increase of those undesirable events. Hence to the extent that there's a quenching of 'me' and 'mine,' to that extent will those undesirable events reduce.

Here, taking 'me' and 'mine' to be the cause of those aforementioned accidents, to be the important elements, we can say that controlling them to whatever extent will allow *satipanna*, mindfulness and right knowledge, to emerge, and that, for the most part, will imply the full development of *satisampajanna*, mindfulness and clear comprehension, which will make sure that we're more responsible in our dealings with others.

People today won't accept responsibility, or don't consider it to be their duty to be responsible human beings, and excuse that as normal behaviour. But then one doesn't know who to blame

for this, bad things, things which shouldn't happen at all are on the increase, see those statistics we mentioned earlier. Things which everyone must admit shouldn't happen nevertheless continue to happen which indicates that we're still unable to recognize their root cause so aren't able to eliminate them. All this takes place because we manage to overlook the dhamma which could quench 'me' and 'mine,' we mostly being unaware that it even exists, and for the very purpose of eliminating such undesirable elements. Our world thus has to suffer this fate, which escalates from being personal to becoming a worldwide crisis, from being a temporary problem it becomes a permanent problem impossible for us, thrashing around in the way we do, to fix.

Rape, burglary, robbery, murder, etc. committed passionately or by deliberation, are called crimes, and have their roots in those outbursts of 'me' and 'mine' which people don't have the power to control or prevent. And, because the feelings of 'me' and 'mine' if allowed to flare up can make one careless of any consequences, hence self control, the power of the law, or whatever, can't restrain these behaviours, because at the time that they occur the perpetrators don't even fear death, let alone anything else.

Now we turn to a method which doesn't involve the sort of control which comes with a system, or course of study and training, which, because there's usually no understanding of 'me' and 'mine' tends to promote rather than to wipe such problems out, so we go along unconsciously creating them over and again. Hence, we remain under the power of the many and various aramana, those sense objects, and any study and practise we may do won't have enough power to enable us to maintain our self-discipline and live a truly moral life.

Therefore, we emphasize that we must always have right understanding where the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' is concerned, and be sure that when we quench 'me' and 'mine' we have that full satipanna which will allow us to control the events as required. If there's the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' to whatever extent we'll then dwell within the orbit of satipanna to that extent too.

So, we can sum up as follows: quenching 'me' and 'mine' means that satipanna has arisen and is dominant, or, should satipanna have quenched away it will mean that 'me' and 'mine' are dominating - or, we might put it another way and say that the manifestation of 'me' and 'mine' means that satipanna has been vanquished, or, if satipanna dominates then 'me' and 'mine' have been defeated. It's like fighting, or continually making war in the mind, and if we can't win this internal war there's no way that we could win an external one, be that a war between people, or between countries, and all because of being deficient in satipanna, in the Dhamma itself.

Hence it can be said that siladhamma, morality, saccadhamma, or any kind of true dhamma come to that, will be aimed at killing off 'me' and 'mine' and leaving satipanna as the controller, thus letting life advance towards its true goal of allowing human beings to experience that which they should experience instead of endless trouble and strife.

Ethical behaviours, with high sounding names, like honesty, altruism, loving kindness, compassion, willingness to admit wrongdoing, etc. are much needed in this world, the problem is that we have only their names, the surface versions of those mind states, and aren't yet able to have anything more, because in this world at this time 'me' and 'mine' are waxing ever stronger. If we hope to have ethics as the world's refuge then we need to take a particular interest in quenching 'me' and 'mine,' which, as Buddhism has it, is the one thing that causes all the forms of dukkha to appear.

For a straightforward and comprehensive understanding of the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' we should consider the ten 'samyojana, the ten 'fetters,' then we'll be able to see for ourselves that the purpose of Buddhism is to get rid of 'me' and 'mine' once and for all.

The first of the samyojana is called, in the Pali language, 'sakkayaditthi,' the belief that this body is 'mine.' What's called 'body' here is a group, or collection, that we believe is 'my body,' or is 'mine.' One understands in accord with one's feelings that this is a body and that this body is 'mine.' When one feels that way one takes care of the body, wants it to be good, attractive, lasting, and, what is most important, wants it to exist for 'my' good, for my benefit, without much considering anyone else. If one should consider anyone else it will concern how they could be of benefit to 'me.'

The message of this samyojana is that in nature there isn't anything that can belong to anybody. However, there are the defilements, or, we might say, there is infatuation so that one has to take possession, one must own something, hence we grab things which can't really be owned and make them into possessions, make them into 'mine.' Thus one seizes the body and mind which, in truth, are just natural elements, and makes them into 'me' or into 'mine.' Those elements, of earth, water, air, fire, space, and consciousness, are collectively clung to as 'my' body, thus a group of natural things, which in truth aren't a body, are taken to be 'my' body. This is called 'sakkayaditthi.' 'Me' and 'mine' are created by the ignorant mind, the mental part of that group of natural things, which clings in this way, hence it comes to have the particular characteristic of selfishness, of egoism, and then anything it does will bring dukkha, trouble and strife, to a greater or lesser extent both for itself and for others. Alternatively, satipanna might arise and intervene to whatever extent, which, if it be worldly satipanna, will promote more 'me' and 'mine,' if it's truly unworldly satipanna it will break those up.

The quenching of 'me' and 'mine' in the form of sakkayaditthi means the emergence of satipanna, mindfulness and right knowledge. This mind being afflicted by ignorance, clings, misunderstands, and misrepresents, satipanna will destroy all of that once there's been education and training of the right kind, once there's proper practise in accord with Buddhist principles. The results of which will be that one won't have that 'me' and 'mine' of the sort that kills, steals, or molests others, does evil, and indulges in rough levels of behavior, instead one will begin to look on people as friends who have the same problems, those of birth, ageing, sickness, and death, so won't therefore be looking to benefit oneself at the expense of others. The quenching

of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ will bring peace, coolness, peace and coolness will bring the fullness of mindfulness and clear comprehension, the fullness of mindfulness and clear comprehension will bring boundless feelings of security for oneself and for others too. One will display the satipanna of one with the courage to take on a wider range of responsibility than is normally the case with ordinary, worldly people, that is, those still full of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’

If only people were able to forsake this first samyojana, this first ‘fetter,’ the world would change, would become the opposite of what it is now, although the fruits of losing the fetters complete would still be far off at the very least oppression and violence would have left the world and there’d be mutual generosity and support instead, along with happiness of the highest worldly kind because of that. This is the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ in its first form.

21 – Quenching ‘me’ and ‘mine’ in the form of vicikicca.

Today we’ll look at quenching ‘me’ and ‘mine’ again. This time it will be the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ in the form of something called ‘vicikicca.’ Vicikicca means uncertainty, hesitancy: being uncertain or hesitant to act because of doubt, or fear, for instance. If we don’t consider and understand vicikicca well enough we won’t see it as being a ‘me’ and ‘mine’ affair. People generally don’t realize that uncertainty, hesitation, or doubt, has its roots in clinging to ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ Moreover vicikicca is often overlooked because it’s thought to be unimportant as far as dukkha and its quenching is concerned, but, in truth, vicikicca has the same importance as the other kilesa do. If one practises the development of samadhi then vicikicca will be operating as a ‘nivarana,’ as an hindrance, or obstacle, as something that disturbs the mind and doesn’t allow samadhi to develop. Should one be operating on a higher level than that, on the panna, wisdom, level, then vicikicca will be active in disturbing one’s faith and obstructing the arising of panna so that we aren’t able to defeat dukkha. Vicikicca disturbs our well-being besides actually being dukkha in itself. And, in the broadest sense, whether we talk about religious or ordinary worldly affairs vicikicca will be a disturbing factor. It might also be said that vicikicca disturbs or destroys our happiness, and it might further be mentioned that the conflict between low, base, and high, elevated thinking can be called vicikicca here, we might even expand it out to take in uncertainty, timidity, distrust, lack of self belief, and so on.

The most obvious kinds of vicikicca appear as uncertainty: Uncertainty concerning one’s career, about how to operate, about how to earn a reputation, etc? Higher than that is uncertainty surrounding one’s beliefs, the belief in goodness, in justice, and so on, as being true principles. The fear of losing advantage, of losing status, of losing out, etc. cause uncertainty, and, in some cases, might force one to act although one knows it’s not right, not proper to act in that way, even while still believing in goodness, in truth, as principles

We can see that the turmoil and confusion, the dukkha, the trouble and strife, the various crises arising in this world are born from our, and most especially, our leaders’ lack of certainty regarding the maintenance of goodness and truth.

Regarding vicikicca in Buddhism: It manifests as uncertainty towards the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha, most significantly regarding the veracity of the Buddha's awakening. However, if we say true it's, as mentioned, a general malaise. Uncertainty regarding the Buddha appears as hesitancy to believe or to take the advice of the teacher even though it's known that they've already succeeded in the endeavour. What causes hesitancy is receiving information which is at variance with that one already possesses, and the benefit of which runs contrary to any benefits we might have hoped to receive.

It's the same with the Dhamma: enough moral, philosophical, and religious principles exist to eliminate the various problems, one just hesitates to choose an approach, or, having chosen then one still hesitates to really commit. This happens because one feels that it won't be beneficial, or because it conflicts with one's previously existing feelings. When a new, different 'me' and 'mine' is concocted the feelings experienced then differ from those previously felt, that person succumbing to the power of another 'me' and 'mine' the various principles they live by become uncertain, and their religion, or even their philosophy of life become mere words, or they no longer take their god, or gods, seriously, which, as anyone can see, is, these days, quite commonplace.

Hesitation as regards the sangha implies a reluctance to commit oneself to the monkhood until one sees an example of someone who's escaped dukkha, until then one will be reluctant to follow. Summing up: there's reluctance to jump into membership with those working to quench dukkha through not believing that those people can really escape dukkha, or through not believing that the method used by them to escape dukkha can be used by one too?

Broadly speaking, there's hesitation to accept the teacher, or what's being taught, and to accept that there are those who've practised the teaching and met with success. Hence this particular person, no matter how much they study, their hesitancy will only increase, they'll vacillate even more readily. Finally it can be said that such people are hesitant even with themselves, that is, their satipanna is tentative, they doubt their own abilities, so that, because of their dithering, their hesitation, they tend to become restless, nervous types, which, should it increase might become something more serious.

As regards any hesitation or indecision apropos the Buddha's awakening, that's mainly limited to the Buddhists themselves, but, in truth, it's much the same as people being reluctant to abide by the rules that govern them. Hesitation, wavering with regard to wisdom, or the teachings of the master, is normal enough and will always exist for so long as one doesn't base belief in the sort of wisdom capable of destroying the defilements. This means that for so long as that knowledge hasn't arisen there will be, more or less, hesitation, uncertainty, a reluctance to act in one's life. Hence we'll lose to a certain extent because of this hesitation. For someone beginning to practice, or who still hasn't connected with the religion, please, don't hesitate to practise. When one has a clear explanation of how to practise one should then take all of the system into consideration until it's clearly seen that by practising in this way the defilements of raga, of dosa

and moha will diminish until they're gone, one will then be willing to practise following the master's advice, just this is enough.

As mentioned we can be hesitant with regard to our own teacher as well as towards the Dhamma or whatever we happen to be studying. This happens even with someone who's a success in life, and it does because of one being unable to steady the mind so that everything around one's concocts it into the various forms of 'me' and 'mine' be they high or low, broad or narrow, or whatever, and which are all the time changing. Hence an idea we think correct one day can be thought quite wrong on another, without us even thinking about what happens over months or years, even the thinking we formulate during the course of this one hour might be at variance with the sort of thinking we were doing an hour before, and even in this minute our thinking may contradict what we thought one minute ago. That's the case because the many and various things surrounding us in nature cause our satipanna, our mindfulness and clear knowledge to be ever unstable, ever unsteady because of the disturbing power of 'me' and 'mine,' which tends to focus on anything beneficial or delicious in the hope of acquiring it, especially when that thing corresponds with desires, and without considering any conventions of good or bad that might exist, and even if they do exist they'll be modified to come into line with the current needs of 'me' and 'mine.'

Hence it can be said that 'me' and 'mine' are the basic and real cause of vicikicca, hesitancy, uncertainty. If we quench vicikicca or learn to control it we'll be able to quench and control 'me' and 'mine' too. We should be able to see clearly that vicikicca is a characteristic of 'me' and 'mine,' or, in plainer language, we might say that selfishness itself is the cause of hesitancy, and is always so both in worldly and Dhammic affairs. Even present and seemingly endless world crises arise from the hesitancy, the uncertainty, the messing about of those who create the crises, those people who have their own selfish traits and dither about when it comes to what's true, right and just, or to doing what benefits themselves, which is what they consider to be good, true, right and just. Our world thus has only endless crises and never knows lasting peace. This happens because of the hesitation caused by 'me' and 'mine.'

In conclusion: to quench 'me' in every way we must first get to know it in every way, including the form that manifests as vicikicca, hesitation, uncertainty. If we can quench 'me' and 'mine' completely vicikicca will cease to trouble us. As long as we're still entertaining feelings of 'me' and 'mine' we'll still be experiencing vicikicca. Hence we ought to study in order to know 'me' and 'mine' in that form which is difficult to grasp, that is, the form of vicikicca, as has been clarified here. This has been the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' in its second form.

22 – Quenching 'me' and 'mine' as 'silabbataparamasa.'

Today we'll look at the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' as the quenching of silabbataparamasa.

Silabbataparamasa is the third samyojana and means wrong understanding, wrong understanding of sila, moral behavior, and the religious routines which are tools used while practising for the

quenching of dukkha. This samyojana is another which, at a glance, wouldn't seem to be connected with 'me' and 'mine,' when in truth it, as with the previous two samyojana, is directly related.

As mentioned silabbataparamasa means to misunderstand and misuse what are, essentially, tools for the quenching of dukkha, and, be it said, for the fulfilment of the religion and realization of the Dhamma itself. We can divide this into two parts, 1) misunderstanding and practising, or behaving wrongly towards something which was originally wrong, misguided, and, 2) misunderstanding and behaving wrongly towards something which is right and proper, that is, we misunderstand something true and excellent and behave towards it in a blind, a wrong way. However, when summed up both come to much the same thing, that is, there's misunderstanding of something one should focus one's attention on and practise with to get a good result, but, because based in 'me' and 'mine,' there's carelessness and arrogance instead of care and caution so that those practices are wrongly taken. It's 'me' and 'mine' and the accompanying stubbornness and stupidity to blame once again.

This has become normal for worldly people, we're accustomed to such misbehaviour so that it's almost an instinctual reaction for us to seize onto things which seem strange, different, unusual in some way, things that we either invent ourselves or acquire from some other source: Besides having insufficient knowledge about something one has invented, one has confidence in it too so that it's foolishly believed to be a refuge, an escape from the problems of life, which it isn't. It might be just a ceremony, just a means of consolation, a self-deception, a way to let go of fear for a while which has become an unconsciously created façade.

As for that silabbataparamasa, clinging to rites and rituals which was originally wrong but which has been taken up and practised anyway: Mostly this is ancient, coming from the earliest times, with some adhering to the form of it even now because it fits with their moral sensibilities, hence there's still strict adherence. Another example is of those with wrong understanding who comport themselves in unconventional, even heretical ways, which they devise to deceive others into believing that something abnormal and queer is really good, true, and correct. These and others were originally wrong, yet, because of ignorance, have been grasped as forms of practice.

As for the silabbataparamasa which is correct but which has been wrongly grasped: There are various principles in various different religions, various methods of practice which, when practised properly, can really quench dukkha but which are being misused, still being handled in such a way that something pure and clean becomes something unclean and impure. This kind of clinging to rites and rituals prevails even amongst those who get the best education, which, however, doesn't include a proper and complete exposition of the Dhamma, that being a different matter. The very ignorant might pray for a child to be born to the childless, or might think that pouring holy water will wash away bad luck, or will help one make a fortune, or whatever, all of which is Buddhism for such people. There are those who, having been educated abroad, come back and immediately seek out a monk for the holy water treatment, which rather indicates that

receiving lot of education doesn't necessarily mean that such people will understand their religion properly, they being more likely to force it to be what they want it to be, having only faintly heard that it's really a tool for the quenching of dukkha, and for getting rid of the sacred.

Here they understand sanctity in a back-to-front way, although it's the same in other religions, as when God is set up as the comforter of those who are in a fix, for instance, then there are those people who go to the temple or perform various ceremonials just in case something happens, or because they want to please God and accumulate merit at the same time. But such are like sleepwalkers in that they don't understand the proper nature of God, or of meritorious activities, and don't know at all that such things are for wiping the mind clean by extracting and destroying 'me' and 'mine.' To hope for a god to come from somewhere or other, to wait for a god to protect one in the same way that one protects children, or to call on something one doesn't understand or know the whereabouts of to come and help when dukkha occurs, one being unable to make use of right understanding to free oneself, to eject dukkha from the mind, in spite of the fact that all Dhammic practices aim to wipe the body, speech, and mind clean of defilement so that a new state of affairs can arise, one which is dukkha-free, or which has less dukkha than before.

As for 'Buddhism,' it might be said that amongst the Buddhists silabattaparamasa has flourished in both the areas of study and practice. In practice there's been a continual gathering of things into Buddhism which aren't Buddhist, a making of non-Buddhist sayings sound as if they're the Buddha's words. There's been an interest in the study of deep and wide-ranging theories, in being a sage rather than learning to quench dukkha, and instead of teaching the ending of dukkha, as with the noble truths, etc. there's talk about those things the Buddha didn't talk about and deterred discussion of as being a waste of time, things like, for instance, people dying and then being born, or not being born? Explanations of kamma, anatta, and nibbana often mislead because they've been taken from other systems and inserted into Buddhism.

Even in the Buddhist scriptures there are many examples of things that have been wrongly grasped, as with the belief that everything in the texts comes from the Buddha's lips so mustn't be criticized. There are those who worship the texts as sacred, as well as those who think that they need only buy the texts to escape from dukkha. There are people who go so far as to use some scriptural books as a means of divination, something done by inserting a stick between the pages and then opening the book at that place to see if what's written there is good or bad, they really believing that that will constitute some kind of prophetic truth. This example is a form of silabattaparamasa connected to the scriptures which hasn't been encountered before.

Regarding silabattaparamasa in the field of practice? There are even more ways for it to arise. Most people being full of fear believe easily, and without satipanna, without enough right knowledge to control their fear they'll act ignorantly, act hastily under the power of faith and of fear and take the easy way out, they may ask for help, make use of someone else instead of doing the job themselves, as with one's bad deeds, for instance, then one might let someone else help

cleanse them, or they might believe that death is something that can be postponed, or by performing certain ceremonials someone told them about their lifespan can be increased, or that whatever one fears or is dukkha can be taken care of by performing various Buddhist ceremonies, or, further, believing that if it's a sacred ritual it must be Buddhism, and the completely correct form of Buddhism too. These are examples of the most basic ignorance, there are many more examples that could be mentioned.

More elevated than those is the misunderstanding of merit-making, of alms giving, of ordination, of morality, of concentration, of right knowledge, as well as of other, subsidiary, practices. There's wrong understanding so that opposite, or wrong results arise every time. Especially is that the case with the various practices which, in truth, are for digging out the kilesa, the defilements, particularly the defiled clinging to 'me' and to 'mine.' However, instead of that there's the sort of practise that promotes the feelings of 'me' and 'mine,' which makes them firmer, more deeply buried, and more refined. In reality it will be the defilements of 'me' and 'mine' underpinning any desire one might have, not purified satipanna. Hence there's merit-making and alms-giving of another form based on different intentions, which will be ultimately dangerous for society and for the religion too.

As for maintaining sila, moral behaviour, that's looked on as a practice that can promote sanctity, or guarantee some result in the future instead of being a tool for eliminating those kilesa and the self-indulgence they bring. When one has attained samadhi and thus vipassana, or 'clear seeing,' it's possible for one to deviate from the path, because then it's become a mental matter, it's namadhamma, and there's the opportunity of experiencing the unusual, the amazing, so that the inclination can be aimed more towards adhammic desires. The activity called 'vipassana' arises but doesn't entirely aim at ejecting the defilements, rather, because of the power of 'me' and 'mine' which dominates and pulls the mind around, it might be aimed at acquiring magic powers, or as a means for developing fame and fortune.

When these things advance in the wrong way, or there's wrong intention towards the path and its fruit, then nibbana, for that person, will be wrong too, there'll be michaditthi, wrong view, full and complete. This is silabattaparamasa as it relates to practice. Taken together this is like a cancer, a tumor, which, rooted in clinging to 'me' and to 'mine,' has developed on the body of Buddhism and will eventually destroy it.

Now, looked at from a wider angle we might say that misunderstanding and intentionally using anything in such a way that it brings no real benefit is silabattaparamasa - as with vijja, knowledge, or with any invention which might appear, these should be used as promoters of peace in society, but instead are unconsciously and ignorantly used to spread social confusion, trouble and strife, to spread dukkha. Hence, we see that the majority of human beings are, under the thrall of 'me' and 'mine,' deliberately misusing the things of nature so that that which starts out clean and advantageous becomes soiled, unclean, becomes dukkha, becomes harmful as a result, and we have to swallow the evil consequences of that.

