



FOREST DESANAS

21 talks on Dhamma

**by the Venerable Acharn
Mahā Bua Ñāṇasampanno**

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Table of Contents

<i>The Dhamma Weapon</i>	5
<i>The Guiding Principle</i>	9
<i>Cause for Schism</i>	17
<i>The Dhamma Water</i>	25
<i>Calming the Citta with Paññā</i>	33
<i>The Four Satipaṭṭhānas</i>	37
<i>The Ovādapāṭimokkha</i>	43
<i>Investigation Methods</i>	49
<i>Looking Always at the Heart</i>	55
<i>Dukkha</i>	65
<i>Two Kinds of Knowledge</i>	73
<i>A Lifetime Endeavour</i>	81
<i>Genuine Progress</i>	87
<i>Mental Development</i>	91
<i>The Dhamma Teaching</i>	95
<i>Watching Your Thoughts</i>	101
<i>The Four Requisites</i>	107
<i>Exposition on the Buddha</i>	113
<i>The Four Noble Truths</i>	117
<i>The Importance of Correct Behaviour</i>	121
<i>Investigating Avijjā</i>	125
<i>A Glossary of Pali and Buddhist Terms</i>	131

The Dhamma Weapon

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The term ‘Majjhimā’, or suitability, refers to the application of the Dhamma weapon to encounter and overwhelm any kind of kilesa that might appear. When the strength of this Dhamma weapon matches the strength of the kilesas, then we can withstand them. But there is still the possibility of the kilesas overwhelming and defeating us. But if we are tougher and a lot more forceful than the kilesas, then they will steadily diminish. We will come to see the result which will testify to the efficacy of our exertion at this stage, using this particular kind of Majjhimā as the means of countering the kilesas. We will then use this particular method of practice in the future.

One must steadily and constantly do the work of suppressing and eradicating the kilesas. When the kilesas steadily weaken, the application of the Majjhimā Dhamma will be automatically adjusted to the intensity of the kilesas. When the kilesas are violent and vehement, then the Majjhimā Dhamma must be equally forceful and vigorous. One must really stand one’s ground and fight to the death. One must not retreat one step or back down. One must not abandon or let go of one’s sati and paññā, which is the foremost and the principal weapon, such as during the time when dukkha-vedanā or pain appears within the body due to sitting for a long time. There will be a lot of pain in the various parts of the body, which becomes more intense and severe. It will yield no result or benefit if we merely endure this pain. We must use our endurance and perseverance in our contention and in our struggle with sati and paññā. Paññā will have to dig and search, probe and analyse, for the truth of the dukkha-vedanā or pain which is appearing at that time, by constantly having sati controlling and directing the work of paññā. Both of these factors must be relentlessly performing their work.

One has to investigate to see where this pain arises. It will be unavoidable that there will be the presumption and assumption that pain arises from any one particular part of the body. For instance, at the knee or round the waist, or at the bottom, or at the thighs around the pelvis, or at any other particular part. Whichever part seems to be most profoundly affected by this pain is where one has to focus one’s sati and paññā. One has to examine and find out what is the cause of this pain. What is it that is being afflicted? Is it the flesh, or is it the skin? Or the sinews or the bones? One has to examine the flesh, and then compare it with the pain to find out if they are one and the same thing. Are they similar to one another? The flesh has a physical appearance and characteristic, but the pain doesn’t. It simply manifests itself. This is the way of differentiating them so that one can see them clearly as they are. This work of differentiating must rely on sati to direct and focus paññā to probe and examine the nature of pain and the nature of the flesh.

Then one’s understanding, perception, and insight of this truth will be consistent and continuous. One must not relent in the application of one’s sati and paññā, as they must always go together in a pair as they investigate all of the sabhāvadhammas or phenomena like the pain and the flesh. If we want to isolate a bone for investigation, because there are aches and pains in the bone and we have the understanding that this bone is being afflicted by pain, we must then concentrate our attention in looking at this pain until we can see it very clearly. Then we have to look at the bone itself to see what kind of characteristics it has, for the bones have their distinct characteristics, features, and colours. But this pain has no such features. It is simply pain, similar to the pain that we have alleged to be arising from the flesh. It is just our presumption to think that the flesh is being afflicted with pain. Whether it is the pain of the skin, the flesh, or the bones, it always has the same characteristic. But the skin, flesh, and bones, all have different characteristics. How can they be pain? Let’s consider when a person is dead. The bones, the flesh, the sinews and the skin still remain. But there is no pain. If they are one and the same thing, why is there no pain in a dead person, in spite of the fact that the skin, the flesh, the sinews, and the bones are still there? If this is the case, how can we consider them to be one and the same thing? This is one aspect of investigation.

The second aspect deals with the citta, which is terribly important. We must now isolate the citta and look into it. Is the citta afflicted with pain? If it is not any single part of the body that is being afflicted with pain, then is it the citta that is being so afflicted? We have to look at the citta and at the pain, and also at the body to see how they are different from one another. All the citta has is just knowingness. Whether pain arises, remains or disappears, this knowingness is still there. Even before this pain arose, this knowingness was still there. If the pain is the citta and the citta is the pain, then when the pain disappears the citta must also disappear. The citta, knowingness, should not remain. If they are one and the same thing, then it would have to be like this.

But what happened here was that when the pain vanished, this knowingness still remained, and before this pain arose, the citta also knew. How can they be considered one and the same thing? We have to identify the saññā that alleges this thing or that thing is painful, the flesh is painful, the sinews are painful, the bones are painful, the heart is painful. In short, we are painful! When it gets to the point where ‘we are painful!’, then it can be excruciating. We have to differentiate and analyse so that we can see it clearly as it is. This is one type of Majjhimā to be used in combating the pain that becomes extremely intense after we have sat for a long time, or when we are afflicted with illness.

This is especially so during the last moments when we are about to pass away. Then the pain will launch its full onslaught. It will attack us with maximum force, to the extent where we may not be able to withstand it, but perish right there and then. Between this pain that is so severe that we are unable to withstand it and will have to pass away, and the pain that arises from practice - of these two types of pain - which is more severe? If we are not capable of realising the true nature of pain, by doing the investigation at this time, how then can we gain insight into the true nature of pain that arises at the time when we are about to pass away, when the pain is at its maximum intensity?

If our work of investigation is in vain at this time, then when we die we will also die in vain. We will never be able to come up with any truth to hold on to as our support. We have to investigate until we gain true realisation and insight into the nature of pain, of the body and all its parts, like the skin, the flesh, the bones, and the sinews. We must investigate with paññā until we see that the citta is the citta, that each separate phenomenon is a separate truth, that pain is just pain, then it is possible for us to separate ourselves from them. Even if the pain doesn’t disappear, it will not be able to disturb, agitate, confuse and trouble the heart. We will remain at ease, comfortable, bold and courageous. We will have a shield protecting our heart. Each of these phenomena is real. They do not affect one another. The body is merely the body, the pain is merely the pain, and the citta is merely the citta. They each are real. This is how I myself was able to perceive them with sati and paññā. This is another aspect of the Majjhimā that we will have to apply in our practice.

When rāgataṇhā or lust becomes very intense, we will have to apply the means that is equally forceful and strong. We have to counter it with its opposites. We have to bring in the nimitta of aśubha or the contemplation of loathsomeness. We have to visualise a body that is very sexy and beautiful in our mind, and then break it down, decompose it, until it becomes bloated, rotten, being devoured by vultures, crows, and dogs. How then can there be any lust or infatuation? This is the way of the Majjhimā - this is how we will have to apply it. We have to come up with the tool that is suitable for the different kinds of kilesas that exhibit themselves. No matter how forceful and violent, or how subtle they might be, we have to come up with the appropriate tools that will neutralise them. Or else we will never achieve our goal. It is the same way with aśubha. We have to do it in a way that will catch up with the kilesas and see them clearly within our hearts.

We have to counter and overwhelm each different kind of kilesa with the appropriate kind of Majjhimā. Then we will live in peace and happiness. The Dhamma teaching of the Lord Buddha which we call the Majjhimā is of many different levels or categories. When we have established bases within ourselves, then the Majjhimā that we have utilised will now have to vary to suit the various kinds of kilesas that still exist and which are far more subtle, until this Majjhimā flows continually, day and night, due to our relentless investigation. When the kilesas become more subtle, then paññā will also become correspondingly more subtle. The things that are capable of catching up with the kilesas are sati and paññā. No matter how the kilesas may manifest themselves; sati and paññā will always catch up with them, and outwit them.

You have to apply this sati and paññā, and really investigate, doing it thoroughly. Don’t remain idle, doing nothing. Don’t be weak or discouraged. Don’t project difficulties into the future. Don’t think that in the future it will be very hard to do the practice. If we want to think, then we should think that the kilesas will always be menacing and trampling over our heart in every form of existence that we will take up. This will go on ceaselessly if we cannot find a way of eliminating them. They will be the ruler of the heart, and subject it to take up birth in the various forms of existence following the kamma that we have accumulated in the past. We will be totally useless if we allow the kilesas to menace and damage ourselves. If we are going to think about the future, this is how we should think. It is only the present that is of any importance. We have to pick ourselves up, stand our ground, set up our resolve, and not back down.