Finally we might see that all of this is quite the norm for beings full of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ When that’s the case how much quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ can there be? That will depend on how much we can reduce silabattaparamasa, that ‘reducing’ being one of the characteristics of those who move from the worldly to the truly noble level, to being a ‘noble one.’ One who’s quenched ‘me’ and ‘mine’ to the level of sanctity is one who quenches, or leaves behind, sakkayaditthi, viccikica and silabattaparamasa. Such an one has reached the nibbanic stream, or, in the Pali language, is ‘sotapana,’ a ‘stream-enterer.’

23 – The characteristics of the ‘sotapana.’

Today we’ll look at the quenching of ‘me’ which creates the sotapana, the ‘stream-enterer.’

As mentioned above if ‘me’ and ‘mine’ are completely quenched, that is, there’s no more ‘ahankara’ or ‘mamankara,’ one is then arahant. In the case of the sotapana the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ has been partial, which can be inferred from the word ‘sotapana’ : ‘sota’ + ‘apana,’ ‘sota’ meaning ‘stream,’ ‘apana’ means ‘to reach.’ ‘Stream’ implying the way which leads to nibbana, or towards the ‘magga,’ the path of eight stages, which involves the important element of ‘nana,’ knowledge, or ‘sammaditthi,’ the ‘right’ understanding that nothing should clung to as ‘me’ or ‘mine.’ Details concerning the eightfold path will be looked at when we come to deal with the method of practice for quenching ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ at this time we’ll just point out the nature of the stream which flows towards nibbana.

One should bear in mind that the sotapana can be an householder or an ordinee, that being said, what is it that allows both groups to obtain the nibbanic stream? The answer is simple enough: abandonment of the three aforementioned samyojana. Now, that the householder, one who still indulges in carnality, is yet able to do this means that abandoning the three samyojana happens before the abandonment of kama, carnal desire. To be more precise: the abandonment of the three samyojana has to be achieved before kama can be overcome, so, although one is still involved with carnality the first three samyojana can be abandoned - which doesn’t, however, mean that that one can be totally obsessed, or intoxicated with kama. Hence we need to understand those three samyojana well, don’t misunderstand, as is usually the case, and think that the stream enterer needs to abandon more than is necessary.

It’s certain that the stream enterer will have less lobha, dosa, and moha, or less raga, koda, and moha to deal with than the average worldly person, but that doesn’t mean that those defilements will have been eradicated. Hence abandoning lust, hatred and delusion to some degree is possible, and, in this instance, there is the abandonment of lust, hatred, and delusion to the level of the first three samyojana. These three samyojana essentially are lust, hatred, and delusion manifesting in one particular form although they possess several characteristics. And, as mentioned above, any samyojana will, as a rule, manifest as ‘me’ or ‘mine.’

We can define it thus: the feeling of being the ‘me’ and ‘mine’ which wants to get something arises because the desire is based in raga, or lobha, that which wants to get rid of something is

based in dosa or koda, anger, while the feeling of being the ‘me’ or ‘mine’ which is doubtful, uncertain is based in moha. Raga, dosa, and moha thus define the characteristics of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’

While the stream enterer doesn’t abandon everything necessary - which, if they had, would mean the attainment of nibbana full and complete - they do abandon just that which allows them to be one walking on the right path, to be one who will certainly attain nibbana in the future, or in the near term. Hence the word ‘stream’ here carries the implication of certainty. Prior to this one would have been ignorant of this, one wouldn’t have known that there was a particular way one should behave, and how that should be developed. Now, however, there’s knowledge, there’s clarity, and, hastening, one enters into that straight way, one attains the stream that flows on to nibbana.

Why should one have to abandon these three samyojana in order to attain the nibbanic stream? This is something that should be looked at in a general sense and not just from a religious point of view. It needs to be clearly seen that these three fetters are commonly present in the average human being, hence it’s said that such is ‘putujon,’ or ‘worldly,’ which implies that one is ‘common,’ here meaning that there’s something obstructing the mental operations so that one might not realize truth, that one is defiled, besmirched with the defilement of ordinary people. Such an one won’t understand the existence of a noble one, while those enobled wouldn’t find satisfaction in the existence of a common individual, hence it’s necessary to divide them into two camps: the ordinary, or the commonality, and those who’ve gone further and reduced the common-ness until their minds are able to understand properly in accord with truth, so are able to maintain themselves in the state which escapes the dangerous, the injurious, and removes any possibility of them falling into the nether worlds. What divides these two groups is the abandonment of those first three samyojana. Once these have been abandoned one walks the path, attains the nibbanic stream, so becoming safe from the ‘enemies,’ that is, from the defilements, and one gets a new name into the bargain: ‘noble one,’ which means one who’s gone away from the enemy, gone away from the defilements, thus: ari = ‘noble’ + ya = ‘gone away from.’ Imagine the worldly as being blindfolded, or sleepy, while the noble ones have none of that and stride intently towards the ultimate destination. It’s this which earns the stream enterer the epithet ‘cakuma’ that is, one who has the ‘eye,’ the Dhamma eye, which previously they didn’t have.

While the stream enterer is one who has the ‘eye’ relevant to the first level of sanctity, an higher ranking noble one must possess appropriately clearer vision. What caused the ‘blindness’ or the condition of being ‘eyeless’ was the problem of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ which brought full opacity, hence this had to be reduced until the ‘eye’ began to open, began to ‘see,’ at which time one became a prime, although worldly, person who ‘saw’ nibbana clearly enough so that the certainty arose that one would attain at some future time, which is ‘sotapana,’ or the first level of sanctity. Hence the requirement for dumping ‘me’ and ‘mine’ to the level of stream entry or first-level nobility of the true sort lies in the abandoning of those three samyojana, and having the feelings

of being ‘me’ or ‘mine’ quench to that degree. The gradual extinguishing of the remaining ‘me’ and ‘mine’ falls to the duty of a higher level of nobility.

Now, let’s consider the import of abandoning those three samyojana, which might be applicable to anyone. First we need to give meaning to the word ‘sakkayaditthi’: sakkayaditthi is ‘self,’ or personality view. ‘Viccikicca’ is not knowing which direction, which way life should go in, still not knowing, or having still not made the correct choice. ‘silabattaparamasa,’ is ignorantly, or blindly, mis-using what should be beneficial ways and means so that they become a danger to oneself. ‘Ways and means’ here refers to things like culture, ethics, and religion.

Here it’s not just about those in religious circles, but about humankind in its’ entirety: if anyone is yet selfishly oriented, still doesn’t know what direction life should go in, and is still doing wrong as regards morality and humanity then how should we classify them? Are they a full, a perfect human being yet? There probably wouldn’t be many who’d say that was so. On the other hand to hold that someone who’s put an end to the three undesirables is on the way to being fully human probably wouldn’t be disputed, it would be admitted that such an one is of the noble class.

There are many subtle differences separating the noble from the ignoble, but, essentially, it comes down to the same thing: ‘selfishness,’ which here implies the common, everyday form of that problem, which, even though it were completely abandoned wouldn’t make one an arahant. Hence we take ‘selfishness’ on this level to be the meaning of the word ‘sakkayaditthi.’

As for vicikicca, it means hesitancy, indecision concerning the ultimate aim of life. The ultimate aim is a life without hesitancy, etc. which implies a life free from intoxication, a life without infatuation, a life which doesn’t fall under the power of the low, the base, so a life lived with God, as the Christians might say, hence without indecision, without infatuation with the delightful, attractive things in the world, a more worthy lifestyle. Even though the body has to dwell in the world of the delightful, the attractive, the mind can accept and respect the supreme value of a life without all of that and settles on it as something that needs to be attained in the fullness of time.

Now, silabattaparamasa, or wrong understanding of those things which humankind should make use of in order to be safe. We’re talking correct understanding and proper behaviour as regards culture, civilization, and morality - depending on what we want to call those things - which is genuinely human and practised under the power of reason.

These are the general meanings of, and the way to abandonment of the first three samyojana in the Buddhist system. Hence the stream enterer is that truly noble person the world should want. As for indulging or not indulging in carnality, that’s another matter, the abandonment of carnality, kama, in all its forms being the business of those with a higher level of nobility, here we’re concerned with the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ on the sotapana, or stream-entry level.

24 - The characteristics of the sakitakami (the once-returner.)

Today we'll look at the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' on a higher level than the sotapana, that of the 'sakitagami,' the 'once-returner.'

As mentioned, it should be noted that as there's the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' from a base level gradually rising through the ranks so the 'me' becomes progressively more difficult to quench. This is because the more 'me' and 'mine' are quenched the further one withdraws from the worldly forms of experience and meets more with the transcendental, the first level of which is sotapana. Even though the sotapana doesn't completely transcend the world still it can be said that they do dwell above it, and will dwell completely above the world at some future time. We call the mental level of all noble ones, from the sotapana up to the arahant, the lokuttarabhumi, or the transcendental plane, experiencing which one isn't oppressed by the world because one knows it in such a way that worldly sense objects can no longer become the base for the arising of 'me' and 'mine,' or, as with the sotapana, can still be a problem but only minimally, and certainly not as with the putujana.

Even though the noble one on the sotapana level still has to experience dukkha because 'me' and 'mine' haven't been completely put an end to, yet their experience of dukkha is different from that of the putujana, the worldly person. Although a noble one experiences dukkha it's the dukkha of someone with knowledge, who has satipanna and understands clearly the nature of dukkha, it's cause, it's remainderless quenching, and the way to it's remainderless quenching, while, because it's beyond the range of their knowledge, the putujana is looked on as being blind and immersed in dukkha. As for the supreme noble one, the arahant, they attain the complete cessation of dukkha because they've completely quenched 'me' and 'mine,' which leads us to conclude that the putujana doesn't know anything about the quenching of 'me' and 'mine,' the noble individual being the one who knows the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' in accord with their level of accomplishment. Hence, when talking about the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' of the higher nobility it means that quenching which is increasingly subtle, increasingly profound.

As mentioned above the sotapana abandons three samyojana, seven more remain which the other noble individuals must abandon, or quench. The noble one next in line from the sotapana is the sakitagami, who won't abandon any of the seven remaining samyojana, but will, in addition to the samyojana already abandoned at the sotapana level, be able to reduce 'me' and 'mine' in the form of lobha, dosa, and moha, that is, the sakitagami will reduce them somewhat more than the sotapana did.

In addition it should be known that the meaning of any samyojana derives from a combination of loba, dosa and moha, but that it's not usual to refer to the samyojana as lobha, dosa and moha. Here, the aim is to sort things out so that one can see clearly the nature of those defilements, and of the 'me' and 'mine' which flares up in those forms, and to facilitate knowledge and

understanding for the practice of abandonment, as well as to understand the tactics used so that it can be repeated. The Buddha arranged the samyojana depending on the degree of difficulty involved in their abandonment, from sakkayaditthi to avijja.

Hence, we might say that as regards ‘me’ and ‘mine’ in the form of sakkayaditthi, vicikicca, and silabattaparamasa, the sakitakami abandons just what the sotapana abandons. As for ‘me’ and ‘mine’ in the form of the seven remaining samyojana, the sakitakami just brings about a weakening and doesn’t abandon any actual samyojana. And, regarding lobha, dosa, and moha in the form of, or connected with sakkayaditthi, vicikicca, and silabattaparamasa, then the sakitakami again abandons what the sotapana abandons. As for lobha, dosa, and moha in the form of the seven remaining samyojana the sakitakami doesn’t abandon anything, again there’s just a general weakening, a reduction of power taking place. Even so, it can still be said that the sakitakami abandons more of the kilesa or the samyojana than the sotapana does, so inhabits an higher realm.

Sakitakami means ‘once-returner’ (saka = once, akami = one comes.) The words ‘once-returner’ mean to return, to seek after something we have a longing for. The thing longed for here is the kama world, the world of sensuality, it’s kama, carnality, which forms the object of our longing. We might compare this to someone who has to leave their home but still entertains a longing towards it. Hence they go back to look at the place once more, after which they leave for good. Because one misses that home, it’s become an obsession, there’s a strong attraction so that it’s difficult to let it go, as with one who changes from being a worldly person and becomes noble, that is, they come up out of the water, as it were, come out from that longing after kama and go strongly counter to it, but although there’s strong mindfulness and wisdom the defilements are very powerful, which is why the noble one on the first level, the sotapana, must still indulge in some forms of kama even though they have the wisdom of a noble one.

The sakitakami can go further, can see beyond the carnal, but still has the longing which makes them, at the least, return one more time before they escape, hence the epithet ‘sakitakami,’ the ‘once-returner.’ They differ from the sotapana, from the one who’s entered the stream, because, although they partake of kama, of carnality, they haven’t escaped it, yet they’re clear as to the way out from kama and mentally they incline strongly in that direction, thus, they’re at a different level. As for the point that a sotapana who’s a monk must abstain from any contact with kama in accord with the vinaya, the monastic discipline, even so they’ll still entertain a longing for carnality in accord with the mental level of the sotapana, just as the sotapana who’s a householder does, however, it’s only because of the control exercised by keeping the vinaya, the monastic discipline, that there’s no actual indulgence in kama on the physical level, because that discipline isn’t yet inherently mental.

Hence, it can be said that the mind of the sotapana is on the same level regardless of whether one is a monk or an householder, and, when talking about the abandonment of the samyojana, or the true meaning of the word ‘sotapana,’ then it’s not required that one leave the household life for

the monkhood. As regards the sakitakami, there's normally more pressure on the householder to ordain, the sakitakami being mentally farther away from the world and from kama than the sotapana. Therefore, even though there's the abandonment of the same three samyojana there's still difference, still higher and the lower with different virtues. It's clear that the 'me' and 'mine' of the sakitakami is less of a problem than that of the sotapana.

When we come to the level of the sakitakami ordinary beings might experience some trepidation, in that they're now going to have to go beyond kama, go further than is normal, go out of the comfort zone which existed with the sotapana, and, generally, as a rule, people won't be so keen to abandon kama with just one backward glance.

It can be seen that the noble diverge even more from the worldly right here, and that far more is involved than just observing the moral stance of the sotapana. Hence this is considered to run even more contrary to the desires of ordinary people. In fact, when the numbers of sotapanas recorded is much greater compared to the numbers of sakitakami it's hard for the worldly to understand how the latter, the sakitakami level, could be the more desirable. When we consider the yet higher levels of the anagami and arahant things become even more elevated, hence less and less people will be inclined to try for them. These are the various levels of 'me' and 'mine' that need to be abandoned in the subsequent steps, grasping which will allow us to know the noble as they really are and won't lead us into areas of blind faith.

But, let's calculate: if people in this world were just sotapana, not needing to elevate themselves to sakitakami, this world would have everlasting peace, peace enough for the needs of ordinary people, there might even be an excess, might be more than the worldly should get from being sotapana. Thus this in itself demonstrates the meaning of being above the world, of being lokuttara, as it's said: Just at the beginning stage one dwells on the highest worldly level, above the usual form of human life. Higher than that and one has to raise oneself up (crane one's metaphorical neck to see what's ahead,) and it's difficult to decide whether to follow the path or stay where one is, then there's a lot of fear regarding having to give up what one holds dear and to actually follow the path, which itself will measure, will let us know how much selfishness, how much 'me' and 'mine' remains for a noble person on these levels when compared with ordinary mortals.

25 – Characteristics of the Anagami.

Today we'll look at the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' in the form of the anagami, the 'non-returner.' As mentioned, a person's 'nobility' will be revealed through the quenching of 'me,' in that the more that's quenched, the more the noble person emerges. This has already been demonstrated with the sotapana quenching 'me' and 'mine' in the forms of sakkayaditthi, viccikkicca, and silabattaparamasa, and the sakitakami quenching 'me' yet more in the form of the kilesa, lobha, dosa, and moha, although that quenching doesn't get called anything specific. As for the noble one next in line, this is the anagami, who has to abandon two more samyojana, that

is, the ‘fetters’ of kamaraga and patigha, which means the ‘me’ and ‘mine’ arising in the form of sensual lust, or kama, and of patigha, repulsion, irritation, grudge, etc.

When considering this we can see how the sotapana and the sakitakami differ from the anagami. The kilesa of lust and anger are difficult to remove, so much so that the first two nobles aren’t able to eradicate them completely, so how could a worldly person be expected to overcome them? The one who defeats them will have to make a particular effort to the extent of becoming ‘anagami,’ however, it should be clearly understood that, although the sotapana and the sakitakami aren’t able to absolutely get rid of these two kilesa that doesn’t mean that they’re tangled up with them in the same way that a putujana would be.

Therefore, the happiness arising from kama for these people isn’t an intoxication, being just an instinctual response controlled by their satipanna, their mindfulness and wisdom, hence there’s no dukkha, or any falling into harm of any sort. Thus the absolute cutting off of any delight in kama is one of the highest levels of virtue in this regard. As for patigha, annoyance, that’s the same, it’s not the annoyance, or the irritation of a worldly person, it’s just a mental condition which arises from the impact of an object which is disagreeable and creates a feeling of discontent, of irritation, for a time, it doesn’t imply fierce anger. Hence these can’t be abandoned by the sotapana or sakitakami. It falls to the anagami to abandon them, the anagami then dwells above kama, carnal delight, and patigha, anger, annoyance and might never experience a carnally delighted, or an angry, frustrated form of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ again.

We might know the anagami easily through knowing the meaning of the word ‘anagami.’ It means ‘non-returner’ (an = not + agamin = one comes,) just recall the meaning of the word sakitakami and the nature of the anagami will be easily grasped, the sakitakami still longs after kama, while the anagami doesn’t have that problem, has no longing for kama, isn’t inclined to think about it, hence is called ‘non-returner.’ It’s clear that in setting the levels of the noble ones there’s much use of kama as a measuring device, something all people can understand, and which tells us that kama is a great problem, one which has disturbed human beings since ancient times. Hence, when talking about the highest human accomplishment we should focus on that which is difficult to abandon, because abandoning things which are difficult to get rid of is the highest human accomplishment, something which is beyond the abilities of everyday humankind.

All nobles maintain that highest human accomplishment in accord with their level of nobility, as we see with the anagami who maintains that ideal to the extent of no longer entertaining love or hate for anything on any level. However they still need to continue onwards until they attain the final stage of nobility, that of the arahant, which, for them, will be like reaching their final destination, at which time they’ll dwell above the world fully and completely. As for the anagami, even though they’ve completely abandoned raga, sensual lust, and anger, there’s still moha, delusion, to deal with, which is an extremely subtle affair and which will have to be

abandoned on yet another level, hence, even though ‘me’ in the form of kamaraga and patigha can no longer arise, there’s still that more subtle ‘me’ remaining to be abandoned.

To continue: we’ll take a look at the words ‘kamaraga,’ and ‘patigha.’ As regards ‘kamaraga,’ we’ll need to understand the word ‘raga’ properly first, otherwise we’ll misunderstand from the start. ‘Raga’ derives from a word meaning ‘dye,’ or ‘tint,’ but in Dhamma language it’s taken to mean desire, that being something which dyes, or tints the mind. One might feel desire for anything, if for kama it’s kamaraga, if for the contentment which comes from absorption concentration, or from samadhi, neither of which is concerned with kama, then it’s called ruparaga or aruparaga respectively, depending on whether the contentment arises from the rupa or arupa jhanas. Now, if happiness comes from a more elevated source than those it’s called ‘Dhammaraga’ or ‘Dhammanandi,’ which will probably sound odd to people generally because it’s not been much mentioned and some will almost never have heard it, below Dhammaraga are ruparaga and aruparaga.

One who’s never had an interest in the religion won’t have heard of these two words, but if one has studied Buddhism one will have met with them. They aren’t the same as Dhammaraga, which even one who has to do with the Buddhist scriptures will have found it hard to coincide with, because it’s not bandied about much. But a word which one hears often and which one will understand straightway is the word ‘kamaraga,’ which is the fourth samyojana the anagami abandons. Hence the word raga in the ordinary, everyday meaning and as used by people generally has the particular meaning of kamaraga, of carnal desire, and doesn’t mean any and every form of desire.

The anagami abandons kamaraga but isn’t able to get rid of rupa or aruparaga. It’s the arahant who actually abandons rupa and arupa raga, but doesn’t find it necessary to abandon Dhammaraga since that just means seeking, or desiring nibbana under the power, of satipanna, and not the power of the kilesa. This is the extended meaning of the word ‘raga’ we need to grasp so that we can know the kamaraga that the anagami has to abandon.

Even the word ‘kamaraga’ which is well understood we might yet divide into the coarse and the refined versions, which will reveal just what the worldly and first-level noble individuals actually retain or abandon. Hence, using everyday speech we might say that the noble person on the levels of sotapana and sakitakami abandons kama but not the longing for it. It’s the anagami who then abandons any residual longing for kama. Thus the term ‘longing for kama’ is a means for determining the mental level of a noble person who doesn’t directly, or physically indulge in kama, which, if anyone should misunderstand here, might cause feelings of aversion or fear regarding practising for nobility, or might make one not want to approach Buddhism because one has understood that, from the start, one has to abstain from sexual transactions completely, which is impossible for anyone to manage, and would be too harsh, too cruel a regime for ordinary people living in the world to maintain.