The Lord Buddha had vouched for the efficacy and the result of all the Dhamma that he laid down for us. He was the first one to cultivate this Dhamma, and was able to attain the fruits, rising up steadily from the mundane state of existence to the state of illumination, to the state of Buddhho or the state of purity, by the power of this Dhamma. The Lord Buddha had tested this Dhamma before expounding it to us, so how can this Dhamma go off the mark? The kilesas can never surpass this Dhamma. Every kind of Dhamma

surpasses and outsmarts every kind of kilesa. If we apply the Dhamma that is suitable to each different type of kilesa, then it is certain that we will overcome and vanquish every kind of kilesa. This is the fundamental principle that we have to consider and apply in our practice.

We have to exert ourselves to the utmost and be very diligent and enterprising. We should not see anything to be more valuable than Dhamma to the extent where we become obsessed and engrossed in it; or see anything to be more valuable than the state of deliverance from the kilesas and āsava, which oppress the heart. This is a crucial point. We should aspire for the happiness that arises from being totally free of all kinds of kilesas, as this is the everlasting happiness that is totally independent of time, the happiness that lasts forever. You have to set up your determination to concentrate in your investigation. I teach you, my fellows in the Dhamma, wholeheartedly and with pure intention. I have not kept any secret from you. I teach and bring to light the various means and methods in coping, conquering, and overcoming those influences that are harmful and antagonistic to the heart, from my personal and practical experience. I illustrate and point out all the facts and know-how of practice.

You must strive relentlessly in your exertion and set your heart into the practice. Sati or mindfulness is terribly important. You must always maintain your sati. Don't be careless or unmindful. But when we come together the tendency is for us to be absent-minded and to lose our guard, like the time when we come to have our hot drinks, or while we are walking along the path together, or when we have to work together. We tend to be unmindful, to the extent where we become carried away and become somewhat wild and reckless. Don't let this happen within the circle of the practitioner who sees the danger of the *vaṭṭa saṃsāra*, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, and the menace of the kilesas. While we are walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, while we are eating or drinking, we must always be seeing the harm of the kilesas. Don't be immersed in the pleasure of eating. While standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, don't be immersed in reverie and fantasy, nor be heedless or negligent, for this is not the way of the Lord Buddha.

This is not the way for one who is going to be free from dukkha. Remember this very well. Wherever you are, be possessed with sati. Don't be negligent or heedless. Be possessed with sati always. You must really and firmly establish your sati. Don't waste your time thinking of or concocting the things that you have done countless times before. All there is in this *vaṭṭa saṃsāra* and this entire world is just our thinking and concoction that agitates and troubles our hearts. Haven't we seen their menace already? Why do we have to cherish them and be immersed in thinking about them? We should learn our lesson well from those things which have been harmful to us. We should avoid and stop that kind of thinking, and try to suppress and eradicate all those things that are harmful to us, namely our thinking and concocting. Let us think in the way of the Dhamma, so that the Dhamma can appear. Then all the thinking that goes in the way of *samudaya* will gradually fade away. Then this other thinking can spring forth becoming truth and Dhamma that is capable of overcoming the kilesas and āsava.

The citta that steadily attains calm is the result of our practice. Let us not put the blame on our *vasanā* or endowments or gifts. The kilesas pay no attention to the *vasanā* of anyone. Regardless of the numbers of the kilesas, they all are always harmful to us. We have to look at the kilesas as a curse and as the devil. We must not think about those *vasanās* that can help us eradicate the kilesas, apart from thinking about our diligent effort and strenuous exertion, having sati and *paññā* as our weapon. This is the crucial criterion for the eradication and suppression of the kilesas. Don't be concerned with the *vasanās*, for this can only cause us to become weak and discouraged. Then we will not succeed. We have to be tough and strong, we who are the practitioners.

When I heard Tan Ajaan Mun relate the way that he had exerted himself, I was moved with sympathy and compassion for him, for he was really earnest and serious, putting his whole life into it. He really sought for the truth and Dhamma, without anyone to teach and guide him. He kept on struggling and ploughing through doggedly by himself with only the aid of the scriptures that were presented in general terms, and was eventually able to succeed and become our wonderful teacher of this era. Before he could become famous and an honour to Buddhism, and be respected and venerated both by those who had gone forth and by the laity, he had to really struggle. He was really earnest and serious, really putting up his life in exchange for what he was looking for. It was this that enabled him to become wonderful and noble, and to be free from all forms of dukkha. No form of *samudaya* or conventional reality could delude him any longer, from that very moment on to the end of time.