Another thing that should be considered going forward is that abandoning kama, or being one who's above the influence of kama, then how, and by how much will they experience a high, or sublime level of existence? Ordinary people, worldly people generally might see this differently, that is, might see the absence of kama as not being sublime at all and that any sublimeness will be found in being replete, in experiencing an abundance of kama, of carnality.

If one still is of that opinion then there's no way that they'll see Buddhism as something that should be studied, or as something that might form a refuge for humanity. When one has indulged in kama and, at the same time, been chewed and bitten so often by it that one comes to recognize its harmful quality, one will then know for themselves that kama is like a poison, is bound up with dukkha, and, as mentioned, is really harmful, but that its harmful character is concealed, hidden, and thus difficult to recognize. In truth kama burns us all the time, but the heat produced is like a wet heat so that it's hard for anyone to realize that they are being burned. When one does begin to realize this one begins to take an interest in that Buddhism which exists to eliminate the power of kama, to dwell 'above' it and to partake of that kama which isn't kama at all, so not causing the arising of dukkha or of any sort of harmfulness.

Anyone, if they really consider the matter, can see for themselves that kama acts like a lure, or a reward, which nature uses to tempt all creatures into the dukkha connected with reproduction. Reproduction is the aim of nature, is a principle of nature, or it could be called an accident of nature. There's naturally evolution only in those things, or species, animal or plant, which, because they involve a cycle of reproduction, still exist to this day. Any line or species which doesn't involve the reproductive cycle will disappear completely before there can be any evolution. Hence, any species able to survive has done so because there was a reproductive cycle, which, persisting, has become a common feature of nature, has become an instinct, one instinct amongst the many.

An important problem is that the reproductive cycle is hard work, is uncomfortable, is quite hard to bear with, so that there has to be something to sweeten it up, to camouflage it somewhat so that beings don't feel that it is dukkha. Then again, sometimes one might recognize the dukkha nature of reproduction but be willing to make a trade-off and accept the lure, the bait as compensation. Hence whether the act be intentional or an accident of nature, it's necessary that there be another kind of, instinctual, feeling involved, a feeling of satisfaction, of happiness, or fascination with the bait, the lure, the pay-back with which nature entices beings into willingly and cheerfully accepting the dukkha of the reproductive process. The 'lure' here is kama, something that humans, animals, and even plants have on levels various, refined or crude, but all with the same basic meaning, that is, something able to lure beings into accepting dukkha, as mentioned.

Regarding patigha, it means dissatisfaction, or frustration, but that dissatisfaction, that frustration, where does it come from? It comes from, or has its roots in kama, in sensuality, carnality, again. All the forms of dissatisfaction arise because one doesn't get what one wants,

because things aren't as we'd like them to be, etc. And what does your average human being want, nothing more than kama, both physically and mentally. If one can abandon kamaraga then one can cut the root of patigha too. Don't get involved with kama and patigha won't have any way of arising.

Taking a closer look: As regards people generally then, as Freud claimed, anything and everything comes from kama, even patigha, because sickness and death find their source in kama, people want to live and have a life replete with kama, they don't want to get sick, they want kama. If one can cut off feeling while experiencing kama then any patigha arising because of sickness and death will decrease accordingly. Hence we shouldn't look at patigha just on the obvious level, we should go deeper to that kama which is always its foundation, and then the various problems associated with patigha will finally go down together with the various problems associated with kamaraga. How noble is the anagami? That's something that may be known through the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' in the form of kamaraga and patigha.

This is the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' pertaining to the anagami; one might now see how much less of the 'me' and 'mine' problem they have to deal with.

26 – Characteristics of the Arahant.

Today we'll talk about the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' as it pertains to the arahant. Here we reach the final stage of the quenching of 'me' and 'mine,' so for a better understanding we should look again at the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' from the beginning, the sotapana, to the end, the arahant, so that we can grasp the main principle involved. Hence: the sotapana abandons sakkayaditthi, silabattaparamasa, and vicikicca, all of which are 'me and 'mine' in the form of moha. The sakitakami is the same as the anakami in that they both abandon kamaraga and patigha, that is, they abandon 'me' and 'mine' in the forms of raga and dosa, raga here meaning kamaraga, carnal, or sensual desire, so that there's still rupa and arupa raga to be dealt with. When we come to the arahant they have to abandon ruparaga and aruparaga, that is, 'me' and 'mine' in the form of raga, and must also abandon mana, uddacca, and avijja, which is 'me' and 'mine' in the form of moha. As regards avijja, there's more to be considered, because it's also the source, the root, the chief of all the kilesa, of all defilement of whatever kind.

If we sum this up briefly one more time, it can be seen that the sotapana and the sakitakami begin the abandoning of moha. The anagami specifically abandons the defilement of raga and also abandons dosa, while the arahant abandons whatever remains of raga and moha, which is quite different.

However, any difference isn't important, what is important is that we grasp, we understand that, when looking at the whole process of the abandonment of the kilesa within the four levels of nobility the defilement of moha must be first, then comes some of raga and all of dosa, then comes whatever remains of raga and moha, the point being that this then represents the beginning of wisdom, or that called 'sammaditthi,' which is the leading light amongst all

enlightening dhammas, as can be seen with the noble eightfold path where first and foremost amongst the eight is sammaditthi, right view or right understanding, which is wisdom leading the way with sila and samadhi following. The order of events here is wise, not foolish, it being prudent to apply wisdom, right understanding, before beginning any activity. This should be taken to be a particular characteristic of Buddhism.

To perform any activity we first need to know the broad direction we should go in, we need to know the way to operate clearly and correctly before we begin, then whatever we do will be done easily and successfully. Hence it would be appropriate for Buddhism to be called a ‘wisdom religion,’ that the Buddha’s disciples prosper through wisdom. Buddhism is a system controlled by reason from beginning to end, a principle we should always uphold.

Now we’ll look at the characteristics of those kilesa, those further five variously named samyojana, which the arahant, following on from the anagami, should abandon.

Regarding ruparaga and aruparaga, we’ve discussed them already when dealing with the anagami so we can just say here that these two kinds of raga aren’t concerned with kama, with sensuality, but with the happiness and satisfaction arising from the rupa and arupa jhanas, the purer happiness experienced by one whose mind is cleansed of kamaraga, who dwells above kama in all its forms. Hence it’s natural for this sort of happiness to become the base for strong attachment so that it’s more difficult to abandon, which indicates that the satisfaction experienced in the rupa and arupa realms, or in the Brahma world, has a strength and profundity which makes it difficult to withdraw from, hence, when compared to the satisfaction experienced in the sensual worlds generally, as with the human world, the difference is very great so that the abandonment of the rupa and arupa ragas has to begin with the nobles. Briefly, we’d say that the pleasant feelings arising in a mind which has been brought to peace and tranquility through the power of samadhi has a flavour much more likely to cause attachment than any pleasant feelings arising from kama, there really being no comparison. However such experiences are only possible for those with already elevated minds, who can generate the happiness which comes from jhana, absorption, or from real samadhi. As for those who fall into kama they won’t know this kind of happiness. Whether we call this finding of satisfaction in pleasant feeling ruparaga, or aruparaga, it will have basically the same effect as kamaraga, in that it will tend to tint or stain the mind in a way which will be difficult to remove. Rupa or aruparaga will, however, stain the mind more profoundly than will kamaraga, so there’s a very subtle level of defilement involved, a level only one of elevated virtue can abandon. This is the kilesa of raga which the arahant abandons.

Now, we come to the samyojana called ‘mana.’ This samyojana is the feeling of attachment to ‘me,’ instead, that is, of being infatuated with other things. There’s infatuation with one’s own condition, that is, of being better than, the same as, or worse than others, and then there are the various struggles which occur depending on one’s feelings. When there’s this comparison with others going on then, at the least, there’s some joy, some rejoicing, jubilation on the one hand,

while there's some sadness, depression, on the other. That the sotapana up to the anagami still cannot abandon this samyojana means that those noble ones still have the feeling of being 'me,' still feel that 'I am' in some way, although they've already abandoned lust and anger - as it's said: those Brahmas aren't associated with sensuality and anger, but are intoxicated with and are arrogant regarding their own status, in that they being pure as regards sensuality and anger will boast to others that they're higher, purer, more peaceful, and so on, also they like to challenge, to test, as they did with the Buddha by asking this or that question in a competitive way, not asking because they didn't know the answer, as ordinary people would. These are examples of that mana which is present even in the sotapana up to and including the anagami, they having not yet abandoned it completely. Even though this defilement isn't obvious externally, internally it's yet to be given up: One isn't boastful, but one cannot, for instance, give up the thought that 'I am' virtuous. Hence the feeling of being like this or like that is still existent, therefore the quenching of this samyojana implies the quenching of 'me' and of 'mine' complete, without any remainder.

The next samyojana is uddacca, which shouldn't be confused with the uddacca of the five nivarana, the five hindrances, one of the enemies of samadhi. The samyojana called uddacca is a defilement with the same name and a similar meaning, but is more subtle and acts as the enemy of panna, of wisdom. Hence uddacca here doesn't mean the mental distraction caused by some disturbing object, or by the swarming of the nivarana, but is a feeling which causes the mind to shake, to ripple, to wonder, to be sceptical about the various things impacting the eyes, ears, nose, etc. Even though one doesn't like or dislike any of those things because the defilements causing that sort of response have been abandoned still the mind moves or ripples because of them, mind just wants to know what's happening, whether something is dangerous or beneficial, etc. Even, finally, the mind intrigued, sceptical, again because it wants to know, would be considered as uddacca here. This can be explained: If the feeling of 'self' or of 'me' still persists, then the scepticism, or curiosity as to whether whatever's impacting the senses is dangerous or beneficial for 'me' will arise, so it's a question of whether to want or not to want. When the feeling of being 'me' has been truly quenched the mind will be stilled, won't shake or move unnecessarily whenever an object meets with the senses. Once uddacca has been abandoned mind will be completely above any anxiety or vacillation regarding anything.

Noble ones on the primary level have enough of a 'self' remaining so seek out beneficial things while fearing the dangerous, it's only the nobles of the final level, the arahants, who absolutely abandon those activities, because they've put an end to the feeling of being 'me' completely. When the 'me' has been abandoned the feeling of 'mine,' having nowhere to go, will be abandoned too, which means that the feelings of 'ahankara' and 'mamankara,' being basically the same thing, arise and quench away together too, and do so quite automatically, so there's no need to explain them separately. When 'me' and 'mine' are gone, then uddacca will also be gone.

Now we come to final samyojana which is avijja, ignorance, the meaning and character of which has already been described in detail and which is referred to here as the final samyojana needing

to be abandoned because it implies the last remaining defilement, moha, the root, or original kilesa, the source of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ We experience through non-knowledge as against knowledge which leads us to say that before there was complete ignorance concerning all things, but on arriving at the level of the sotapana then knowledge began to shine through, which the Buddha described as the ‘dawn,’ he called sammaditthi, right understanding, the ‘dawn’ of nibbana, in that some forms of avijja had decreased and some forms of knowledge had arisen, not, however, to the extent necessary for the abandonment of avijja complete.

As mentioned the three samyojana abandoned by the sotapana are all moha-based, although moha itself isn’t abandoned completely at the sotapana stage. The sakitakami doesn’t abandon too much more than that. The anagami abandons raga and dosa. Moha is finally swept out at the arahant level; moha on the final or original level is called avijja. Vijja, knowledge, maximises, which means that all things are known as they should be known, that is, all the forms of dukkha, the cause of their arising, their quenching, and the method used to do the quenching, all are directly experienced in one’s own mind, hence it’s not something learned, heard about, or thought out, but knowledge which arises and is experienced clearly in one’s own mind, hence it’s full, complete, wisdom which utterly destroys ignorance so that one knows the truths of the four noble ones through penetrative knowledge in the mind after having practiced fully and in accord with that knowledge acquired at the beginning of one’s practice.

The student should observe that there are three differing levels of knowledge involved, which we can sum up thus: knowledge which has been heard, acquired through study, called here pariyati; knowledge which arises from getting down to work, from practising, here called patibati; knowledge which arises from the successful abandonment of the defilements, that is, direct and clear knowledge of the defilements and of their eradication, this is knowledge coming from penetration, called pativedi. Wisdom, or knowledge of the noble truths is the aim here, which means knowledge on the pativedi level, full knowledge of all the forms of dukkha. A phrase like ‘all the forms of’ is used because it implies knowledge complete. We mustn’t forget that it’s not the case that the sotapana, for instance, doesn’t have knowledge of the four truths, rather that their knowledge is of a lower order, is on the level of a stream enterer, or of a sakitakami, or of an anagami, which means that dukkha in all its forms isn’t yet quenched, because ignorance, avijja, in all its forms, isn’t yet put an end to. Hence vijja, or full and complete knowledge of the noble truths which abandons all the forms of dukkha lies in the realm of the arahants, or with the abandoning of the samyojana on the arahant level. And, we might have it known that the meaning of avijja, at this level, is ignorance of the noble truths, this is what has been abandoned.

Concerning knowledge of the four truths, we’d like to suggest that if one would like to apply this form universally, so that anything at all can be understood, then it will be necessary to set it out in a logical manner, thus one would ask the questions: What is it? Where does it come from? What is it for? By what means can it be dealt with? If we can come to know anything in these four ways we’ll know it by using the methodology of the four noble truths, or, vice versa, we’ll know the noble truth of that particular thing. As with dukkha: we know what dukkha is, that it’s

a condition not to be desired in any way. Where then does dukkha come from? It comes from tanha, foolish desire, and clinging to 'me' and 'mine.' What is dukkha for, what is its purpose? The purpose of dukkha is to fuel the desire to quench it and to attain nibbana. By what method will that be done? It will be done by developing a proper method of practice. Here we can see that having full knowledge implies that we know the result and the means of obtaining it - it's not just about knowing how or what something is. This method is something useful for Buddhists, something we can make use of to know all things.

27 – Characteristics of the Arahant (cont.)

Today we'll continue to look at the quenching of 'me' in its arahant manifestation. As regards the arahant abandoning the ten samyojana, we can see that the abandonment of avijja has the greatest importance, it being, as mentioned, the source of 'me' and 'mine.' Further, there are three other important characteristics that should be noted: one becomes 'one who knows,' one who's abandoned the kilesa, and one who experiences the ultimate peace and tranquility. The 'one who knows' here knows the noble truths, the one who abandons the kilesa abandons the root defilements of raga, dosa, and moha once and for all, which implies the abandoning of the samyojana too, 'sanyojana' being a word we can use instead of kilesa, and it also implies the complete quenching of 'me' in any of its manifestations. Being one who has the utmost peace and tranquillity is the fruit, or result of abandoning the kilesa, or of abandoning any clinging to 'self,' which renders one brimful of that which one should want to be brimful of - true humanity, that is, one is now truly a human being, having a mind above the power of the defilements, above dukkha, or, it might be said, above any form of 'existence,' even above everything, that's the essence of the 'arahant.' 'Aharant' can also mean one who is far from the 'enemy,' one who dwells above and beyond everything.

Regarding the word 'arahant,' from the available evidence it predates Buddhism. It was used to denote someone who'd reached the highest levels of a particular doctrine, or teaching, hence anyone who was a master, who had practised and had attained the completion of their chosen system, until, in the Buddha's time, this word was being used in every system, even with the naked ascetics, the 'sky-clad.' Some accepted that every movement and system had its arahants, especially was that so if they happened to be rulers, governors, sect leaders, important people, or whatever, but there was always practice involved. Those who practised self-mortification, or ascetic practices to the utmost degree were called arahant, and, as just mentioned, those who were 'sky clad,' that is, the naked ascetics who didn't cling to anything, or had no possessions, were also called arahant, as were - especially by people with little or no education - those who carried on strange and incomprehensible forms of practice. This word's been in use since ancient times, since before the Buddha, and just means one who practises and achieves the ultimate success. Hence the meaning of 'arahant' should be limited to that. As for Buddhists they don't take externals into consideration, it's about whether the defilements, the asava, the samyojana, have been put an end to so that there's no further attachment to 'me' and 'mine' in any way whatsoever, that, say they, constitutes the arahant.

Concerning the word ‘arahant’ there’s some confusion and some misunderstanding in what’s been said and written about this word over the years amongst people generally. Properly speaking it should be a rule that the word ‘arahang’ or ‘arahant’ refers to a person who actually is an arahant, as mentioned. The word ‘arahat’ actually means the state of being arahant, and is the designation used to describe attainment of the final level of the eightfold path, that which makes a person into an arahant, so that it doesn’t refer to the person but to what makes a person an arahant. There’s some misuse of words here: taking the word ‘arahat’ to be a person, for instance, causes confusion and misunderstanding. The word ‘arahant’ is used to describe both the Buddha and his disciples if both are arahant, so that in order to differentiate between them the word ‘sammāsambuddho’ is added to the mix, and the master, or teacher, then becomes ‘arahang-sammāsambuddho.’ As for the disciple if they be arahant too the Pali word ‘kinasavo’ is used, then we have ‘arahang-kinasavo,’ meaning one whose ‘inflows,’ whose ‘asava’ are extinct. In truth, as regards the one who quenches dukkha and the one who quenches the defilements, it’s the particular qualities of each that constitute any difference between them, as with the arahang-sammāsambuddha, which means the arahant who is self-awakened, who is the master, the teacher, and is the source of the doctrine being taught. As regards the arahang-kinasavo, it implies a disciple who is also arahant. But that there are different groups with particular qualities within this particular grouping, as when there’s been, for instance, just the ending of the kilesa, one will then be called ‘sukkhavipassaka,’ a ‘bare insight worker,’ while if one is the actual destroyer of the kilesa through some special qualities, like expertise in the fields of knowledge and teaching, in the use of language, or even being one who displays super-normal abilities, then one will be called ‘patisambhidapatta,’ ‘one who has attained the four analytical insights,’ or ‘chalabhinna,’ ‘one who has the sixfold super-knowledge.’ But all of that isn’t important when it comes to being arahant, the important bit is in the quenching of the kilesa, and in the quenching of dukkha.

There’s still something more we should know, that is, that there’s a Buddhist saying to the effect that one who puts an end to the kilesa is arahant but can be known by various other names too, like ‘bhikkhu,’ ‘samana,’ ‘thera,’ ‘Brahmin,’ for instance. This rather implies that a monk in the ordinary sense who isn’t yet arahant isn’t yet a monk in the true, Dhammic sense either, and is a monk only because he keeps the discipline, it’s once he’s become arahant that he can truly be called a monk. The samana is the same: in the traditional understanding just ordaining means that one is a samana, however, it’s only once one has put an end to the kilesa that one becomes a samana in the true, full sense. As for the Thera, well, according to the monastic discipline if one is a monk for more than ten rains one is called Thera, but according to the Dhamma one needs to be arahant before one can really be a Thera. All these designations, monk, samana, Thera, imply firmness, stability of mind, but it’s easy to see that if the kilesa are still around one won’t be mentally stable, and will still be affected by the multiplicity of sense objects, at least experiencing some level of interest in and thus being agitated by the things that impact the senses, as happens when the samyojana of uddhacca is still operating. The saying that once one is arahant one can also be called Brahmin comes from another discipline, because the word

‘Brahmin’ is ancient in origin and denotes, according to other scriptures, someone who’s put an end to evil, who has moved away from sin. The Buddha didn’t accept that kind of purging or ending of evil as being absolute but declared it’s ultimate destruction to reside in the abandonment of the kilesa, and decreed that one who’d put an end to the defilements was truly Brahmin. Hence the student should take care when hearing the word ‘Brahmin,’ and should consider what sort of Brahmin is meant, because in the Brahman religion there are those who hold that one is Brahmin by birth, for instance, which means that those people, even though they be laypeople, householders, are nevertheless Brahmin by that definition. On a more elevated note it’s decreed that one who completes their studies of the Buddhist scriptures, who fulfils the various duties connected with the texts, is called Brahmin. However, in Buddhism it’s held that the arahant alone is a Brahmin, and it isn’t accepted that the anagami or the sakatikama, for instance, are entitled to that designation. Hence, take it that the word ‘Brahmin’ here means one who has destroyed the kilesa and is purified from all forms of evil-doing, in accord with the original meaning of the word. All of these examples have been presented to point out the more or less broad meaning of the word ‘arahant’ and to provide the way to an easier and more true understanding.

Now, in a similar vein, instead of using the word ‘arahant,’ their qualities, or attributes, can be used to describe them. There many such examples: ‘one who lives the holy life,’ for instance, or ‘one who’s crossed over the flood,’ then ‘one who has gone farthest,’ or ‘one who has gone ashore,’ and ‘one who can sit down,’ then ‘one who doesn’t sail on the ocean of birth and death,’ and ‘one who has no attachments,’ ‘one who has put down the burden,’ etc. etc. If one can grasp the meaning of these sayings they’ll arrive at a better understanding of what constitutes an arahant. The phrase ‘those who can sit down’ means that those who aren’t arahant have the defilements coming to disturb them all the time so can’t be still, even when asleep they can’t be called ‘one who can sit down’ as it applies to an arahant. Because they have the kilesa pulling them around they’re not able to rest, to sit down, even when they sleep or are being still, or doing anything, their minds won’t ‘sit down,’ won’t rest. The arahant is ‘one who’s stopped,’ which refers to the Angulimala affair. Or is ‘one who is unruffled,’ that is, is fearless, because the kilesa which are the cause of foolish fear no longer exist for them. Sometimes the arahant is described as ‘one who isn’t startled,’ or as ‘one who is unfazed,’ ‘one who doesn’t flee,’ and there are others which are more elevated, like ‘one who isn’t anxious,’ ‘one who doesn’t yearn,’ ‘one who doesn’t entertain expectations,’ which mean that the arahant hasn’t even a mote of dukkha remaining, however indirectly. If one observes carefully one will see that all of the foregoing, and some sayings which we haven’t quoted, all point in the same direction, to ‘one who’s quenched ‘me’ and ‘mine,’” or, in the Pali language: ‘one who’s escaped from all the forms of attachment,’ or is ‘one who doesn’t cling.’

The more one considers the clearer it becomes that the nature of an aharant is all about the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ Briefly: the feelings of ‘me’ or ‘mine’ are quenched completely, everything is quenched until there arises a new meaning, that of ‘emptiness,’ that is, there’s isn’t

anything of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ left, not a smidgin, because the kilesa which caused that clinging is completely gone, there’s nothing remaining that could give rise to it anymore. This is the emptiness of nibbana, it’s the ending of dukkha, it’s the emptiness which doesn’t have a trace of ‘me’ or of ‘mine.’

In conclusion, the worldly person has the feeling of being ‘me’ on more occasions than can be estimated and in different forms, some good, some bad, depending on circumstances. The sotapana begins the process of abandoning ‘me’ in the form of moha, the sakitakami takes it further, the anakami abandons ‘me’ in the forms of the kilesa raga and dosa, while the arahant quenches ‘me’ in the form of whatever remains of the kilesa of moha, and the complete quenching of ‘me’ is attained. There isn’t anything else.

28 – Sunnata is the site of dukkha’s quenching.

Today, we’ll look, for the last time, at the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ as it relates to sunnata. As mentioned the abandonment of avijja, ignorance, brings the knowledge that there isn’t anything that is a ‘self,’ there are just natural things, be they physical, mental, or a combination of the two. When this is seen clearly enough the various things that were clung to as ‘me,’ or as ‘mine’ aren’t clung to anymore even though the eye still sees forms, or the ear hears sounds, or the nose smells, etc. This is the quenching of that clinging to ‘me’ and ‘mine’ which arose from tanha, from craving for the objects of the senses. When ‘me’ and ‘mine’ doesn’t arise there’s the freedom from clinging called, in Buddhism, ‘sunnata,’ which, however, might have the same name but not the same meaning as the sunnata of other systems. Freedom from the clinging to ‘me’ and to ‘mine’ is the freedom of nibbana in its utmost form because it involves the complete quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ Nibbana means remainderless quenching, the remainderless quenching of the kilesa which are the cause of dukkha, as well as the remainderless quenching of that dukkha which is the fruit of the kilesa, which kilesa, during the course of these lectures, we’ve combined into the single phrase: ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ Hence, we should once again sum this up, briefly, by saying that the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ represents freedom in accord with the meaning of nibbana. What remains to be pointed out is how this highest of voidnesses can be of general use, can become a universal principle in the world.

It should be recognized that, if the quenching of ‘me’ can be accommodated by the noble truths, it would fit nicely with the third truth, that of dukkhanirodha, the remainderless quenching of dukkha. That remainderless quenching of dukkha is something everybody should want, hence, when sunnata is the same as the remainderless quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ then sunnata should be something everybody should want too. However, there’s a problem, in that people generally don’t understand sunnata, or they understand it wrongly, so that there can arise some negativity, or even fear, towards this principle, even though one might be a Buddhist, even a monk, which would imply a high rank in the religion. Hence we ought to consider just what, precisely, sunnata is in such a way so that it will interest people generally.

People generally, hearing things like ‘being free from ‘self,’ or ‘attaining liberation from the ‘self,’ feel that they’re going to end up somewhere without anything that they can depend on, or can hold onto, and forever too. This happens because they understand that there’s a ‘somewhere’ which is without anything at all except the ‘me,’ which will still exist in some sort of form. They can’t discover the understanding that the ‘self’ is empty, is void, as is everything else. This means that one who hasn’t attained the void doesn’t understand the void either, but, in dependence on the way one feels there’s speculation, and one comes to an understanding. If one attains to the true void in the way mentioned then there’s clear-seeing and the ‘me’ becomes empty, or void, as does the ‘mine.’ As mentioned, ahankara (me) quenches with mamangkara (mine,) or, mamangkara quenches along with ahankara. When the thing clung to as ‘me’ or ‘mine’ becomes void so does everything else, then everything being void what can fall into what? Hence sunnata isn’t scary as in the understanding of those still soaked in ignorance and clinging, but is an experience minus foolish fear, or anything else of that sort, like love, anger, hatred, and so on. That’s the point: those who’ve come to know emptiness, to know the void aren’t disturbed by foolish fear, love, anger, hate, anxiety, or any of that, which can be summed up as not being disturbed by anything at any time.

The absence of disturbance is the cessation of dukkha, which, in the texts, is called the supreme happiness, as it’s said: ‘nibbanam paramam sukham,’ meaning that nibbana is the supreme happiness. Hence, when nibbana is the same as sunnata then sunnata must represent the supreme happiness too. Therefore, one who professes love for nibbana while being afraid of emptiness is a-doze and a-dream as far as the nature of nibbana and sunnata is concerned, and doesn’t understand those concepts in any way. Some of the discoursing on these subjects is mere custom, the tradition of people talking in temples to display their knowledge of the higher Buddhist principles to others, however, when the talk concerns the void, emptiness, it always causes trepidation, because, in truth, one’s mind doesn’t want to be without those things it dotes on. This is that emptiness which has been so profoundly misunderstood that nobody much gets any benefit from it. Nevertheless it’s the highest thing in Buddhism, on a par with nibbana, the supreme dhamma.

Briefly: That called ‘emptiness,’ or ‘voidness,’ means the mind without any feeling of clinging to anything as being ‘me’ or as being ‘mine.’ Freedom from ‘me’ and ‘mine’ is complete so that if anything should arise it won’t be ‘me’ or ‘mine,’ there won’t be anything affecting the mind in that way. This is emptiness. The mind will just be a natural mind, as it should be, will be void because nothing will bother it, nothing will touch it, it now understanding everything as void, as empty. Because the mind has put an end to avijja, to ignorance, it won’t cling to anything as ‘me’ or ‘mine’ ever again, it thus doesn’t affect anything, and nothing affects it, mind is fully freed from ahankara and mamangkara. Looked at in another way, mind is quenched without any ‘fuel’ remaining, which is the ultimate and true voidness.

The quenching which doesn’t involve that nibbana element is quenching with some ‘fuel’ remaining, hence there’s another birth, another sprouting, as it were, and another death, then

another birth, etc. because that's the ordinary sankhara cycle of arising and quenching, and not a quenching into the full nibbana element, which would result in 'vi-sankhara,' in the quenching, the ending of any more sankhara, of any more concocting. In this psychological sense the essence is in the quenching or the non-quenching of clinging, or upadana. 'Death,' or the quenching of the sankhara in the physical sense, doesn't concern the quenching of upadana, of clinging, so that the 'self' will continue to exist as long as the thought of it remains, and even though one may think that the body dies, or quenches, it won't be allowed that the 'self' does. When the feeling of 'self' isn't fully quenched it can then arise anew, be 'born' again, as it were, giving rise to the vattasamsara, to an endless flow of birth and death, of arising and quenching of the feeling of being 'me.' That isn't anything to do with the nibbanadhatu, the nibbana element in the full sense. If the nibbanadhatu is involved there can be quenching of the feeling of 'me' complete while the body still has life, or is dead, either way.

In truth, although there's still life once any clinging to 'self' is ended, the body, or whatever is remaining, becomes problem-free because it becomes meaningless, insignificant, life having lost the meaning of being 'self.' Thus it's considered to be the attainment of that nibbana which, the defilements having been put an end to so that there's no remaining 'fuel,' is called 'anupadisesanibbana,' the 'remainderless quenching,' and, when, later on, life comes to an end, breaks up physically, we call that body and mind combination the pure aggregates, that is, the five aggregates minus any defilement which will quench away once more into the already attained anupadisesanibbana. Hence it's a truly final quenching with no more fuel left to spark a new growth, or a new birth, so it's not the same as the death of an ordinary person who dies in accord with their fate, or in accord with the causes and conditions guiding a particular group of sankharas at the time, which isn't concerned with the nibbana element at all, that we call 'death' in the ordinary sense, not a quenching into nibbana as with the arahant.

All of this is intended to point out that if one attains emptiness, or the void, it implies the attainment of nibbana while one is still alive. Even until death when the body breaks up it will be nibbana, that is, the same emptiness, the same voidness, without any fluctuation or difference occurring. Emptiness of this sort is the true meaning of nibbana so isn't scary at all. The more one has proper understanding the more clearly one sees nibbana. The more one sees clearly into nibbana the more satisfaction there is and the more willingly one inclines towards it, and, instead of fear, one finds the courage to strive and attain to the best of one's abilities. In truth sunnata isn't anything to be afraid of, rather it's something which should arouse interest.

As regards nibbana, we should know that there are two kinds, that which has fuel remaining, and that which doesn't. The nibbana which is fuel-free is that in which 'me' and 'mine' are completely quenched, as already explained, the nibbana which has fuel remaining is that in which 'me' and 'mine' are not fully quenched, but have begun to be taken out, which means that those on the earlier levels of nobility aren't yet arahant. Hence we might consider that the sotapana, the sakitakama, and the anakami all attain to nibbana but it's nibbana which still has the appropriate 'fuel' remaining, hence there's 're-birth,' that is, the arising of the feelings of

‘me’ and ‘mine’ anew, depending on the remaining fuel, but it will be a diluted form of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ that arises. This nibbana of the lower level nobles is called ‘sa-upadisesanibbana,’ that nibbana which isn’t yet the ultimate emptiness still not being a complete quenching. Even so it’s still much better than no quenching at all. This is emptiness on a lower level.

The student should observe and consider for themselves the quenching of ‘me’ without any remainder which is emptiness complete, and that quenching of ‘me’ which still has some fuel remaining, which is incomplete. Whether something is seen as frightening or not will depend solely on how it’s being understood. And one should recognize that this emptiness can be ambiguous in meaning, can have several meanings. The Pali word ‘sunna’ is translated as ‘empty,’ or ‘void,’ but is more usually wrongly translated as ‘in vain,’ ‘wasted,’ or ‘useless,’ so that it has no use at all, and is a meaning which is far from accurate, in fact quite the opposite of what it should be.

Sunna, void, or empty, doesn’t mean empty in the sense of being vacant, or of being nothing at all, rather it just means that everything that exists should exist, and can be of benefit, but is also void, or empty of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ Hence to translate this word as meaning nothing, or vacant, is to misrepresent Buddhism, or, through the handiwork of those who claim to be Buddhist, even destroy the religion. It’s this kind of thing that’s scary, not emptiness. Some people focusing only on the material aspect postulate that, ordinarily, there must be emptiness, that is, there isn’t any ‘thing,’ there’s no ‘matter’ of any kind, which they take to be the emptiness, or voidness of nibbana. This understanding is wrong, contradictory, isn’t Buddhist, and needs to be seen as a form of micchaditthi, of wrong understanding, so don’t get involved with that.

Concerning this matter, because we don’t recognize a doer or a done, don’t worry about whether there’s something called matter or not, but go beyond that and recognize that the actor as well as that acted upon must be empty, be void, that is, they shouldn’t be clung to as ‘me’ or ‘mine.’ Hence, the world, or the various objects in the world represent the passive side of experience, while the mind which knows or meets with them is the active side, one must look on those two as essentially the same, in that both sides of the equation are void, or empty of ‘self,’ or of any meaning which might cause them to be clung to as ‘self.’ This has nothing to do with the existence, or not, of matter.

29 – The world will be fine once ‘me’ and ‘mine’ have been put an end to.

Today, we’ll, continuing on from the previous occasion, talk about sunnata again, about that knowledge of sunnata that should be applied in every event, in the lives of people generally.

It’s been pointed out that sunnata has the same meaning as nibbana, that is, the quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ so freedom from dukkha and it’s cause. Any quenching in this instance isn’t about the quenching of material things, or ‘matter,’ of any sort, because matter doesn’t quench, there’s only a constant transformation from one form of matter to another. Equating the changing of one form into another with quenching isn’t quite what’s meant here, quenching here

implies the quenching of those many and various instances of clinging to matter in its ever-changing form.

Human beings can't escape from, can't avoid being concerned with matter, because the human body is material, is matter, hence concepts like sunnata, nibbana, or the quenching of 'me,' and so on, aren't concerned with matter, or with the material directly, only with the quenching of any clinging to those things. However, there's a Dhamma saying to the effect that '(one) can quench material forms,' which can just mean that if we quench clinging to those forms, to those rupadhammas, they'll lose their meaning, and it will be as if they didn't manifest any meaning at all, because in Dhamma language it's said that only when anything arises into the mind as a combination of thought and feeling is it deemed to have actually happened, to have actually arisen. Hence we have the ability to cause things to arise, even a whole world, or we can make them quench away, as it were, make it so that they exist but without possessing any of those meanings which might make them bases for clinging, so causing matters various to arise which will be dukkha.

It's said that one quenches into coolness, into nibbana while in this world, which represents the highest ideal of Buddhism. Such a quenching doesn't involve death, neither is it concerned with what might happen after death, it doesn't mean that the world perishes, rather it means that everything continues to exist but has been 'cooled down' through non-clinging, which hereinafter we can say is dwelling quenched into coolness, or dwelling in the void, or dwelling in the remainderless quenching, because all those have the same essential meaning, although one which is hard to grasp, difficult to understand. The Buddha said, concerning sunnata, that it was profound, had a profound meaning, was thus hard to thoroughly penetrate into, was difficult to completely understand, yet also said that it was useful for laypeople, for people living in the world. This he said because he wanted everybody to have the opportunity of living quenched into coolness, of dwelling in the void, in the remainderless quenching. If people won't put their faith in this sunnata principle, won't rely on this truth, there won't be anyone able to avoid the constant dukkha of this world, because there really isn't any way to do that other than this.

To easily understand this matter we should consider another, particular, problem, that is, if we can live understanding the variety of sense objects as being not worth clinging to as 'me' or as 'mine,' then we can, perhaps, figure out why we were born into this world. We use the words 'figure out' because we, at this time, have yet to completely abandon 'me' and 'mine,' hence we need to figure out how we're going to feel if we can get rid of those problems? And then it wouldn't be difficult to work out just why we were born? Or, more properly: what nature produced us for? When we try to comprehend how it would feel to be without any clinging to 'me' and to 'mine' we might also recognize the idea that we were born to please ourselves is laughable. And if we think that we were born to be besotted with the variety of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind things populating this world then we would surely have to be crazy, or something like that, because that would be contrary to nature, would make life into a constant battle, into a fight with nature we could never win. Hence, to conclude: we weren't

born to please ourselves, or to become intoxicated with the multiplicity of sense objects in this world, which then just serve to fill the world up with dukkha, with sorrow.

Now, let's take another look: Why were we born? We were born to rid the world of dukkha, of misery! If everyone can help everyone else to prevent the arising of dukkha then the world will be without that problem. Hence, everyone in the world, no matter who, should know how to prevent its arising - so, act in accord with the Dhamma, as nature determines, or, in other words, act in accord with that absolute truth nobody can contradict. When anyone resists, or doesn't do that there's immediate dukkha, which, it can be said, must be severe.

This is an important point that needs to be clearly understood and taken as the basis for all our thinking, our beliefs, and our activities in this world. Hence for a person to live peacefully in this world in accord with the meaning of the word 'human' they need to study this, understand it, and put it into practise. There's no need to be bothered with anything else, this in itself will be enough, that is, to be one who doesn't misunderstand, doesn't have wrong thoughts, doesn't do wrong in any way. A society made up of such people would experience only peace and tranquility, and, unlike today, wouldn't have a multitude of outstanding problems and difficulties needing attention. This would be a benefit of understanding that we weren't born to just please ourselves. Once that's acknowledged people then start to live for the good of the world generally, hence it turns out that we were born to make the human world a beautiful place, make it a world populated by people without the 'me' and 'mine' problem.

Looking first at the broader picture one sees that the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' called sunnata, or nibbana, is in itself what makes this world into a beautiful place. And it must be so, there is no other way. Ultimately, through us figuring it out for ourselves, and because it's an immutable law of nature, beings aren't born to become 'me' and 'mine,' but to make the world beautiful, that is, remove the stench of 'me' and 'mine' from it. Nobody in this world should take any part in the world's destruction.

Now, we arrive at an important problem, one which arises because of the fact that the mass of the population don't accept this kind of thinking, so what should we, who have to live in this world with them, what should we do? The principle is the same, in that we should try to quench 'me' and 'mine,' not immediately in the world at large, but in ourselves first of all. In such a case the 'world' then refers to one's own 'world,' that is, to the combined body, speech, and mind of the individual. Such an explanation of 'world' is found in the Buddhist scriptures.

Now, if one believes that one has been born to make one's self, one's own small world into a thing of beauty, one will need to understand the word 'beauty' properly: Keep it free from the stench of 'me' and 'mine' and it will be a truly beautiful 'world.' Beauty in the material sense is popularly associated with physical adornment, with decoration, which differs from the desired definition of beauty here, in fact it's opposite in meaning, that form of beauty being usually associated with 'me' and 'mine' and not with their quenching. It's that form of the beautiful that

makes people slaves of the material, of the degrading, how could that ever be beautiful? Genuine lay followers, who've advanced in accord with Buddhist principles, even though they be lay followers, still need to connect with sunnata, with nibbana, or with the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' since their minds are elevated enough to see that they weren't born to please themselves, but to make this world beautiful, that is to say, they weren't born for the sake of the defilements, but for the development of thriving satipanna.

On the other hand it should be understood that sunnata is what will make the world beautiful, it being capable of completely cleansing the world of its impurities. When the world is soiled, impure, one has to cleanse it with the knowledge of sunnata, just as we need to use clean water to wash the dust of our feet. Being 'worldly' means that a person is still full of 'me' and 'mine,' which is what ensures that they stay worldly. If and when they chance to put an end to 'me' and 'mine' that worldly person will disappear, even though they may still live in a house along with their family. That would be the most noble of attainments, much more so than the level of well-being the worldly dream of in this day and age, that cannot even compare. The worldly, because they've fallen completely under the power of 'me' and 'mine,' naturally proceed in the opposite direction, that is, they fall into hell, into that true form of hell which lurks in the deepest level of the worldly mind and makes life into a gloomy, an ugly experience.

Concerning practising for the attainment of the path and its fruit, we have the ten samyojana to measure our progress against, while, as regards wiping away the dukkha of laypeople we can gauge our progress against various forms of defilement, like the sixteen 'upakilesa' we'll be looking at next.

30 – Quenching 'me and 'mine' by way of the 16 upakilesa.

One group of defilement which ought to be looked at that of the 16 upakilesa. These defilements are called upakilesa because they're like symptoms of the major forms of defilement and manifest most commonly and frequently amongst those people occupying the sensual realms, causing dukkha, gloom and depression. The word 'upa,' here, has the meaning of being inferior, or subordinate to, so these aren't kilesa in the full sense but originate from and have their basis in the kilesa, the three root defilements of lobha, dosa, and moha. Abandoning these upakilesa will then, in essence, mean abandoning lobha, dosa, and moha. We can sort these upakilesa according to their peculiar and repeatedly manifesting characteristics, which will be much the same as pointing out how many different rôles the three root defilements regularly play. Further, if we look carefully we'll also recognize that these upakilesa are indications of the existence of 'me' and 'mine,' so if one can be free of them to some extent one can just live reasonably normally. The sixteen upakilesa are as follows:

1 – 'Abhijjanavisamalobha,' is a defilement of the lobha sort which arises when the mind meets with an aramana, an object, capable of making it function abnormally, because then there's a feeling of desire to get, hence there's watching, a 'keeping an eye out' for anything beneficial,

for the opportunity of acquiring something nice, until the desire to get it arises. So it's the defilement involved in the desire to get and to accumulate, whether out of necessity, or for sensual stimulation, or even for self-aggrandisement. 'Abhijana,' means to focus, although here it implies the desire which motivates focusing. 'Visama' means abnormal, not normal. 'Lobha' means greed, the intent to acquire. Put together the three come out as 'abhijanavisamalobha,' that greedy desire to acquire which destabilizes the mind and its satisampajanna. That's the essential point: That it's greed without satisampajanna, without mindfulness and clear comprehension. If it's just straight desire, that is, desire coupled with satisampajanna, so under the umbrella of reason, this upakilesa won't be present. It's clear to see that this upakilesa derives directly from 'me' and 'mine,' and which, when not intercepted will flare up uncontrollably becoming more and more greedy every time it does flare up, or, to put that another way, it forms the subconscious trait which is the root defilement of lobha, of greed itself. The practitioner here, even a lay-follower, follows the same criterion as the ordained, in that they maintain that advanced guard of satisampajanna, the knowledge that nothing whatsoever should be clung to as 'me' or as 'mine' at the particular moment that an object impacts, and which is also subsequently and continuously maintained, so that should there be a mistake it won't be allowed to recur. Hence, no matter how many events arise one will be error-free. In truth, if sampajanna is present it will stop abhijanavisamalobha before it can fully arise. It's generally recognized that prevention is better than fixing something once it's gone wrong, which also happens to be one of the most important Buddhist principles. Hence the sati which arises from sunnata is watching over the mind and keeping it free from 'me' and 'mine,' which otherwise wouldn't happen because uncontrolled desire for the various sense objects would negate it. An animal gets caught because it tends to see the bait rather than the hook, which is just the sort of mistake which negates satisampajanna and forms the essence of this particular upakilesa.