This is what is meant by 'Nibbāna is permanent'. The kilesas are impermanent, for they are *samudaya*, which have both *sukha* and *dukkha*, gain and loss. They make people happy and sad, and will always do so. When we have eliminated all of them, then it is no longer an issue to say whether the citta is permanent or not, or whether *nibbāna* is permanent or not. It is only the kilesas that infiltrate the citta that make it have its

ups and downs, highs and lows, constantly changing and not remaining the same. It keeps changing from sukha to dukkha, from being luminous to being dull, from being confused and agitated to being calm. These are all the influences of the kilesas. But when the kilesas calm down due to our exertion, then the heart also attains calm. If our exertion becomes more intense, then our mind will get calmer. When we can overcome any particular kind of kilesa, then that kilesa will disappear forever. We will keep on overcoming and getting rid of every kind of kilesa, until there isn't a single one left within the heart.

We will then not have to go looking for any happiness anywhere else. We can see very clearly that the reason that we cannot find any happiness is because of the kilesas which obstruct and oppress us with dukkha. We have to shoulder the burden of this dukkha constantly - all of the time, in all the various forms of existence right on up to the present one. But when we are totally free from this oppression of the kilesas and they have been totally vanquished from the heart, then it is not necessary to ask about the akāliko citta, the timeless citta or the akāliko Dhamma, the timeless Dhamma, or the Dhammopadipo, the radiance of Dhamma which is constant and unchanging. We don't have to ask about these things, for they will be found within our mind.

You must really strive in achieving this, for it is the most valuable treasure - much more precious than all the other possessions of the world that are highly cherished and valued, with tremendous greed for them, and boundless desire to acquire them. Although one might already have lots of them, one still wants more of them. This is the way of lobha or greed. The ambition for power and influence is also the work of the kilesas. Greed, or lobha, is the work of the kilesas. Hatred is the work of the kilesas. Delusion is the work of the kilesas, as well as the confusion and trouble of both the body and the heart. They are all the work of the kilesas. They are not the work of Dhamma. Although it might have to go through dukkha, the work of Dhamma is the work for happiness. This dukkha is the investment capital; the sukha is the profit that arises therefrom. This is not the dukkha that is damaging and menacing without there being any reward, like the dukkha created by the kilesas to destroy people. This dukkha is different.

When we strive in our exertion, if there is dukkha then let us face it, so long as the results are steadily forthcoming and the heart becomes more blissful and joyful until we arrive at the state of perfection when all of our burdens will be discarded. The battle that has been raging intensely against the kilesas like a Dhamma-Cakka turning around relentlessly and ceaselessly both day and night, while walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, with the exception of the time when we go to sleep, will cease immediately when all of our enemies have been totally vanquished. Then the weapon that countered the kilesas, or the mode of our practice that has been turning around like a revolving wheel, will also cease immediately. This is because all of the opposition and all of the enemies that we have been contending with, have all totally disappeared. The battle between the kilesas and the citta has now come to a decisive conclusion. We have won. The conquering of oneself, which is the conquering of the kilesas within one's heart, is far more supreme than conquering other people or winning battles a hundred thousand times. We have to accomplish this task.



The Guiding Principle

June 5th, 1979

No race of people living on this earth, without any exception, lives in isolation. People of every country live in groups, forming societies, forming circles of families and friends. It would be correct to say that people are cowardly, and it would not be wrong to say that people have to socialise and to be involved with one another. We, bhikkhus who are fearless and resolute should live alone in seclusion. But fundamentally we still have to live in groups and in company. We still have to have contact with our peers, though we spend most of the time wandering around and living in seclusion and solitude. But from time to time, there will be the occasion and necessity to come into contact with our peers and our teacher, to ask some of the questions that we might have arising from our practice, and to listen to further instruction about the truth and Dhamma. So in the end, we are also classified as social animals, with the exception that our way is different from that of the other people.

The traditions, customs, rules, and disciplines of the bhikkhus and the laity are different from one another. The traditions and the discipline of the bhikkhus follow the rules of the Dhamma-vinaya, and, therefore, in all our conduct and behaviour we must conform to the principles of the Dhamma-vinaya. We also have to be mindful of our thoughts, and of which way they are going. We have to be concerned with the morals of it, and whether this thinking is going in the right or the wrong way, for it is still possible that even if we are not going against the Vinaya, we could be going against the Dhamma. To break the Vinaya is a grosser offence, whilst breaking the Dhamma is a more subtle violation.