2 – 'dosa,' 3 – 'koda,' and, 4 'upanaha,' all three of these upakilesa are the defilement of dosa. That called 'dosa' breeds the intention to harm others. That called 'koda' is the intention to harm oneself. That called 'upanaha' is intentional and unending vengefulness, vindictiveness, aimed at hurting others but necessarily oneself too. As mentioned, the defilement of dosa tends to negate, repel, desires to destroy, and is the opposite of lobha which tends to the positive, in that it pulls in, it encourages, hence the conduct involved will differ and will be a means of fixing clearly the kind of defilement involved. However, even though they be opposites they're still kilesa and are still the cause of dukkha. The defilement of raga, or lobha displays deep, impassioned characteristics which aren't the same as dosa, which tends to be a more harsh, more bitter experience. The greed based kind of defilement can be compared to the danger connected with water, the dosa based to danger connected with fire, but it needs to be stressed that both are dangerous. Generally, at least at first, people are taught to practise metta and karuna, kindness and compassion, but in truth, practising in that way isn't really enough and might not be helpful. At best that's just a preventative act, the real practice lies in practising with satisampajanna, mindfulness and clear comprehension. The reason that these kilesa flare up is because satisampajanna is absent, as was the case with abhijanavisamalobha. Hence, maintain

satisampajanna when receiving sense objects, or when involved with an object, or even when reminiscing about someone or something from the past, be always aware, don't let 'me' and 'mine' flare up from desire then we can prevent the upakilesa of dosa from arising. If there is anger, putting that right through practicing metta is somewhat comedic, the way we should act is to bring back satisampajanna through feeling shame: feeling shame because we're a practising Buddhist, or a decent person who still struggles with these problems, or, we could consider the various kinds of damage done by dosa, both on the obvious and less obvious levels, in that one loses contact with the Dhamma, with ethics, morality, truth, and any mental peace and tranquility that's been gained, and, perhaps, shortens one's life too. Satisampajanna can cause enough shame to arise to enable one to put an end to this sort of kilesa providing there's regular and proper practice. As for advancing mettakaruna, that can be practised as a good, basic fix. It's when these two techniques are brought together that they become a complete method for cleaning out these upakilesa.

The majority of the remaining upakilesa, from 5 to 16, are moha-based, or display various moha traits: 5 – 'makkha,' the feeling that makes one overlook the fact that beings in this world are essentially social creatures, with a willingness to help each other, to be mutually beneficial. Makkha, however, makes one feel that they don't need anyone else, or that they're not indebted to other people, so that they don't know how to love, or express gratitude, even towards their parents, teachers, and so on. This mind can be coarse, rough, harsh and rigid in a way which is dangerous and not at all desirable. However, if we can just come to feel that other people, or other beings are an asset, both to us and to each other, then one's mind can become human in the true sense. However, the moha form of 'me' and 'mine' is overly proud, too full of itself, so doesn't see this even when it's obvious. We can reduce this problem by using satisampajanna and acquiring the wisdom which recognizes the indebtedness of human beings even to small creatures like birds, insects, etc. and respect their value, their worth. This is a device for gradually dealing with this upakilesa.

6 – 'Palasa' is the kilesa which causes one to be constantly appraising oneself with regard to those more elevated than us, of forever raising oneself to a higher status than is really the case. Palasa operating in tandem with makkha tends to make one domineering, so that one oppresses others, which is an obvious indicator that the 'me' is dominant. This leads to one not listening to other people, not respecting the opinions of others, which is common amongst those with insufficient education. No matter how foolish a person may be they will act in such a way that other people will think them clever, and they won't be able accept any sort of admonition because won't deem anyone elevated enough to teach them anything. Many bad things happen to young people because of this upakilesa. This defilement is difficult for ordinary people to understand, while abandoning it requires that profound satisampajanna which can only come from a sufficient stock of real knowledge, hence we might say here that the system of teaching designed to destroy both ahankara and mamankara has no rival in this respect. It should be recognized that this sort of defilement, which has many names, can only be absolutely defeated

by the power of the arahant path – as for ordinary, everyday people? We can only hope to apply some control.

7 – ‘Issa,’ jealousy, envy, is one of the most well-known defilements, one which arises easily, happens to everyone, and is one of the most frequent. This comes from the ‘me’ that doesn’t want anyone be as good as, or better than ‘me,’ so thinks about undermining, or destroying any competition, and although one feels that there’ll be a bad result for oneself more than anything else yet one can’t let it go. Hence one mightn’t abandon this through the development of metta, karuna, and mudita. To be correct any abandonment must arise from that satisampajanna which prompts us to recall that all beings are subject to kamma and that when we have evil intentions towards someone or other it always affects us first, we must feel terrible before they do, and, further, reminds us that we should take care of our own business and not get involved in the affairs of others. If we do get involved in someone else’s affairs, especially because of jealousy, we won’t be able to do our own duties, which would be shameful. The belief in kamma ought to be recognized as an important and fundamental Buddhist principle in the overcoming of jealousy. Then there’s wisdom, or the power of reason, and there’s the shame one should feel for having acted ignorantly and destroyed one’s own accumulated good, and for having lost contact with Buddhism. These are important, major elements in the ejection of this upakilesa. As for metta, karuna, in general, and that mudita, which is finding pleasure in the successes of others, that’s like the peak, summit, or crown, which will ornament, give a beauty to the mind, and which will only increase until, once complete, this upakilesa will have been abandoned.

8 – ‘Macchariya,’ stinginess, or meanness: this one comes from an excess of selfishness in the form of ‘mine,’ but also in the ‘me’ form, because the desire to have more and better than somebody else is present. Stinginess is mainly about the acquisition and accumulation of things appropriate to one’s desires, while, at the same time, preventing others from acquiring as much as, or more than ‘me.’ This is really just an ordinary effect of ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ in that one is selfish to the extent, for instance, of, even though there is more than enough of something one looks on it all as ‘mine,’ hence there’s a refusal to give anything away for the benefit of others, which, however, isn’t fuelled by lobha, greed, but by ignorance, by people not knowing that giving is the better way to go. On realizing that giving is better one will immediately switch to doing that, hence the removal of stinginess is dependent on satipanna once more.

9 – ‘Maya,’ meaning ‘deceit,’ refers to a condition in which, when this defilement is active, bodily and verbal actions are inconsistent with mental feelings. Once the feeling of ‘me’ has disappeared and when dwelling normally under the power of reason, of cause and effect, one won’t have enough power to remain firmly in that truth, or, even to control oneself and stay on the right track, as it were, and the condition of being devious then reveals itself to other people through various physical and verbal actions. Internally there may be self-deceptive thoughts, as when one makes excuses for one’s deficiencies and unreliability, but it’s mostly when aimed at other people that maya becomes full-on. Hence, internally, within the mind of an individual, maya must be based on the assumption that there are two sides to the mind, one constantly

deceiving the other. Maya might be based in lobha or in dosa, but not to the same extent as it will be based in moha, delusion: There's maya, deceit, because there's moha, delusion. Although these manifestations of maya imply some ingenuity, intelligence, yet it's ingenuity born of wrong understanding which has been absorbed by an individual, that's why it's held that maya is mainly rooted in moha. Socially, maya manifests as the various tricks and tactics we might use to take from others for our own benefit, while those tricks which smack of the miraculous are also maya because they're the ultimate expression of this upakilesa lurking in the depths of one's mind. Hence, in solving the maya problem we don't focus particularly on satisampajanna but mostly on wisdom, panna, and sacca, truth, it being thus necessary that there first be an accurate judgement of what is true and right to act as a basis. As for satisampajanna, it will, in the beginning, just do the timely duty of helping to recall what should be done at any given time. The practice of 'being established in the truth' which involves consistently doing right on a daily basis, will, if one can make it habitual, help keep wisdom on track, will change one's habits, mend this particular defilement, and maintain the strength of one's satisampajanna too. A thing that should be noticed is that 'me' and 'mine' is weird to the extent that it can deceive itself, because it can take the deception to be 'fun,' so isn't related to lobha, greed, at all. Because this is a mental disease peculiar to 'me' it has to be treated with special medicine and in a particular way, which is most difficult to do. It also looks as if the instincts are helping to promote these symptoms, as with children, who, not knowing right from wrong in this case, then if they cry a lot and that makes them feel better, it helping to relieve any mental tension, then they'll burst into tears for no more reason than that. Hence we mustn't make light of a complex defilement like this, which in truth is 'me' and 'mine' playing complicated tricks.

31 – Quenching 'me' and 'mine' in the form of the 16 upakilesa. (contd.)

10 – 'Satheyya,' this means boastfulness, that is, the desire to boast of whatever one thinks will make one seem better than, or will gain advantage over someone else, to have them allow that, accept defeat in that way, is another, obvious, manifestation of 'me' and 'mine.' Normally this upakilesa comes directly from moha, if, however, it's based in raga, as when sexual feelings are involved, the effects will multiply. The word 'boast' here doesn't mean showing off about something worthy, something that should be displayed, rather it indicates the kind of boasting which is a deceit, that is, it's not anything that should be bragged about, but there's the desire to show off because this upakilesa happens to be present. Boastfulness is very likely instinctually-based, because even animals display something similar, in that they show off out of fear of any opposition, or out of a desire to mate with the opposite sex, hence it's something difficult to give up, at least before the attainment of the arahant path, at which time it will be completely dismissed. Generally speaking, if there is something truly good, truly worthy, truly beneficial it's appropriate to reveal it, and that form of 'boasting' will then be a simple revelation, not a brag, so won't involve this upakilesa at all. Ordinees in the Buddhist sangha have a regulatory code which forbids all bragging, no matter what kind it is, that being part of the discipline which aims to render monastics blameless so able to pursue the Dhamma freely. Therefore, this

upakilesa should be completely overcome. According to the ancients it's better to reveal one's worth to others without resorting to boastfulness, because the more one is boastful, the more one loses one's grace and becomes ugly, unseemly. Hence, safely promulgating true goodness is the ultimate art form, and must mean that the feelings 'me' and 'mine' and their associated ugliness don't dominate.

11 – 'Thambha,' which means stubbornness, obstinacy, contrariness. Ordinarily this word is translated to mean 'pole' or better, 'stake,' as in something one sticks into the ground and attaches things to. If one knows something about stakes and their use one will grasp the meaning of this upakilesa quite easily, because it represents the qualities of obstinacy, pig-headedness, stubbornness, so that it's difficult to move anyone afflicted by it. To say that one can't be easily moved doesn't imply anything good here because it's not that unshakeable goodness or firmness combined with the rightness of Dhamma, rather it's combined with ignorance, deception, with moha, delusion. It can lead to death because, certainly, in some situations there wouldn't be any surrendering, any bending of the knee. This defilement has the same basis as maya but manifests in a different, a harder, way, maya being gentler in character. It is a product of 'me' and 'mine' which can be clearly seen, in that if there's clinging to 'me' and 'mine,' or 'me' and 'mine' has flared up to some extent, then there's going to be the appropriate manifestation of stubbornness too. The more moha, delusion, dominates, the less life is lived under the power of reason, and the less grace it exhibits.

12 – 'Sarambha' is to evade, to put off doing things, to dawdle, to find excuses for not accepting, or not agreeing with what should be accepted or agreed with, so it's something like tambha without displaying the same basic symptom, that is, there's no up-front stubbornness involved, so it's not being obstinate, rather it's trying to get out of doing what one should be doing but doesn't want to do. This sort of thing can concern other people, like one's mother and father, one's superiors etc. If we sum this up briefly then it's struggling to avoid something, to avoid a face to face battle. It's commonly and easily seen as avoiding responsibility, as when finding excuses for one's guilt, like a criminal would, for instance, so that even if one should kill somebody it will always be the fault of the one murdered. It's not lying for gain, but it does happen because there's clinging to 'me' and 'mine,' so because there's the desire to preserve one's dignity, and even if nothing tangible is gained from that there's still the kudos of being most skilful at avoiding things, so it's the kilesa of moha at work. Struggling to get the better of others in the sarambha way isn't fair and isn't acceptable although in some cases it may be necessary if one is to survive, which would be reasonable, but, nevertheless, things should be done fairly. Even outside of Buddhism in the world at large such activities are thought wrong, not gentlemanly, not playing the game, are generally looked down on, hence, in Buddhism, it's arranged amongst those most dislikeable of defilements.

13 – 'Mana,' and 14 – 'atimana' are similar in meaning and lineage. In the first instance 'mana' means conceit on the normal level, with the latter, 'atimana,' it's conceit which is excessive to the point of directly affecting others by, for instance, showing disdain, or contempt for them.

There are differences in meaning here: ‘mana’ means simple conceit, ‘atimana’ means conceit to the point of directly involving other people, then it’s arrogance, uncontrolled conceit. The word ‘mana’ means ‘to know,’ but here it means ‘to know’ wrongly, that is, to know under the power of defilement and not satipanna. Specifically it’s to perceive, or to feel oneself as ‘being’ in whatever way, like perceiving that one is a person and thus better than an animal, or that being a rich person’s child is better than being a poor person’s child, or that a well-formed person must be better, or luckier than one who is de-formed - or, to backtrack a little, to perceive that one is worse off than if one were a god, or that a poor person is worse than a rich one, or being ugly is worse than being pretty, and so on. Hence one feels that one is something particular and goes about making comparisons with others so that the feelings of being better than, worse than, or the same as, arise, then one might, in accord with any ongoing feelings or perceptions, see oneself in some particular way which may cause resentment or rejection, but as yet won’t pose a direct problem for other people. ‘Atimana’ does mean problems for others, as when one impinges or intrudes into the affairs of other people, as when one feels that one has something particular which justifies that, even feeling that one is a better, more elegant speaker than them, which isn’t good at all, being still based in the defilement which causes such things to happen. The feeling that makes one look down on others is likely to manifest for those whose education allows it the opportunity to do so, or which allows other forms of defilement to arise, as when competing, the inclination to destroy or insult others will then be easily conjured, even in the case where a truly higher party is concerned the feelings will still be inclined to the defiled so won’t be held to be feelings in the true sense. It’s desirable to recognize that all creatures go along according to their kamma, in accord with cause and supporting conditions, as indeed does education and any training, hence we shouldn’t denigrate each other, which only implies wrong understanding, we should be ashamed of doing such things, certainly we shouldn’t be proud of it.

15 – ‘Madha,’ which means that mental intoxication which is based in moha, in delusion, intoxication in the material sense, like when drinking some inebriating potion, plus the resulting drunkenness, isn’t taken in here (but will be included ere long.) Intoxication here implies infatuation in or with those things which are its basis, something which may be beyond the scope of ordinary people without any Dhamma study to help them. Namely madha indicates the fixation on things like luck, fortune, rank, appearance, like wealth, honour, distinction, etc. so that one tends to forget what normalcy feels like. Higher than those problems is intoxication with the world and its ways until one forgets about death, or there’s intoxication with fun and games until one loses touch with the fact that the days of one’s life are ticking away. Put in ordinary, everyday speech that could be called ‘madness,’ as when one is mad for the attractive, mad for riches, mad for honour and distinction, and so on and so forth. However that’s not the sort of madness that gets one certified and put into a mental institution, in fact it’s just the opposite for some folks, for those who like such things, because the fact that such things are born of defilement and thus harmful won’t interest those people, until, that is, things go too far and start to get ugly. As far as the Dhamma is concerned both sides of that equation are unacceptable, if there’s intoxication, even though it only concerns oneself and doesn’t take in

anyone else, it still counts as a loathsome defilement. This particular form of intoxication doesn't seem to be an effect of 'me' and 'mine' because it arises unawares - however, the truth is that it's very much an effect of 'me' and 'mine,' that is, it's the condition of being intoxicated with oneself, because what is intoxicated is 'me' and 'mine,' nothing more than that.

16 – 'Pamadha,' (pa = thoroughly + madha = intoxicated) means completely, thoroughly intoxicated. This is the case because there's been a complete absence of *satisampajanna*, of mindfulness and clear understanding, arising from some form of carelessness, heedlessness, unawareness, mindlessness, or whatever the case may be. Or there's a loss of *satisampajanna*, as when drinking some intoxicant and the nervous system being affected causes carelessness, which is intoxication on the *rupa*, the physical side of things, or it happens because of some contact with the external world. Another way which is mental, or internal, has its roots in *moha* but causes the arising of carelessness just the same, although on an incomparably deeper level. Hence the word 'careless' here doesn't just mean carelessness in the ordinary sense but that carelessness which is connected with *dukkha* and *sukha* on a profound and elevated level, for example: being ignorant, delusional, being unaware to the point that life becomes a barren affair and one doesn't get the benefit one should from being human, which we can understand here as a life lived carelessly throughout, from birth to death. The heedlessness which causes things to go slightly wrong doesn't indicate this defilement in the full sense. The defilement of *madha* is rooted in 'me' and 'mine,' as is *pamadha*, although to a greater extent, because it's a comprehensive or thorough intoxication.

Creatures in the sensual realm having to deal with these sixteen defilements day-in, day-out must lead gloomy lives, as is clear enough if we care to look. The quenching of 'me' and 'mine' in the form of these *upakilesa* might, therefore, be described as the layman's *sunnata*. Laypeople should try to quench them so that they can, on the appropriate level, be free of their influence and make life into a beautiful experience, and not just those who are Buddhists, but people generally. Here, because quenching these *upakilesa* won't cause any conflict and will sit comfortably with every religious system in the world be it big or small, old or new, then those in the sensual realm of existence have the opportunity to become truly beautiful people.

As for those in the *rupavacarabhumi* they, besides being beautified by the absence of these *upakilesa* yet also increase the beautification through being established in the peace arising from the *rupajhanas*, while those in *arupavacarabhumi* abide nicely in the *arupajhanas*.

In conclusion: the temporary or permanent extinction of 'me' and 'mine' is something both laypeople and the ordained can take on in accord with their particular level of attainment and depending on which of the four realms of existence they happen to inhabit at the time. All of which could cause one to be suitably beautified. One shouldn't misunderstand and be discouraged by any this.

32 – The principle of the quenching of 'me' and 'mine.'

Now we come to the final problem, that is, the method of practice to be adopted for the remainderless quenching of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ That method is known, for short, as ‘magga,’ which means ‘path,’ or it could be called ‘Brahmacariya,’ or even ‘religion,’ because the essence of those is practice. But the oldest designation would be ‘Dhamma’ which here would refer particularly to practice.

The words ‘religion’ and ‘Dhamma’ have broad meanings, that is, they cover everything, including the process of study, which is the precursor of practice, as well as the attainment of path and fruit, which would be the result of practice. Here, take it that study, or ‘pariyati’ in the Pali language, is really an adjunct and can be included in the term ‘practice.’ As for the result, or ‘pativedhi,’ of practice, that’s already been detailed above as the cessation of the sense of being ‘me,’ which, once practice is genuine, should be an inevitability. Hence, it can be said that practice is the essence of the religion, or of the Brahmacariya, or of the Dhamma, and is here referred to as the ‘path’ to indicate the way or method to be followed. So, briefly, the path and the Dhamma form the main points. The Dhamma is the path, and the true path is the Dhamma, so it can be said that to see the Dhamma is to see the path, or to see the path is to see the Dhamma, or that walking the path is to walk with the Dhamma, while reaching the end of the path is to reach the ultimate, which can be called the remainderless quenching of dukkha, or nibbana, or whichever of the many designations in use is preferred, here, however, we’ll call the ultimate the remainderless quenching of ‘me’ and of ‘mine.’ Its full and proper title would be the ‘noble eightfold path,’ which is the fourth of the noble truths.

However, that called ‘path’ - now, in addition to pointing out that it’s composed of eight elements, it might also be mentioned that it exists in other forms, in any of which the essential meaning will remain the same. How it will be explained will depend on circumstances, will be appropriate for particular listeners on a case by case basis, and will depend on the instructor, in particular a Buddha would know what should be taught to whom, and in what way. For example: the four noble truths.