They are all the work of the kilesas, and that is why we have to be careful; for we are here for the purpose of overcoming and correcting the kilesas. We must not take these thoughts lightly. Our actions of body and speech that we exhibit when we communicate with our peers must be watched and observed. Whether we are living in seclusion or in the company of our fellow bhikkhus, we have to be mindful of our conduct and behaviour. We have to be observant of the rules and the discipline which is the Dhamma-vinaya. This is our way of life, and we must not abandon it. When we live with others, we have to follow the traditions, the rules, and the disciplines, of the society that we are living in, and this is the society of the bhikkhu. The laity have their own laws and customs to govern themselves. They have their own ways and customs which are of a coarser nature, as they are not very strict with their behaviour and conduct. It is not like the way of the bhikkhu. Speaking from the principle of the one who has gone forth, the bhikkhu must be careful at all times, and be mindful and observant of all of his behaviour and conduct - every action of body, speech, and heart, and in all postures. We are now living together in a social group made up of varying temperaments and personalities. We bring with us our own old ways and habits. The core of our personality and character is uniquely our own. We have to realise that these are each individual's personal traits and have to be very careful when we exhibit them.

The conduct and behaviour that go contrary to the principles of the Dhamma-vinaya, which affect and disturb our fellow bhikkhus, are not considered as traits or personality. Every one of us here must therefore be very careful, cautious and vigilant, for this is the way of maintaining peace and harmony amongst ourselves. This is the way of preventing any trouble from arising. It is as if we are all of the same organ. Our practice of the chaste and holy life will flow smoothly and with ease, for there will be no mental hindrances or any problem arising from this way of living together. There will be nothing to menace and trouble the heart, nothing to confuse, agitate, or prevent it from becoming calm as one tries to develop samādhi. For this reason, we have to be very careful and vigilant. All of us have to bear this well in mind - that we are now a bhikkhu. We must maintain our status of the bhikkhu, both in our hearts and in our behaviour and conduct, of speech and bodily action. We have to make sure that they don't affect and disturb other people. As far as conceit and snobbery are concerned, this is directly the work of the kilesas. We have to consider them as harmful to ourselves and our colleagues. We must avoid mindlessly exhibiting them and hurting everyone around us, as this is just the way of spreading filth and destroying happiness. This is especially so in the circle of the kammaṭṭhāna bhikkhu, a very refined class of people. Our behaviour and conduct must be virtuous and conform with the principle of the Dhamma-vinaya. This moral excellence does not come from any unestablished principle.

We must strictly adhere to the Dhamma-vinaya as our guiding principle because it is the most sublime. We will see this clearly when we develop our heart. The more refined the heart becomes, the more will we be impressed with the subtlety of Dhamma. But at the same time the kilesas will also become correspond-

ingly more subtle, so we must not be complacent and take them lightly. We always have to be vigilant. The happiness that arises from living together is the consequence of each one of us being careful and cautious, mindful of our kilesas, and preventing them from exhibiting themselves. It is the nature of the kilesas to always agitate us and make us sad and gloomy. At the same time they also affect and disturb others, by creating emotional strain in those people such that they cannot live in peace, for they always have enmity and aversion within themselves. This will significantly damage the work of mental development. Even when there are no tensions, it is already very hard to practise meditation. This is because in the mind there is a natural process that constantly pushes the mind into thinking and concocting about this and that, causing it to become restless and agitated, to the extent where it is impossible to enter into calm, in spite of the application of maximum effort. This is how the mind normally is. And when there are issues and problems to deal with, then it is like adding fire to it, that will only afflict it with more discomfort and stress, which will then spill over to the other members of the community, thus preventing them from living in peace and happiness.

In this way, we just build up a lot of bad kamma for ourselves and others. This is not what a practitioner who strives for the eradication of all forms of immorality, should be doing whilst endeavouring to live together in peace and harmony. We have to oversee ourselves, and have self-control and discipline. Our behaviour and conduct must not go in the way of the kilesas. This is the principle of living together. When there are no clashes or friction, and when we all follow the principle of rationality, truth, and Dhamma, then there will be no room for the ego. We will only uphold what is right based on the principle of Dhamma as the determining factor. Even though the mind might not attain calm, at least there will be no dukkha, as the dukkha will not be able to arise when we have left no room for it to come out. This is one form of peace and happiness: living together harmoniously among friends and among good people. We should not look at each other with enmity, but we should look at each other in the light of reason. If there is the necessity and due reason for us to become involved and enter into contact with one another, we should allow ample room for mettā or goodwill, and make allowances for other people's mistakes. Let bygones be bygones. This is the way of the practitioner. We should not look at others in the light of animosity and enmity. When we see anyone breaking the rules of the Dhamma-vinaya, then we must warn and admonish him. We must gladly take and listen to any warnings and admonishments from our fellow bhikkhus.

The one who listens does so in the light of Dhamma, for the purpose of correcting the wrong that he has committed, so that he can conform to the right way that has been pointed out by his peers. This is the proper way for both parties, both the one who gives the admonishment and the one who takes the warning. The one who admonishes does so in the light of Dhamma. He does not do it out of displeasure or dislike, or for the sake of finding fault with another, or to humiliate and embarrass the other person. The one who takes the admonishment also does so in the light of Dhamma. He respectfully takes the criticism as if he is being shown a store of great treasures. This is right and proper for both sides. Living together in harmony is important. If one of the members of the community behaves badly, then it will have an adverse effect on every other member of the community. For this reason, living together means that each one has to be careful and cautious. There should always be forgiveness for one another, befitting our status as the practitioners of Dhamma who are filled with Dhamma within our hearts, and being principally endowed with mettā and karunā, love and compassion. For this is the basic constituent of the mind of the practitioner. A practitioner must always cultivate mettā towards all living beings: 'Sabbe sattā averā hontu', and so forth. Furthermore, one also cultivates the Karaniya Mettā Sutta, and the other suttas dealing with the brahma-vihāras, the four sublime abodes. A bhikkhu must always cultivate these thoughts. What I have shown here is only an example. It is for you to take it up and develop it in your practice. The cultivation of mettā is for happiness and coolness.

Furthermore, you have to cultivate yourselves in the practice of mental development. Don't engross yourselves in the thoughts of animosity and distaste for anyone. You have to consider that we are living together following the way of Dhamma. Always be forgiving and magnanimous. A bhikkhu is one who can sacrifice everything. A bhikkhu is always forgiving. If a bhikkhu cannot forgive, then nobody else can. This is the crucial principle that the bhikkhu should follow. Then when we live together, we will live in peace and harmony, in happiness and coolness. This is the governing principle of a community. It is for this reason that it is not possible for me to accept too many bhikkhus. I have thoroughly considered this. I am not concerned that there might not be enough of the living requisites to go around, for I am looking from the standpoint of supervision. When I have to oversee a lot of people, I will not be able to give adequate attention to everyone. There is also a greater possibility for one of us to cause damage and disturbance to the rest of us. There will then be chaos and trouble for the whole community. This is not good or desirable. But when I can maintain the numbers of you here at the optimum level, then my instructions to you can be

to the fullest benefit, and I can give you all the necessary attention. Excess breeds mediocrity. When there are too many of us, then whatever we do will take longer.

For instance, the time that we spend eating will be much longer instead of shorter. We have to spend more time getting things done. By the time we finish our chores, it can be quite late in the day. There will be a lot more work to do just to take care of all of us. The more people we have, the more work we have to do. Then there will be less time left for practice, and less benefit. For this reason, I only accept just enough, because this is just about the right number. If I take any more it will be excessive. Things can go badly if there are too many. The possibility of people making a mess of things is far greater, and there will just be more clumsiness and incompetence. And it will just be a nuisance for me. I have a lot of mettā and compassion for my Dhamma colleagues. How can I not have any compassion for those who are seeking for Dhamma? I also used to be a junior bhikkhu who was searching for a teacher. I had to go through many teachers before I finally ran into Tan Ajaan Mun. I sympathise and understand your feelings and your predicament, for I have put myself in your place. Otherwise, I would not be able to know how to deal with you. This is because both of our predicaments are of the same nature, for we are in the same boat.

The way things are now, some of you might think that this temple is very strict and very resolute, and very rigorous and scrupulous. This is because you haven't seen how I practised in the past. The laypersons applaud this monastery as being unsurpassed by any other monastery, concerning our strict observance of the rules and the discipline, of orderliness and cleanliness, and of the bhikkhus who are obedient, and well-behaved, not showing any signs of transgression and mischief. This is how they sing our praises. But we should not indulge in this sort of compliment, for I have really been very lax with all of you. And what is the reason for this slackness? It is simply because there are just a lot of you now, and this laxness is the natural consequence of it. When there are more of you, then this laxness increases, and the amount of the gifts and the living requisites also increases correspondingly, as you all can see. But our practice and exertion does not become more rigorous and intensive. There are also a lot more people that come into contact and involvement with the monastery. So the more people there are, the more work there is. But there isn't much that we can do about it, as this is their faith and conviction. They come voluntarily, and nobody can prevent them from doing this. The amount of food that we are getting nowadays is grossly in abundance. This excess of the living requisites, and of the gifts and offerings, can weigh down on the practice of mind development. If one is not careful, one will steadily degenerate, without any doubt. For this reason, the practitioner must always see the harm of these things, and must not become too involved. If he does, he will be buried by them and his Dhamma virtue destroyed. He will never progress. We must, therefore, be vigilant.