In the usual approach to the four noble truths the Buddha describes dukkha as birth, ageing, sickness, and death, the cause of dukkha as the three forms of craving, of tanha, the remainderless quenching of dukkha as the remainderless quenching of tanha, and the method employed for the cessation of dukkha as the noble eightfold path. As for the greater, the fuller approach to the noble truths, that’s described by the principle of paticcasamupada, or dependent origination, that is to say, dukkha (1) is again described as birth, ageing, sickness, and death, but the cause of dukkha (2) becomes jati, bhava, upadana, tanha, vedana, phassa, ayatana, namarupa, vinnana, sankhara, arising from avijja step-by-step. The remainderless quenching of dukkha (3) is specified as the escape from ageing, sickness, and death, which happens because there’s the step-by-step quenching of jati, bhava, upadana, tanha, vedana, phassa, namarupa, vinnana, sankhara, and avijja. And practising (4) means practising for the gradual destruction of avijja until there’s the remainderless extinction of dukkha which, essentially, is the noble eightfold path

again, because living correctly in accord with the path can prevent the arising of avijja, ignorance, or can turn it off completely.

So we can see that this might be known by different names depending on how it's viewed, but that they all point to the same thing. The problem remains that if it's too long a matter how can it be shortened to just the essentials, so that there's a method of practice which, albeit a shortcut, will nevertheless be good enough to quench dukkha and be suitable for people generally, for those who aren't able, or don't feel the urge to study, yet a true method, not anything frivolous.

When practising the shortened or more common version of the noble truths the path is the important part, and when practising the more comprehensive version then examining the cessation of things from the standpoint of paticcasamupada on the nirodha, the quenching side, assumes importance. It should be considered how both are essentially the same and which is the shortest.

Regarding the eightfold path, sammaditthi is at the beginning with sammasamadhi at the end, hence it should be recognized that sammaditthi, right understanding, or wisdom, is the most important component, being the opposite of wrong understanding, or ignorance, which indicates that in the beginning there has to be at least some lessening of ignorance and the various things connected with it for the path to appear, or, to put it another way, when there's the arising of knowledge that then allows the other forms of rightness to appear more easily until all eight components come together as the path, or as wisdom, gradually arisen, then there'll be knowledge of a higher power with the ongoing destruction of ignorance. Hence, there's paticcasamupada in quenching mode here, operating unseen and quite automatically. This said, then within the eightfold path paticcasamupada in its quenching mode can be found.

Looking at paticcasamupada, we need to realize that it's divided into two parts, one part composed of the theory, the other part of the actual practice. The theoretical part tells us that, step by step, this arises because that has arisen, while this quenches because that quenches, and that this performance continues throughout a certain sequence of events, so revealing, pointing out that this is the way things actually work. The part concerned with practising is about not allowing paticcasamupada in its arising form to occur, and encouraging paticcasamupada in its quenching form to appear instead. Essentially it's about causing wisdom to arise and quench the various strands of ignorance until dukkha is gone, or has quenched away.

Therefore, if practise is to be real it must be clearly understood what its purpose is, and when and how it should be applied? The answers to those questions should be: to practise mindfulness at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind itself, so that, whenever there's an object, that is, a form, a sound, a smell, a taste, a touch, or a mental object, making contact, it doesn't concoct vedana, feeling into arising, or, if a feeling should arise to stop it concocting into tanha, craving, thus to keep feeling to 'bare' feeling. When craving can't arise then upadana, clinging, bhava, becoming, and jati, birth, plus the inevitable dukkha can't arise either. Now, it's essential that

feeling doesn't concoct into craving, so we must have sammaditthi, right understanding, on hand, that is, the clear knowledge that all feelings are impermanent, subject to change, are dukkha, are anatta, and are essentially maya, illusory. Right understanding, or sammaditthi, which is the heart of the noble eightfold path, also forms the heart of paticcasamupada, hence they can be deemed true practices.

On the other hand, we might forget paticcasamupada and the eightfold path, that is, not immerse the mind in those practices, but just begin with wisdom, with the knowledge of how we should act when an object impacts the eye, ear, nose, tongue, etc. That problem will be solved by practising properly towards those sense objects using the technique which prevents the arising of 'me' or of 'mine' into the mind, and the matter will end there, and without us having had to divide things up into vedana, tanha, upadana, bhava, jati, and, finally, dukkha, because if there's no arising of the feelings of 'me' or of 'mine' there won't be any dukkha either.

An important point to grasp is that 'me' and 'mine' is known as 'upadana' within the cycle of paticcasamupada. Thus it can be said that the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' lies in the practise of paticcasamupada in its quenching mode: that the form of practice which prevents the arising of 'me' or of 'mine' occurs any time that the true quenching cycle of paticcasamupada is in operation. Hence what prevents 'me' and 'mine' from arising is practising within the cycle of paticcasamupada, which here will also include the entire noble eightfold path, because it's the power of sammaditthi, of right understanding, which prevents the arising of 'me' and 'mine' while at the same time fully manifesting sammasankappo, sammavaca, sammakamanta, samma ajjivo, sammavayamo, sammasati and sammasamadhi quite automatically. For micchasankappo, micchavaca, etc. etc. to arise, there would have to be the feelings of 'me' and 'mine' already arisen from some sense contact, that is, there'd been foolish clinging to something so that 'miccatta,' the various forms of miccha, wrongness, had arisen.

Hence, in conclusion, practising just for the quenching, or non-arising of 'me' and 'mine' is the totality of Buddhist practice, be it through the development of sila, samadhi, and panna, the noble eightfold path, paticcasamupada, or whatever. Further, in the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' is the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, or the path, its fruit, and nibbana, which will be the result of having practised completely. So, let's just focus on how one should operate so that 'me' and 'mine' aren't allowed to appear. Although this will involve the shortest of shortcut methods yet it will be enough, and be suitable for all people no matter what their level of education.

This being said, everyone can see that just practising for the non-arising of 'me' and 'mine' is at the heart of all the groups and forms of practice remaining to be studied and memorized. But that the essence of them all is to avoid any clinging to anything at all as 'me' or 'mine' at the particular moment that a sense object comes to impact the eyes, ears, etc. which is also the basic modus operandi for all the methods which aim at the quenching of dukkha, or at the attainment of nibbana. So, all the practices for the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' are based on the same

principle which here has just been shortened, pruned to its essentials so that it can become a universal form of practice suitable for everyone. Hence, from now on, we'll have the ability to decide what's necessary, what we need to understand as regards practice so as to avoid having anything unnecessary come into the mix, because it's not good to become an expert in the sort of pariyati that leads to one becoming a philosopher while still being unable to quench dukkha of any kind.

The short practice method mentioned above, although short still needs to be divided into two phases, that is, the normal phase when there isn't any object coming to impact, and that phase when there is an object impacting, at, for instance, the eye. Both phases are related, in that practising prior to the impact of a sense object means practising in order to be prepared, to be ready for the event, then, when it happens, there's the practice which involves using any pre-prepared knowledge and expertise, that is, there's the application of satisampajanna to the experience. Therefore the basic and essential principle of both phases of practice is the same in that one needs to always be clearly aware that nothing whatsoever should be clung to as being 'me' or 'mine.' When there's yet to be a sense impact then one should recognize all things properly, don't be misled by anything, don't fall for the illusory nature of things, but be aware of the truth which is central to all things: that everything is anatta, 'self-less,' is sunnata, empty, void, in the true sense.

Essentially it's about seeing truly until our continual clinging to things becomes depressing enough to cause the cultivation of knowledge, wisdom, light, right understanding, or whichever word we prefer, to appear, which will enable us to dwell always with a sufficiently nimble, strong, decisive mind, so that, when any object impacts it's just a matter of knowledge intervening right away and not allowing clinging any opportunity to arise. This, timely, intervention of developed knowledge we call satisampajanna.

When there's satisampajanna there aren't any problems, or any difficulties. It's mindfulness and clear understanding which prevents any clinging, there being no way for it to arise because of these two dhammas: sati to recall, and sampajanna, that right knowledge, ever ready. Combined together, they remember to bring the right sort of knowledge to deal with any particular sense impact so that clinging and the consequent dukkha doesn't arise. Because of that 'me' and 'mine' have no way of appearing.

This is a two stage form of practice related through having the same aim, which essentially is that nothing whatsoever should be clung to as 'me' or as 'mine.' Henceforth, we'll consider how to go about the practice.

33 – Nothing at all should be clung to.

Today we'll continue to look at the method involved in the quenching of 'me' and 'mine' through application of the principle that 'nothing at all should be clung to.' The student should always bear in mind that in accord with paticcasamupada and the eightfold path one should

maintain sammaditthi, that is, the right understanding that nothing should be clung to, also that there are two phases of practice involved, that in which an external object is yet to impact a sense, and that in which an object has impacted. Hence, when an object has yet to impact we should still be aware that nothing at all should be clung to, then, when an object connects there'll be sati bringing that knowledge, sampajanna, in good time.

The practice in toto can be summed up as the avoidance of clinging - to anything. One might ask: Why do that? The answer would be: To quench the feelings of 'me' and of 'mine' - or, a more complete answer would be: To quench tanha, wrong desire, to make sure that it doesn't arise towards any feeling emanating from an impacting object so that upadana, clinging to 'me' and 'mine' doesn't happen. Practising in accord with the eightfold path is for the quenching of tanha and upadana. Although one might not use the designation 'eightfold path' and instead call it sila, samadhi, and panna, yet, in the final count, it will have the same purpose, that is, the quenching of tanha, or of the defilements, and all of that must be based on the knowledge that nothing should be clung to, then practice will be properly and quickly done, not having any deviant form of sila, samadhi, and panna present, wrong knowledge won't arise.

Once the student knows that all practice is for the quenching of tanha they should give it particular consideration and make a proper understanding, recognizing that there are two kinds of quenching here, that which is true, and that which isn't - that is, there's the quenching from which tanha cannot recur, and that from which it can. If there's no recurrence of tanha that's a true, or complete quenching, if there is a recurrence then it's incomplete. Regarding the kind which isn't complete, there are several forms: That quenching which occurs naturally, as when desire for something is overcome by desire for something else, something new; a little more meaningful is that quenching which happens through coincidence, as when one meets with something which turns off desire, like a corpse, or something unclean which might intervene causing an opportune quenching; more meaningful again is that in some instances consideration prompted by conscience or by reasoned thinking can make tanha quench away. However, those being temporary in nature, they can address only immediate problems and won't be complete quenches. Which raises the point as to why, when one has been a student of the noble truths for so long, is one still unable to completely quench tanha? Well, it's because there's only ever been temporary quenching practised.

The true quenching of tanha is called in the Pali language 'asesaviraganirodha,' which means complete quenching through the power of viraga, of 'fading away,' as in the fading away of tanha which follows on from nibbida, that is, disinterestedness, which itself arises through clear seeing into the truth that all things are changeful, are without 'self,' and are dukkha, so shouldn't be clung to as 'me' or as 'mine' because void of any such meaning. Quenching tanha through some method of practice, and only through some method of practice, is the true quenching, otherwise it will be temporary.

As for the knowledge, or clear seeing that nothing should be clung to, it should be understood that there are several levels, but only one which sparks nibbida, that first rung of the ladder which can give rise to viraga. The student should first observe that, as regards this knowledge, there are at least three levels: That which has been heard, which is called knowledge; that which is due to reasoned thinking, investigation, which is called understanding; that which comes after and surpasses both of those because the practice has been completed, that is, clear and thorough knowledge of penetration.

Let's look at how those three levels of knowledge compare. Which of them will, for instance, cause deep changes in the mind? Which, on the other hand, are superficial, will have little effect and will fade away and disappear? In the end we'll see which kind of knowledge the understanding that 'nothing should be clung to' corresponds with: Is it just knowledge, something we've heard about, or knowledge acquired through thought, through reasoning, or must it be that clear knowledge of penetration? One then knows for oneself which knowledge causes nibbida, brings on ennui, disinterestedness, and encourages the arising of viraga, the fading away of the defilements. In the scriptures there's no doubt: We aim for that knowledge of penetration which can change the mind. Hence it can be said that the quenching of tanha which is asesaviraganirodha must be based on clear knowledge of penetration into the fact that all things whatsoever shouldn't be clung to, that is, they should be clearly recognized with wisdom to the extent of being yanadassana, or the eightfold path.

Now we come to examine the import of the saying 'nothing whatsoever should be clung to.' In the Pali language this is 'sabbe dhamma nalam abhinivesaya' which translates into 'all dhammas whatsoever shouldn't be clung to by anyone,' or 'shouldn't be implanted, or imbedded.' The word 'abhinivesaya' means to 'enter strongly,' which is also known as 'clinging,' or 'attachment,' that is, to have the mind cling, or attach by imbedding into the mind the perception that this is 'us,' this is 'ours,' which for easier understanding comes out as 'me' or 'mine,' as above.

We should take this saying to be the heart of Buddhism, because there's an account in the Pali texts where someone asked the Buddha to sum up his teaching in one short sentence and he replied: 'Sabbe dhamma nalam abhinivesaya,' also affirming that if one should hear these words then one would have heard everything; if one practised this one would practise everything; if one got the result of having practised this one would get everything, there wasn't anything more than this. Hence it's said that this is the heart of Buddhism.

We can see clearly that the whole study of scripture is about learning to avoid clinging to anything, studying for reasons other than that is unnecessary. Now, practice: One should practise for the abandonment of clinging, practising for anything other than that will, once again, be more than is necessary. As when practising to maintain sila, the practice must be aimed at subduing clinging, because killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc. all have their roots in clinging. If samadhi is developed then it should be done to stop clinging, to have a void mind, a

peaceful mind without any clinging at all. If it's not done for those reasons it won't be in accord with the aims of Buddhism. If one advances wisdom, or vipassana, it should be done to enable one to dig out and destroy the roots of clinging once and for all, then it will be that panna, that wisdom which agrees with Buddhist principles, other than that and it will be deceptive, the wisdom of the credulous, of the blind-believers, those blinded by their greed. All this makes sila, samadhi, and panna, working properly together, form the complete dhamma practice for the destruction of clinging, or, more broadly, for putting a stop to any clinging to anything at all. Now, regarding the result of practice? That's the arising of the path, its fruit, and nibbana, or a life lived above any form of clinging - the fruit arising from clinging's final destruction.

All this tells us that all the wisdom, the knowledge, the practice, all the results of practice in the Buddhist system can be summed up in one short sentence: 'nothing should be clung to,' which can be installed as the true heart of Buddhism. Therefore if it's asked what we should use to quench tanha and upadana, desire and clinging, we can confidently declare that those two can be quenched through meeting with the heart of the Buddha's teaching.

Because this matter is so important we should look at the practice in more detail as to how and when we can use it to quench tanha so that we're able to practise properly. In this first step we'll look at the various practices which can be used by people, both lay and monastic. If we're to quench tanha and upadana then we'll need to make use of the following principles:

While there's nothing disturbing the mind, that is, when there aren't any meaningful sense impacts happening at the eyes, ears, etc. we should take time to consider just what 'all things' are and why we should avoid clinging to them. By doing that we can come to understand them better, more clearly, until there arise feelings of sadness, all things having been recognized as illusory and not worth clinging to. There'll also be sadness because of one's foolish infatuation and clinging. Behaving in this way day in, day out, one becomes smarter over time, so that there comes to be knowledge, understanding, and that penetrative wisdom always appropriate to whatever is happening at any given time, as well as a fading away of lobha, dosa, and moha through the power of that sadness, that disenchantment. Doing this regularly one makes an habit of feeling detachment towards things. This is the first method, something we do whenever there's nothing important impacting the senses.

A second method will be used whenever an object comes to impact the senses, that is, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and the body surface, the five of which form one group, while the mind forms another. Concerning these five objects, it should be recognized that we, ordinarily, aren't free from sense impacts very often because it's difficult to be so, and, although there may not be anything external impacting the senses yet the mind will still be able to receive objects internally, in the form of particular thought patterns based on past perceptions, which in their turn instigate memories which then arise into the mind becoming current mind objects. Now, there are, externally, still five sense doors, that is, the sense doors of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body surface, which will open to receive objects into the mind too. We'll find it difficult to live

guarding the eyes, ears, nose, etc. because there's a regular flow of seeing, hearing, smelling, etc. going on, hence there will be a great many sense objects impacting the senses.

Therefore, take it for granted that if there isn't anything external impacting the senses there'll very probably be internal objects regularly impacting the mind. Don't be misled and think that if the eye isn't seeing anything, the ear isn't hearing anything, the nose isn't smelling anything, the tongue isn't tasting anything, and the body surface isn't receiving impacts, that there isn't anything to disturb us. In truth internal sense objects are no less disturbing than the external variety, and, besides, are more complicated, more profound in their nature, therefore we'll need to be careful, that is, know those things called 'aramana,' or sense objects, properly, recognize them as those things that shouldn't be clung to. We'll get to know the aramana as they actually are, as illusory, as 'bait' for clinging, because, although they lack any essence people are fooled into clinging to them, then there's dukkha.

Therefore, to implement this second method we'll need to draw on our experience with the first, and use it in a timely manner, use it in the moment of sense impact, employ the power of satisampajanna until the clear seeing arises that all things are aniccam, dukkha, anatta, and so really shouldn't be clung to. It will be at that moment that a feeling of sadness will arise concerning those aramana, those things, and towards the 'me' who did the clinging - the same sadness that arose in the first method of practice, and nibbida, disenchantment, plus the fading away of the kilesa will ensue.

This tells us clearly that practice, although the methodology is different, will be essentially the same. Both methods are about not allowing clinging to arise while allowing the fading away of the defilements to take place, or, at the least, about denying the defilements so that they don't cause disturbance, not allowing 'me' and 'mine' to flare up, but to shut them off, starve them out until they die.

34 – Sila, samadhi, and panna.

Today we'll look at the method of practice which should normally be used. Practising in the ordinary sense means practising at the time when there aren't any objects making contact, which can be divided into two, that is, into the theoretical, which is for students, for educated people, and which can be looked on as study and practice, that's one kind, another is the method of practice for people generally, not the specially educated sort, which has no obvious technique but isn't entirely technique-less either, and which will be particularly useful for those of little education, little mental strength, or for the aged. However, no matter how different the methods may be the aim will be the same, that is, the ending of 'me' and 'mine.' If we compare these two methods to the building of houses, then one group will build a house with metal and concrete, or with gold, as they see fit, while the other might do the job using wood and leaves, but if we look at this as just being about creating somewhere to live, then one group will have invested a lot of money and wearied themselves by going to a lot of trouble, which the other won't have, yet they

both get the same basic result. The point of all this is that it's difficult for one group to follow the way of another group, hence everyone will choose the way which suits them best. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, anything done wrongly won't give a right result. To have one of strong intelligence follow the method of one of weak or dull intellect won't work, while to have one of small intellect follow the methods of one with great intellect won't work either, hence they need to be distinguished.

For one who has the indriya, the controlling faculties, complete then they already have the basis for study and practice, there's enough of the upanisaya, the supporting states, or indriya - but there's still another problem, that is, although one has wisdom it's not yet ripe, if one waits for it to develop naturally one will have to wait for a long time, hence one adds some method that will ripen wisdom quickly, and integrates it into a method of practice that will quench the kilesa, so blending two forms of practice into one and avoiding having to deal with two separate methods, which is good and commonly used. Thus there's more technique involved with the result that there's the ongoing cultivation of both mental strength and wisdom. Once the kilesa are quenched one becomes a special sort of noble person, one with many other spiritual attainments. The practice involved is more or less long and comprehensive for all methods, particularly for the method which is practised perfectly, which will thus take up a lot of time and effort, but the results will be worth it.

This practice involves some preliminary preparation: studying the technique, preparing a place to practice, preparing oneself, one's food intake, preparing the body properly, etc. and then beginning to practise sila, samadhi, and panna. It's required that one maintains full sila, full moral purity all the time, however, if one is properly absorbed in the practice of meditation then sila will be self-sustaining, because there'll be self-restraint every step of the way there won't be any opportunity for sila to break. There'll be full self-control so everything will be as it should be, hence there'll be no need to think about sila. As for samadhi, that's about preparing the mind so that panna, real knowledge can arise, hence there's practise according to the method so that the mind becomes stilled, that is, fixed on a single purified object, and is ready to use, or be 'active,' as it's called, there's training until the various levels of jhana are achieved and this well-schooled mind can then do its work wisely. As for the development of panna, of wisdom, that implies gaining clear penetration knowledge, that is, knowing the truth of all those sankharas until the feelings of 'me' and 'mine' can no longer arise, until there's sadness, disenchantment, boredom with those many things once clung to as 'me' or 'mine,' there's the fading out of the kilesa through the power of knowledge and the associated disenchantment until one can no longer fall back into defiled clinging, which then develops until the kilesa are put an end to once and for all through the power of that burgeoning and decisive wisdom. Making that knowledge arise is the development of panna. The panna that can truly destroy the kilesa is called the noble path. The ending of those kilesa is called path, fruit, and nibbana.

Hence we can see that the practice is triune, that is, it's composed of sila, samadhi, and panna, the last of which is in the position of being the governor or principal. Many other practices with

different names will also involve these three forms, therefore it can be taken that sila, samadhi, and panna form the basis of practice generally and are known as the 'tri-sikha,' that is, the three things that should be studied. However, the word 'sikha' implies study and practice combined into one form, not just study alone, in truth it's about studying while practising, following the principle that while practising one comes to knowledge.

Now, that there are so many practices is due to the tri-sikha being divided up, as in the eightfold path, for instance, where the pannasikha is divided into sammaditthi and sammāsankappo, the silasikha into sammavaca, sammakammanto, and samma-ajjivo, and samadhisikha, or cittasikha, into sammavayamo, sammāsati, and sammāsamadhi. Together they're eightfold so known as the eightfold path, which, in truth, is the tri-sikha of sila, samadhi, and panna in practicable form.

The practitioner should recognize when practising that pannasikha comes first, takes the position of leader, then there's silasikha and samadhisikha. In theory it's sila, samadhi, and panna. One ignorant of this change in the order of things will adhere to the theory that it has to be sila, samadhi, and panna. When this is the case it's said that one immediately finds oneself trying to roll a mortar up a mountain, because panna hasn't been taken as the leader nothing more will happen, sila won't manifest, neither will samadhi, there'll be deviation, one will slide off the path, and end up, as they say, trying to roll a mortar up a hill, which would be a real pain because the mortar will always be inclined to roll back down again. Therefore panna must come first, hence the order is rearranged, thus: Panna, sila, samadhi, instead of sila, samadhi, and panna. This means that panna leads in every event, from temple matters, to religious matters, to study, to life in all its phases, to choosing an appropriate meditation technique, to being one who wisely considers that this practice is of this sort, and, when practised, has a certain effect on the kilesa, that is, it destroys them completely - then beginning to practise with it.

Hence one's sila is easily and fully maintained, it destroys the coarse defilements and is therefore prime when it comes to the acquisition of samadhi, which is its ultimate duty. As for samadhi, when panna is the leader it's easily acquired and has sufficient quality to perform its function of maintaining the mind in a peaceful, strong condition, ready to cause the arising of panna, which will happen naturally without any deliberation, panna arising through the power of that samadhi. This arisen panna is able to perform its duty and destroy the defilements. But it doesn't just do that, it also supports and progressively increases the power of sila, of samadhi, and of itself too until the defilement problem is eliminated, that is, the defilements are completely quenched to the level of the arahant and the journey is at an end, the brahmacariya being fulfilled.

Now we arrive at a more advanced technique for the practice known as sila, samadhi, and panna. We realize that sila, samadhi, and panna must be allowed to do their proper duties, and fully, so we don't follow the books or the ceremonial route and practise that sila, samadhi, and panna which would be like rolling a mortar up a hill, instead we'll roll the mortar down the hill by practising with panna, sila, and samadhi. Still, there must be the smarts necessary to figure out how the practise should be managed so that there's the quickest, safest, and surest advancement

from beginning to end. However, it's to our benefit that we don't need to do that, the Buddha having already laid down the correct mode of practice. We just try to avoid the counterfeits and make the right choice, which, specifically, will be the four satipathana, the 'four foundations of mindfulness,' as they exist in the proper form of anapanasati. We'll need to be careful about getting tangled up with that form of satipathana, or of mahasatipathana, which is overblown, inflated, or getting involved with a fake form of anapanasati. Further, we'll decide how the essential elements of the four satipathana which exist in the form of anapanasati are to be practised.

In the first place we'll need an object to focus on for the practice of self-control and the development of samadhi. Out of all the tens of things available the best is the breathing, because, in the first place, it's convenient, being part of us we don't need to go anywhere to find it, and when practising with the breathing there's a good result for our bodily health, there's physical well-being, which is a gain, and, of course, it promotes mental health too, in that the mind will be able to do its ongoing duty. It's particularly good in that one will be practising a method which is subtle, refined, peaceful, and restrained, not noisy, loud, or frightening, as with some objects. These are reasons enough for choosing the breathing as the object of meditation.

Now, as to the purpose of this training in its beginnings: According to the law of nature if we want to have some impression, or some knowledge stamp itself on the mind and be remembered over a long period of time then we need a method of training capable of doing that. For that task there's nothing better than the in and out breathing, that is, we imbed it in the breathing process by recalling that knowledge with every in and out breath. We can see this easily if, for instance, we want to feel distaste for somebody, then we just try to recall that person's badness or evil ways with every in and out breath and the required feeling will impress itself in the mind. On the other hand, if we want to feel friendliness, or love for someone, then we need to think of that person's goodness, or of their endearing qualities with every in and out breath, and the desired result will be created. Essentially: if we want to remember something then we should practise in this way.

Now, that's not all that we want here, we want that knowledge, that understanding, that direct experience that all things shouldn't be clung to as 'me' or 'mine' to be firmly enough impressed on the mind so that we can quench or destroy the kilesa of tanha and upadana, or, at the least, stop them from arising. Therefore we need to maintain that knowledge in the mind all of the time, hence we need to practise every in and out breath with that in mind.

So, in this first phase we're, with every in and out-breath, going to grasp the dhamma truth that nothing should be clung to. We might not be able to actually achieve that, because it will be too subtle, too difficult, we'll have to wait for that, so we need to choose something easier, and, in the beginning, the most appropriate thing will be the actual breathing itself. It's the most appropriate because there's always this rhythmic in and out breathing connected with the body, so it's a more suitable object to practise with than anything else. We begin to fix on the

breathing in this early stage of practice with the intention of following every in and out-breath while not allowing sati, or the mind, or ourselves, as we would usually understand it, to wander away from the object. Hence there's this stratagem: observe and study the in and out-breathing until we can successfully fix the mind on it, or on anything else that we choose, and for as long as we wish.

Now comes something we need to know: training the mind in this way, when done through the right method, does cause the body to calm down and the mind to become peaceful, at the same time allowing a new and wonderful feeling to arise, a feeling of peaceful happiness of a sort that one has never before known, so that the one who feels it will be fascinated by it and think it to be the unchallengeable peak of happiness, which even the pleasure arising from sexual encounters can't stand comparison with. That creatures are only grabbed by sensual feelings and aren't taken with feelings of this kind is because they're incapable, for a number of reasons, of experiencing them, hence they can find fascination only in sensual pleasures. If there was some power which could bring them this experience then feelings of the sensual sort would become bland, even disgusting by comparison, thus the trick or technique that will advance one's practice is based on the principle that if one can truly defeat the highest kind of pleasant feeling then the more base forms of the genre will cease to be any kind of a problem, hence the aim is to contemplate the highest pleasurable feelings as being *aniccam*, *dukkham*, and *anatta*, as collectively illusory, and as something which shouldn't be clung to, so that all the hundreds and thousands of different feelings will immediately lose their power over us. Thus the technique involved is to now fix on pleasant feelings with every in and out breath instead of fixing on the in and out breaths themselves. So, fix on pleasant feelings and proceed to consider how those feelings are, what are they like, how do they arise and pass away, what concocts them and how do they fall under the power of cause and condition? Collectively, feelings are changeful, empty, void of 'self,' and illusory, hence there arises boredom, ennui, and a loosening of desire towards feelings, be they be ever so pleasant.

But at this time we'll still be unable to complete that task there being another interval of practice necessary, that is, the practice of observing the mind with every in and out-breath to become its knower, and to use that knowledge as a tool to go higher step by step until the highest is reached. We thus practise observation of the mind with every in and out breath instead of observing the feelings, as will be brought to a conclusion later.

35 – Anapanasati.

Today we'll, following on from the previous occasion, continue to look at the practice which forms the essence of *satipathana*, that is to say, we'll be dealing with the mental part now, having dealt previously with the feelings.

Practising with the mind requires that one observes the feelings which arise into the mind and comes to know how they change its condition, which is one form of practice. Another way is to

practise bending the mind to one's wishes, as when making the mind feel bold, or cheerful, until one can make the mind let go of the various forms of clinging, make it as nimble, agile, as one wants. That first way, or method, involves becoming skillful in recognizing that the mind experiences feelings which change it in many ways, as when they incline it towards lobha, greed, or dosa, aversion, or moha, delusion, as when it's weak, exhausted, or too distracted, too scattered, or whatever, thus one comes to know all the mind's qualities and characteristics, knows, with every in and out-breath, as one mental condition changes into something different, something other. As for the second method, that involves practising to put the mind right when, for instance, it's sometimes feeling oppressed, depressed, or whatever, by practising to support, to sustain, to elevate it. Sometimes the mind can be persuaded, that is, it can be guided into thinking in the way it should think, in the way that we should want it to think so that it's able to defeat the kilesa, the defilements. The mind must be trained, or controlled so that it's correct with every in and out-breath, until it can be said that one is wise with regard to mental matters, one knows every kind of mind, and knows how to control, or lead it in whatever direction one desires.

Once finished with the practice of controlling the mind one moves onto determining truth, the truth one should know, one then, with every in and out-breath, accesses the truth of all those things which arise and pass away, contemplating their changeful, unstable nature with every in and out-breath. One contemplates the fading away of the kilesa which occurs because of what dhamma, or one looks on that dhamma as a tool able to bring about the present fading away of those kilesa, as well as considering what might come about in the future, while all the time breathing in and out. Then one considers the quenching, the quenching of the kilesa and of dukkha, which we here call the quenching of 'me' and 'mine,' as being due to which dhamma, and to what method operating under what conditions, until, finally, one contemplates the liberation of the mind, or the 'throwing back' of everything to nature, which happens because of the power of which dhamma. All of this is to be clearly contemplated with every in and out-breath.

In these contemplations one might recognize the Dhamma in its various forms, as with the 'tri-laksana,' that is, anicca, dukkha, and anatta, as well as in the form of 'sunnata,' or the form of the 'four noble truths,' the form of 'paticca samupada,' etc. Which all, summed up briefly, amounts to no more than the truth of the arising of dukkha and of its quenching, which is enough, all that's needed, don't let that become inflated into a matter of memorization, of study etc. Finally, we'll recognize that the main thing here is to practise sati, mindfulness, included in which will be the development of sampajanna, or wisdom, as well as sila, samadhi, and panna, plus faith, mental strength, and persistence. This is the 'training in mindfulness.'

Now we come to what it is that's being trained, or used in the training. Simply put it's the mind, the mind is being trained to be mindful, to have sati. We might assume that it's ourselves being trained to be mindful, but going deeper, into the realm of ultimate truth and focusing on the natural, then we ought to say that it's the namadhamma, the mental component, the mind,

consciousness, in all its branches and sub-divisions, which is being trained. However, it's not necessary to know all those things, because this, if we were to be so thorough and go into detail, would turn into a huge psychological matter. Practising in accord with the system already laid out will be enough to fully train what's needed, so that there's enough to accomplish the quenching of dukkha without the necessity of seeking anything more, without going down the path of psychology or philosophy and greatly complicating the issue until the mind spins and some new form of dukkha arises without us having solved our already existent problems.

Now we come to look at the objects to be used in the training process, and it can be seen that there are four such: the breathing, the feelings, the mind, and the ultimate truth of all things. The breathing is called in Pali 'kaya' because it's a component of the physical body, it's connected to the body, hence practising with the breathing is referred to as 'kayanupassanasatipathana,' which is the first of the four satipathanas. Fixing on the various vedana, the feelings, until able to control them, to not allow feelings to ignorantly concoct the mind, is referred to as 'vedananupassanasatipathana.' Fixing on the mind and practising with it using the aforementioned method is called 'cittanupassanasatipathana.' Fixing on the ultimate truth or the rules of the game is called 'Dhammanupassanasatipathana' - fixing upon and contemplating these with every in and out-breath, that is, every time we breathe in, and every time we breathe out, without any break. It's not that there's fixing upon an inhalation or an exhalation first, and then on some object to be contemplated, rather that an object of contemplation is being observed all of the time that the in and out-breathings are taking place, meaning that one fixes on whatever the object happens to be constantly, without any break in observation.

Because there's this fixing of attention with every in and out breath then practising all four groups is referred to as 'anapanasati,' mindfulness *with* breathing. The first kind, or group, fixing on the breathing, is divided into four steps, as are the second, third, and fourth groups, thus overall there are four main groups, comprising, altogether, sixteen steps. The details can be studied directly from the anapanasati lecture given in 1959.

As for the results that will occur, these can be summed up briefly as the development of sila, samadhi, and panna. The 'fixing' referred to is called 'sati,' or 'mindfulness.' The various kinds of knowledge which arise, even knowledge of how the breathing is at any given time all the way up to the ultimate knowledge arising during the final levels of the practice, which is knowledge of the quenching of the kilesa, knowledge that the mind is free of defilement, all such are called 'insight knowledge.' Thus there's knowledge of the path, its fruit, and nibbana, which are truths of nature. It's the knowledge of those dhammas one attains until the final knowledge is reached. All of this is called 'nana,' insight knowledge, each particular knowledge having a long Pali name associated with it. At this time we want to briefly sum the matter up: It's insight knowledge that causes the true quenching of 'me' and 'mine' so that the problems concerned with practice which we Buddhists have to deal with are gone. That signals the end of the practice, the completion of the Brahmachariya.

Having said all that, anybody might be able to see for themselves that it's a matter of theory and thorough, careful practice involving a lot of technique. The student and the practitioner must have something which suits them, or take a long time about making something suitable, then begin to practise until, with enough diligence and patient restraint, the final destination is reached. Such a person is called a 'yogi,' that is, one interested enough in study and practise to maintain the effort throughout life, or until they meet with success. The problem thus arises as to how would ordinary everyday people manage this?

Briefly: There needs to be a 'shortcut' method, or some way of adjusting the technique to make it suitable for ordinary folk, one which doesn't require them to become yogis but allows them to practise and get much the same result, that is, the ability to continually control 'me' and 'mine' until they're completely quenched. Here we need to forget the many and various forms of organized practice, pretend, even, that they don't exist, and focus on the shorter problem of how to maintain the mind, how to control it so that dukkha doesn't arise, and, by doing that, cause knowledge and expertise to arise and to gradually increase. Operating in this short-cut way we might call 'practising to live rightly, to live correctly with every in and out-breath.' This means always being aware that nothing whatsoever should be clung to, and that there really isn't anything worth getting or being. Hence, although we feel that we possess something, or feel that we exist in some way or other, let that just be an assumption, a convention, don't cling to being the 'possessor,' the 'desirer,' or the 'me,' don't cling, maintain self control, maintain *satisampajanna*, mindfulness and clear understanding, always, then we can be correct with every in and out-breath, because dwelling with *satisampajanna* to the fore means that there's *sila*, *samadhi*, and *panna* present too. Even so, we don't think about this as being in some way better, more advanced, or that it's a technique which is much more difficult and troublesome to practise. We just have the certainty that in this form of practice there's *sila*, *samadhi*, and *panna*, there's the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, there's everything here that there should be for the Buddhist. So, just guard and maintain the mind carefully. Don't forget and cling to anything. Let everything go along under the power of *satipanna*, don't mix it up with clinging. If, however, there should be some clinging, let it be clinging to something on the good side, something of the lightest sort, thus clinging will gradually fade away until it's completely gone and one comes to operate always under the power of *satipanna* and never under the sway of 'me' and 'mine,' of egotism. When one arrives at this level it's not difficult to practise being right and proper with every in and out-breath, and one dwells under the umbrella of *panna*, of wisdom, and not under the power of *tanha*. This is the meaning of the phrase 'being correct with every in and out-breath' – practising to control any clinging to 'me' and 'mine' by always being aware of the consequences involved in failing to do that, something which is, as mentioned at the beginning, a fairly detailed affair.

Regarding correctness of the kind discussed here: Operating in such a way that one has the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, or *sila*, *samadhi*, and *panna*, or the path, its fruit, and *nibbana* present in themselves shouldn't be considered as amazing, because thinking in that way might

still cause - through not being aware of their true meaning and value - some new and credulous form of clinging to arise. The greatest value in this practice lies in being right and proper with every in and out-breath, which amounts to 'boycotting,' or cutting off that which sustains the kilesa, hence we 'starve' the kilesa of their 'food,' although we, ourselves, don't have any difficulty doing that. We can repeat a saying here: 'just living properly will cause the kilesa to run out of food,' which is the same as the saying: 'just feed the cat and the mice will disappear' – will disappear without us having the trouble of dealing with them directly. This is considered to be the quickest and most certain way of ridding life of an undesirable presence, of the defilements. Hence everyone should be interested in making use of this 'weapon,' this method, this technique of being correct with every in and out-breath.

When one is always aware that nothing should be clung to, then, when the eye sees a form or the ear receives a sound, or the mind entertains thoughts, that particular knowledge acts as one's protector, preventing foolish feelings from arising, be they of love or hate, of liking or disliking. Have *satisampajanna*, just have right mindfulness to bring the right kind of knowledge at the right time. Doing this won't be difficult for one who's always in a position to practise, they being like a sportsperson who's constantly training for their event.

People being too enamoured of other things aren't interested in these practices, so, to them, they seem to be difficult. But if one likes to do this sort of thing then it isn't difficult at all. Anyway: When feeling isn't concocted, *tanha* doesn't arise, or, supposing feeling does arise but we know that nothing should be clung to, then we'll be able to prevent that feeling from concocting into *tanha*, into *upadana*, so 'me' and 'mine' won't arise, and neither will *dukkha*. This is the true *patikkasamupada* in quenching mode which is found in the shortcut method, which may be the practice of an older, less educated generation, yet it's a true method which gives a true result, and is more elevated than that of those people whose floods of knowledge can't bring them to safety.

This is the secret of the phrase 'when practising in this way one is boycotting, that is, one is cutting-off the food supply of the kilesa.' The 'food' coming in through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind can't nourish the defilements, hence those kilesa are in a condition much like that of an animal which is completely cut off from its food supply, and which, therefore, will weaken and die of its own accord without there needing to be anyone come and apply the coup de grâce. In the case of the defilements it will be that correctness being maintained with every in and out breath that will do the job.

These are the essential elements of the shortcut method, which is a universal form of practice that can be used by anyone no matter what nationality they are, what language they speak, or what religious leanings they have, hence we should consider and study so that we can understand clearly enough to practise it until we get a result.

36 – Everybody's shortcut.

Today, for the benefit of those interested, we'll talk about everyday practice in the short-cut form. Besides being a short-cut through the normal form of practice it's, as regards actual practice, as easy as it gets, and is suitable for all people, for those of little or no education, even for the old and illiterate.

Before anything else we should go over once more that, 1) 'we're purified and liberated by wisdom,' 2) 'all things shouldn't be clung to,' and, 3) 'we're liberated through non-clinging,' all three of which indicate the importance of avoiding clinging so that the feelings of 'me' and 'mine' don't arise. Hence the practice from start to finish is concerned with avoiding clinging, avoiding attachment. If there's deviation from this aim it will be a pseudo, a spurious form of Buddhism being explained by someone with a particular bias. So, it's our duty to find a practice that will be concerned with non-clinging from beginning to end and which will be easy to grasp for everyone.

In the end it's found that the principle of non-clinging might be reasonably easily understood by everyone, and can be expressed in such a way that anyone can immediately grasp. Instead of saying that all things shouldn't be clung to we can spread that out a little and say that all things shouldn't be acquired or taken to 'be' through the power of clinging, because if there's clinging 'things' become immediately poisonous, dangerous. Hence we might put it in this way: amongst all things there isn't anything worth getting or being - because all things are ultimately maya, illusory, and thus primed to become poisonous, to become a danger. However, we have needs, either natural, social, or physical, so we're forced to take, to be, or to get, and taking possession of things in some way can't be avoided. Hence we need to look at how we can take, be, or get, in a way that won't be poisonous, won't be dangerous? Ultimately what we need to do is to connect with things equipped with the understanding that nothing whatsoever is worth getting or being, so that we just engage with it, whatever it might be, as is necessary, without clinging, without attaching, that is we engage with satipanna in attendance.

Like if we have to deal with a dangerous animal, like a tiger, we'll need to do that with satipanna in attendance so that we don't make any mistakes, then we could have power over that creature. Worldly sense objects, or aramana, are much more dangerous than any tiger, but nobody much sees them in that way because we're, all of us, being affected by them all the time, with every breath we take. As for tigers, well, they haven't harmed anyone much in quite a long time, maybe such a thing might happen once during the course of a year in some particular places, which is a very small affair in the world generally. Further, beasts like tigers are just physically dangerous, and might not actually kill anyone. As for those sense objects, they can be very dangerous, even to the extent that they can ruin people, so that they're more to be feared than any tiger. Hence we should dwell in the midst of the multitude of sense objects equipped with the understanding that nothing is worth getting or being, which would represent the greatest of skills, the greatest of artforms, the art of living life properly, correctly, living without any foolish 'getting' or 'being,' living always with satipanna so without clinging to anything of any sort.