Meditation practice is extremely vital for mental development. We must be courageous, firm, conscientious, and resolute, not weak or discouraged. Otherwise, we will fail and not achieve any beneficial results. We have to always remind ourselves that every type of kilesa is extremely tenacious. They are far more clever and cunning than we are. If we act foolishly and practise heedlessly and senselessly, then we will never be able to subdue or eliminate any of the kilesas, because they will always be more powerful, shrewd and crafty than we are, and that is why they are our master. We might think that we are the masters, but truly, we are not. We are just the kilesas' servants without knowing it. All of our thoughts are initiated by the kilesas. They direct us to think in a way that will generate a lot of agitation and confusion, brew up hatred and aversion. Love and anger are the kilesas' creations. Can we not see that they are perilous and harmful? How can we consider ourselves more clever than them, and capable of outwitting them? We are always following their lead every time that we think. We never realise that hatred is just the work of the kilesas. We never realise that anger is also the work of the kilesas. The same with love and aversion. We are not aware that they are the strategy of the kilesas that push and propel these things into being. But if we know this at every moment, then the kilesas can definitely be subdued. This is a very crucial point for the practitioner. We must constantly keep this well in mind.

We have to realise that there is a very great difference in skill and aptitude between ourselves and the kilesas. With what can the kilesas be conquered? It is nothing else but our saddhā, conviction, sati, mindfulness, paññā, discernment and viriya, our diligent effort, acting as the support. Sati is terribly important. Paññā is the tool that does the work of analysis and examination, countering and contending with the kilesas. Sati is the overseer, making sure that we do not lose our guard. And when we have been relentlessly developing and exerting ourselves, then sati will become highly developed. It will then become sampajañña, constant awareness. This is the outgrowth of mindfulness. After sampajañña, it will become mahāsati. It is likewise with paññā, which starts with difficulty in the beginning. Please don't have the understanding that paññā will arise by itself. We have to devise the various ways of thinking, contemplation and analysis that are versatile and many-sided. In whatever way we can eliminate the kilesas and subdue and calm them

down, that way is Dhamma. This is the paññā-Dhamma. We must not entirely rely on the scriptures, for otherwise we will turn into worms eating up the paper. All the Dhamma that the Lord Buddha taught came out of his heart. The Dhamma is found within the heart. Sati-paññā is also found within the heart. We have to bring them out. We have to produce them. Then we will be able to see into the principle of cause and effect, and use it to contend with the kilesas that are extremely cunning and clever. They are always the master in every instant of our thinking and concocting, and during every moment of contact through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, which all converge and become the Dhammārammaṇa, mental objects right within the heart. These are all the work of the kilesas. The reason why we still cannot see the danger of the kilesas is because we are still a lot more foolish than they are. If we are a lot wiser, then when they begin to concoct, we will be aware of them. As soon as they concoct, we will know. We have to strive in this way, and then the result will be as I have just said, without any doubt.

We have to be constantly developing and training our mind. The practice of fasting is a very good way of reducing restlessness and agitation. It is one means of supporting our exertion. The fasting practitioner must be careful every time he fasts. It happened to me before, and I am giving you some precautions. In the beginning stages of fasting, the mind will become consistently cool and calm; the mind is fully possessed with mindfulness and one is hardly ever off-guard. But when one takes some food, then one becomes unmindful and inattentive, which is something quite normal. When we fast again the result might not be like before. Instead of becoming cool and calm, we become disappointed and saddened. The mind now yearns for the past result and neglects the work at hand, which is the establishing of mindfulness. Thinking of the past has now replaced it, and therefore, the results are not forthcoming. We have to cut off this yearning and concentrate on developing mindfulness. Whatever has happened in the past, however firm and stable the mind was before, it has already happened. They were the results gained from our exertion, the same kind of exertion that we are now putting forth, which is the establishing of mindfulness. These results cannot come forth by any other means.