Even though the everyday human world, the conventional world, the world of laws, of rules and regulations, holds that this 'person' 'gets' that thing, so 'has' that thing, or 'is' that kind of a 'person,' we can recognize those as just worldly conventions following the laws which regulate them, therefore, if there has to be some activity associated with some external object it will be performed in accord with worldly conventions, or laws, as would be proper in an organized society. As regards what happens in the mind while all that's going on, well, there'll be peace, stillness, with nobody doing, or wanting, or being, or having, or taking possession of anything, because there'll be no clinging involved with any actions or their results in the external world. Thus everything will be alright on both sides of the equation, that is, on the external, or worldly side, with its conventions of eating, using, being comfortable, doing things with someone, having things to do, having high level duties, or whatever, and on the internal, that is, in the mind, which will be free, normal, original, without any heat or heaviness, without any of the usual ups or downs, without anxiety, etc. happening because of the changeability which must occur externally, and which can, if clung to, cause disappointment or fulfillment as is the case. If one wants to compare this with anything it could be said that externally there's the samsara, while internally there's nibbana. However, in truth there isn't anything at all, or if we allow, then it's all nibbana, that is, freedom from all the forms of dukkha, and their cause. This will be the art of living life according to Buddhism.

Now, this can be put to use by everyone, there's no need to do anything more than just practise to be continually aware that nothing is worth getting or being, as mentioned above. So, don't take possession of anything, and don't 'be' anything, that indicating the arising of 'me' and 'mine.' It's not necessary to study too much, just enough so that we know that nothing is worth getting or being, because when one becomes a good person one then has the dukkha of a good person, or if one is a bad person one then has the dukkha appropriate. Hence don't cling to being or getting anything at all, that is, don't be a good or a bad person and there won't be any dukkha. Further, if one is a good, or meritorious person there'll be the dukkha of one such, which will be very different from that experienced by someone evil. However, there will be dukkha just the same in that there will be a certain kind of 'heaviness' about life. The difference being that the heaviness experienced by one individual will be hot, like fire, while that of another will be cool, but there will be heaviness in both cases. Again, but on a higher level: A person who's happy still has to experience the dukkha of a happy person, so doesn't defeat dukkha. This is so because happiness is still something which has to be carried, has to be borne around, that happiness being rooted in birth, ageing, sickness, and death, in change and transformation, and in those illusory *aramana*, those sense objects, hence it's heavy, it's burdensome to whatever extent. So it's said that there is the dukkha appropriate to a happy person. Hence fight it; don't 'be' anything at all.

Now, when looking at all things it can be seen that they fall into just two categories, those that are good, beneficial, and those that are bad, or harmful. Everyone experiences both of these, there isn't anyone who can experience just the good, or experience just the bad. This continues

to happen because people ordinarily can't see the truth, thus they make the mistake of seeing this as good and this as bad, as harmful, but there's a greater truth, in that both the good and the bad are illusory, so don't cling to them, because cling and there will be dukkha. Those things seen as being good will produce a deeper more profound form of dukkha than will the harmful, the bad, because the good is more clung to than the bad. Further, things which have the meaning of being harmful make better teachers than those labeled as good, because things held to be good make us inattentive, forgetful, hence we finish up being unable to deal with either. It would be better to not cling at all, to have a mind free of clinging towards either, so exercise control over both, and be under their power only to the extent necessary for us to be able to deal with them. This is the import of 'not getting anything' coupled with 'not being anything' as mentioned.

To make things easier for the older generation we'll pose the question as to whether it's any fun 'being' a person or an animal, being a woman or a man, a wife or a husband, a mother or a child. The older generation will shake their heads in response because they have some spiritual experience with those things, unlike the young who've yet to really know them, or understand their import. However, there'll be some children, some young people who, if given an explanation would understand too, those then might be 15, or so, year old arahants, of which there have been few in the history of Buddhism.

If taking just a couple of examples isn't enough we can think of many more, such as looking after and being looked after, are either fun? Is being the master or the servant fun? Is being the victor or being the vanquished fun? Is being the maker or the made fun? Is being clever or stupid fun? Which seems to mean that, no matter how clever one is, the burden of being a clever person increases accordingly. Therefore resist, don't cling to being anything, that is, don't think 'I am' anything at all, let the mind, with every in and out-breath, be free from clinging to being this or being that, let life be controlled by satipanna so that it's many and various activities are performed under their power, then those elders, the older generation, would experience a refreshing form of happiness, would experience another kind of 'youth,' an 'eternal' youth in which age plays no part even while the body deteriorates and the coffin beckons.

This would be the art of living, or life lived as an artform, thus at one with the heart of Buddhism. Hence comes the realization that the proper practise of Buddhism is actually the peak of artistic endeavour, and might be combined with life itself. That would be the true nibbana which anyone might achieve, providing they go in the right direction.

There's a still simpler method, that is, when the satipanna mind realizes that nothing, anywhere, is worth getting or being it naturally and automatically inclines towards desirelessness. However, although it might not be able to quench right away it will still incline in that way, because all things now being understood as not worth getting or being will tend to push, or drive, or make the mind incline, flow towards remainderless quenching, towards nibbana. When this is regularly the case it means that the mind is ready to attain, so that when anything appropriate comes to nudge the mind final wisdom will arise and there can be the attainment of

remainderless quenching, of nibbana, which can happen during the course of any given day, and before the body breaks up.

Now, if that doesn't happen, that is, if one goes on living until the body breaks up, then there's an excellent opportunity at the very last moment of life, just as the mind quenches, to use the method, or trick known as 'dtok gradai ploy jorn,' (lit. fall off the ladder.) It's said that when the body breaks up for sure 'me' and 'mine' will be able to 'grajorn tarm pai,' (lit. 'jump off,') too because of retaining the certain knowledge in the mind that there isn't anything left of any kind, anywhere, which is worth getting or being. That knowledge, through being studied, practised, and thoroughly absorbed just might be able to help at the last moment of life. Thus, there can be quenching of the aggregates into nibbana through the application of extreme satisampajanna employing the method known as 'dtok gradai ploy jorn,' which trick, or technique, if well enough developed, can be accomplished by anyone. All thus have a way of attaining the greatest thing in Buddhism.

Even in the case of the aggregates quenching as the result of an accident, like a road accident when one's been flattened by a car, for instance, then in the time remaining, be it one second, or half a second before feeling disappears completely, one should try to recall the knowledge of remainderless quenching and, through that, let namarupa (the mind and body here) quench away without any clinging being present, hence nibbana can be attained even in the immediate aftermath of a road accident. However, one should prepare, practise to be skilful, fluent and confident enough to let go, to jump in the right way, don't think about doctors, or about anyone coming to help, don't think about wealth, family, or whatever, in that moment think about just one thing: remainderless quenching.

This is the shortest, easiest and most useable form of practice, and one we should find interesting. It's the basis, the standard of practice which all people ought to have access to. As for anyone doing more than this, that would be unnecessary, and, at best, would be an embellishment which might make one's escape more picturesque. However, being eye-catching isn't a necessity, and, further, things might get messy. Hence, one should stay with the standard approach, which will be enough.

37 – Just that!!

In this final discourse we'll talk about the method of practice used in the moment that a sense object, an aramana, impacts, so that we can quench 'me' and 'mine.'

Practising for the quenching of 'me' and mine' in the moment of meeting with a sense object so that, when, for instance, the eye sees a form, then, as the Buddha said to Bahiya Darucariya, just let there be the seeing, when hearing a sound let there be just the hearing, when smelling a smell, let there be just the smelling, when tasting a taste let there be just the tasting, and when the body receives touches, let there be just the touching, then there won't be a 'you,' and whenever the

‘you’ is absent, ‘you’ don’t appear in this world, in the other world, or in the world between. That itself is the end of dukkha.’

From these words we can see that in the moment that a sense object impacts there’s a method of practice available which can prevent the arising of ‘me,’ which the Buddha here referred to as ‘you,’ and when there’s no ‘you’ or no ‘me,’ right there is the end of dukkha, or nibbana. The essence of this practice lies in preventing a sense object from influencing, or dominating the mind, by allowing any seeing, for instance, to just be ‘bare’ seeing, and not letting it concoct feelings of love or hate, of happiness or unhappiness into arising. In short, not allowing the concocting of ignorant feeling, just letting the basic seeing take place and stopping, or quenching it right there, so that it will be satipanna which deals with the experience instead of the defilements, and matters will then be arranged so that there’s no tanha, desire, or upadana, clinging, so no ‘me.’ On the other hand, if some object doesn’t need to be dealt with in this way then that will be that, there won’t be any way for feeling to arise of the kind that could concoct tanha and upadana into being that ‘me’ who sees this or that thing as being ‘mine.’ When this is so there’s no becoming, or birth, or dukkha, and paticcasamupada in its arising mode doesn’t arise, at all.

The foundation on which the ‘me’ is built is, for instance, the seeing of a form, if that happens with satipanna in control, that is, with the knowledge that there isn’t anything that should be clung to intervening at the right time, then the seeing of a form becomes barren as regards the creation of the feelings of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ In the case of hearing a sound, smelling a smell, tasting a flavour, or of something touching the body, the same rules apply. Even, finally, those aramana which impact the mind operate in much the same way, although they aren’t referred to here, because here the intention is to deal with sense objects in the ordinary sense, as external impacts, those which are impossible to avoid.

Something that should be specially made note of is the saying: ‘When seeing let there just be the seeing,’ or ‘when hearing let there just be the hearing,’ which can be understood in two ways. 1) to see or to hear something and not take a particular interest in it, whatever it is, by giving attention to something else, or, another way to look at this would involve the seeing and hearing peculiar to an arahant, of that one who’s put an end to the inflows of defilement, so doesn’t experience meanings in the things seen or heard, has no problems with them, and isn’t concerned with having to practise anything therefore. 2) as something which needs to be practised and which implies, as is normal for us, seeing, hearing etc. and recognizing the things involved as having significance, having meaning, something which cannot be easily avoided and involves problems that we need to know how to deal with. Hence those two sayings: ‘when seeing let there be just the seeing,’ and ‘when hearing let there just be the hearing,’ have a special meaning which will be the object of a detailed and elevated form of practice which we’ll now consider.

Practising in a cruder, more basic way, as with seeing some particular thing, knowing what it is, then bringing in the proper understanding that this is just a form, a rupadhamma, it’s not this or

that meaningful thing with this or that name attached, as with a beautiful rose, an attractive human being, or something unattractive, like feces, or someone frightening. It's necessary to recognize all such as mere forms, as just forms, and not allow the mind to attach meanings so that something becomes like this or like that, of a kind to give rise to the wrong kind of desire and to clinging. The rougher, more basic method, or form of practice, may be used by some people in some cases in which the object being experienced isn't too powerful and doesn't have too much influence on the mind.

Regarding the practice which is more elevated, the practice that will make it possible to get real benefit, then it needs to be a sharper, more penetrative affair, that is, a method which will let one see and maintain the understanding that pleasant feelings are regularly maya, deceptive, because there are things that can have the sort of meanings for all beings that will create only sukhavedana. As for dukkhavedana that's a result which arises because of clinging to some sukhavedana which turns out to be not as expected. If there's no clinging to sukhavedana there'll be no clinging to dukkhavedana either, hence often in the practice only sukhavedana is mentioned, which, in truth, according to paramattadhamma, has dukkhavedana concealed deep within. When sukhavedana loses its meaning so do the many and various things which are its cause, thus don't be tempted by forms visible through the eyes, for instance, in that a beautiful picture can become the base for the defilement of tanha to arise. The essential point here is that there has to be the kind of knowledge that will cut off the root cause of clinging to sense objects, that is, there has to be a true understanding of their qualities or meanings.

Like with the 'pretty,' the 'beautiful,' the 'fragrant,' or whatever, beings get trapped by sense objects because of meanings like these. If these qualities, or meanings, are destroyed by wisdom the many and various sense objects become barren, unable to provoke clinging anymore. Hence we might say that seeing a form, for instance, for one with enough wisdom to avoid recognizing any 'meaning' or 'quality' which might otherwise be ascribed to it, that itself will be 'just seeing.' As for hearing which is 'just hearing,' or smelling which is 'just smelling,' etc. they'll follow the same rules, so, essentially, one will no longer be enslaved by feelings, but will have become one who's destroyed 'qualities,' or 'meanings,' both of pleasant feelings themselves and of the things that provoke them. For such an one meeting with a sense object will be an impact from which a feeling won't arise, or, should a feeling arise it will be just a feeling which has no extraneous meaning or quality added to it, a feeling that won't be able to provoke tanha, upadana, bhava, jati, and dukkha.

The most important thing, therefore, is that the practice doesn't involve a direct physical manipulation of an object, being, for instance, seen, rather it's a mental manipulation directed by satipanna and aimed at destroying the instigator, or cause of any clinging so that the result will be phassa, sense contact, which is just a 'bare' sense contact. For instance: a sense contact at the eye will be just that, an eye contact, and nothing more. The person who receives the contact, or the owner, the experiencer of the contact won't be found, there'll just be the impacting of the eye with a form and the arising of eye consciousness as a result, which consciousness is included in

the meaning of the word ‘eye’ here. Therefore, there’s just the meeting together of the eye and the form, there’s no ‘me,’ no owner or experiencer. When there’s no feeling of being ‘me’ present it means that the desire called *tanha*, or the clinging called *upadana* haven’t arisen towards that particular object, and, by extension, towards any object, so that there isn’t a ‘me’ in this world, or in any world, anywhere - the worlds become free from ‘me,’ and *nibbana* becomes the ‘norm’ of experience because of that power which prevents the form of *paticcasamupada*, of dependent origination in its arising mode from arising. This is an important matter and requires further elucidation.

The essential practise of *paticcasamupada* here is the sort that doesn’t create *dukkha*. It consists in, according to the books: when seeing then just see, when smelling just smell, and, operating in that way, how could there be a complete operation of *paticcasamupada*? As for those who go by the shortcut method, they practise the principle of not getting, not being, as mentioned before, so there’s nothing to decide on there, but for the practitioner who wishes to devote some study to it *paticcasamupada* becomes a device for the acquisition of wisdom. There’s a way to study as much as is necessary, thus: while seeing let there be just the seeing, so that it becomes just the interaction of natural things, that is, of an external material form with the eyeball and it’s nerve system – just a natural matter without *upadana* coming to cling or take possession of anything in any way, it’s just a nature meeting with a nature, so there’s no foolish feeling, craving, clinging or anything arising. This is *paticcasamupada* in the *nirodha*, or quenching, mode, quenching feeling, craving, clinging, becoming, birth, and all the forms of *dukkha*, in a way that can be clearly seen.

Paticcasamupada in reverse mode, that is, from *vedana* back to *phassa*, to the *ayatana*, to *namarupa*, to *vinna*, to *sankhara*, and to *avijja* - how that sequence of events quenches, or doesn’t arise, needs to be properly understood. This *paticcasamupada* in *nirodha* mode ‘arises’ until ignorance, *avijja*, is reached, or goes down step by step throughout the sequence until ignorance is arrived at. This is the most difficult to understand mode of *paticcasamupada*, but it’s really quite straightforward, that is, if *phassa*, if sense contact, is a ‘mere’ contact, between, say, the eye and a form, that being the point of any contact, what value or meaning does that ‘mere’ contact have? Well, it’s as if it hasn’t happened at all, it’s a sense contact without value in this instance, involving the quenching, or non-arising of the *ayatana*, in this case, the eye and the form. Those *ayatana* being barren, or sterile, so *phassa* is barren too, hence it’s called ‘quenching.’ When the *ayatana* are barren then *nama* and *rupa*, or *namarupa*, which is the condition for the arising of the *ayatana*, is barren too, it being as if it didn’t arise at all, or has quenched away. When *namarupa* is barren then the *vinna* element, which is the concocter of *namarupa*, must be barren too, again, it being as if it didn’t exist, or had quenched away. When the *vinna* is barren the *sankhara* which are the concocters of the consciousness element are also barren, not in evidence, or they’ve quenched. When the *sankhara* are barren the *avijja* which concocts them is also barren, it being, once more, as if it didn’t appear at all, or had quenched. All of this happens because of that one small moment of causation occurring mid-

stream in the paticcasamupada sequence called phassa, sense contact, which happened to be a mere, or barren contact, and when phassa is barren it doesn't give rise to vedana so that paticcasamupada in its entirety is then barren, as if non-existent. This is called paticcasamupada in nirodha mode, that is, the side which quenches dukkha fully.

There's still something which needs to be carefully grasped, that is, the profound truth that when avijja has quenched away, or doesn't create at the moment of phassa, as when, for instance, the eye meets with a form, avijja being unable to create anything then the complete paticcasamupada sequence cannot arise. When avijja doesn't concoct the sankharas, that is to say, doesn't create the power that will cause the vinnana element to do its duty and concoct namarupa into active mode, then, namarupa not being concocted in that way cannot perform its function, rather it's as if it didn't exist at all. Further, the ayatana associated with namarupa can't perform their functions either - this is called 'quenching.' When the ayatana 'quench' they don't perform their duties under the thrall of ignorance and any phassa then is 'mere' phassa, just a natural impact, not the sort of phassa capable of yielding vedana, so tanha and upadana can't arise in sequence. Hence, grasp the essential point here: in the moment of sense contact will avijja be involved or not?

Any contact involving ignorance will form the base for paticcasamupada in arising mode (the arising of dukkha mode.) On the other hand, any contact which is well controlled won't allow avijja to connect, and that phassa, that contact will form the base for paticcasamupada in its quenching, or nirodha, mode (the quenching of dukkha mode.) The phassa of a thug, or an ignorant, deluded person, will be connected with avijja, ignorance. The phassa of a noble person, of one who has full knowledge regarding the meaning of this practice, is phassa which doesn't have avijja connected with it, hence is a 'bare' phassa, a simple sense impact from which no 'me' can or will arise, so is concerned with the quenching of dukkha. This is the point to see, to grasp if we're to meet with the truth that the arising or quenching of avijja, of ignorance, must begin when the eye sees a form, or the ear hears a sound, the nose smells an odour, the tongue experiences a taste, or the body receives a touch on one or other of its surfaces, which is paticcasamupada in accord with the Buddha's teaching, and is the knowledge which may be employed as the method for quenching dukkha. If we deviate from this we might get involved with that inflated paticcasamupada derived from books, or some eloquent explanation which won't be even a tiny bit useful in the actual quenching of dukkha.

To sum up: when confronted with an aramana, as when a form impacts the eye, there needs to be satisampajanna, that is, mindfulness and knowledge of the right kind able to deal with the object so that there won't be any clinging. When satisampajanna arises ignorance won't be able to concoct the sankhara into concocting the vinnanadhatu, into concocting namarupa into becoming the base for those ayatana which will effect the arising of phassa, which will bring forth vedana, tanha, upadana, becoming, birth, and dukkha. The knowledge that all things shouldn't be clung to is the wisdom that will always destroy ignorance. Hence, whenever there's sense impact, of

the eye with a form, for instance, let this knowledge be there and phassa will then be a bare, a mere, phassa, and dukkha won't arise.

This is the practice we need to undertake if we're to deal with those aramana, those sense objects, as when a form, for instance, impacts the eye - and practised in tandem with another technique, both needing to be regularly exercised, as mentioned above. When there are two methods, or modes of practice being employed 'me' and 'mine' won't get the chance to arise, instead they'll succumb, starve, because being denied the food, the sustenance normally supplied by the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, there'll finally come to be a change of mind and tanha, upadana, and all the forms of dukkha will perforce quench away.

These 37 discourses point out the characteristics of 'me' and 'mine,' their root cause, as well as the opposite, that is, the freedom from 'me' and 'mine' and the method of practice that will eliminate them, they being a major problem for the whole of humanity, because all the forms of dukkha beings are afflicted by, no matter how high or low one's existence might be, all of it comes from 'me' and 'mine.' 'Me' and 'mine' are dukkha. As it's said: 'To sum up, the five aggregates affected by clinging are dukkha.' Avijja, ignorance, is the cause of 'me' and 'mine,' and they are the cause of dukkha. Quenching 'me' by quenching avijja means that dukkha will be completely quenched too. So, maintain life carefully with every in and out-breath, both when things are normal and there aren't any dangerous sense experiences disturbing the mind, and when the mind is faced with an aramana. Maintain life by practising properly, that is, by applying the brahmachariya at that moment when an object comes to meet with the senses, thus quenching avijja, the pit from which 'me' and 'mine' come, which will bring lasting peace and happiness both within and without, both individually and throughout society.

For so long as humankind doesn't have access to these truths the human world will continue to experience chaos and continual crises, which no one can do anything about because we continue to act contrary to the Dhamma and to nature itself, or, slipping into the language of supposition, we go against the will of God. It's a struggle with nature and with the Dhamma, or with God, a struggle mankind has no chance of winning. Hence, don't persist in being careless, reconsider, start afresh, develop some right understanding and this time walk in the right path, physically, verbally, and mentally do the right things and we'll, without doubt, meet with the best thing a human creature could meet with.

This is the purpose of Buddhism. The essence of Buddhism is just this. Those wishing to meet with the true Buddhism and really benefit from it should try to study and to practise with care and they will get the fullest benefit.