We must stay in the present. Don't rake up the past by hankering for the past results. However lofty they might have been, we must now forget them. Don't think of them, for they will just agitate and disturb the heart. We will then not be able to attain calm. Then there will just be regret and frustration, and grumbling and complaining that this is not like before. This is one form of hindrance. For this reason, I am exhorting you not to become involved with thinking about what happened in the past. We must remain in the present and ask ourselves: 'How am I doing? Why is the mind not calm?' We must focus our attention here. If we cannot take hold of the knowing, then we must not abandon our mantra or parikamma object. Wherever we go, we have to stay close to the mind. Keep the mind constantly concentrating on the mantra, using it as the meditation subject. Whatever it may be, be it 'Buddho' or 'aṭṭhi' or 'kesā', 'lomā', 'nakhā', 'dantā', or 'taco', keep the mind concentrating and holding on to it. Don't let the mind think about other things. If we are not mindful, the kilesas will then direct it to think about other things. When we are mindful of the mantra, the mind will then become calm. This is the key to a successful practice. In the beginning stages, when we try to establish calm, it is quite difficult. But no matter how hard it is, we must not let it bother us. We must consider our exertion to be free from dukkha extremely vital for us and we have to continually exert ourselves.

We have to develop mindfulness until it becomes stable, continuous and persistent. When the time is appropriate for paññā to do the work of investigation and analysis, we must then do it using both the internal and the external as the objects of investigation and comparison. Magga can be found in both the internal and the external. Paññā can be found both internally and externally, if one just develops it so that it actually becomes paññā, which is also called the magga. And what aspect are we going to investigate in the light of aniccaṃ or impermanence, for instance? We can take the external as the objects of investigation, and then compare them with the internal. This can be done. Or we can compare the internal with the external, for in fact they are one and the same thing. There is no difference between them concerning aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā, or asubha, loathsomeness, or paṭikkūla, filth and impurity. They can be found, both internally and externally, in all men and women, people and animals. We can investigate and analyse in any way that we devise, at any appropriate time. But when we develop calm, we must solely concentrate on calming the mind, using a mantra or ānāpānasati, mindfulness of breathing as our meditation subject, that suits our temperament and character. The work must be flowing continuously, having sati constantly supervising. Then our knowing will continuously flow with the work. Once the knowing is in perpetual contact with the meditation object, and the mind doesn't have any chance to wander here and there, the mental stream will then steadily converge into the centre of calm. It now becomes the unique and distinctive feature of the mind. When this feature becomes more apparent, the mind will become calmer. All the thinking and concocting will gradually diminish. The recollection of the mantra will also decrease. What takes its place now is this

very distinctive knowing. Whether we recollect the mantra or not, this knowing will still remain. This is what is meant by the mind converging into itself and ‘becoming itself’. This is the calming of the mind.

You have to really and earnestly concentrate in doing this work. Dhamma is the most supreme and wonderful thing, unsurpassed by any other thing. The kilesas are ignoble, despicable, filthy and corrupt. When we haven’t yet seen and experienced this marvellous Dhamma, we have nothing to compare the kilesas with. So we always follow the kilesas, always believe them, and let them rock us to sleep. But when we have something to compare it with, then we can see that the kilesas are fake. Dhamma will then become real, and become the truth. It will then compete with the kilesas. We will then gradually let go of the kilesas, and see the harm of every kind of kilesa at every moment. This is because we now have the Dhamma as a comparison and as a competitor. Whether it is the calm or the discerning ability of the heart, whatever level of calm it is and however brilliant and subtle *paññā* may be, all of them are Dhamma. These Dhammas are the competitors of the kilesas. We will get to know immediately the difference between the Dhamma and the kilesas, concerning the benefits, ease, comfort, and happiness that they can provide. This is how it will be for all practitioners who do not relent in their exertion, and who strive in ridding all the kilesas from their heart. They achieve this by the power of the Dhamma. The taste of Dhamma excels all other tastes. All other tastes are nothing but the taste of the kilesas. What else can they be? Whatever flavour it may be, it is usually the flavour of the kilesas.

The Dhamma always outstrips the kilesas. The kilesas always surrender to the Dhamma. They are not afraid of anything else but the Dhamma. They capitulate to the Dhamma. So how do we make the kilesas surrender and be fearful of the Dhamma? We must develop and train ourselves with the Dhamma. We must not relent or back down. We will then experience calm and insight right within the heart. We will also discover the means and techniques used in subduing the kilesas right within the heart. Once we have cleared the way of hindrances, then the Dhamma will have the opportunity to grow steadily, not dependent on time or place or postures. When the opportunity is there, the Dhamma will steadily appear, just like when the kilesas emerge. When the conditions are right for them to appear, then they will appear. The more the kilesas appear, then the more the dukkha. The more the Dhamma emerges, then the more the happiness. This is the basis of comparison and competition between the Dhamma and the kilesas that can be seen clearly within our hearts. The kilesas have ruled over our hearts for a long time. Aren’t we ever going to learn our lesson about their menace? It is about time that we did so now, as there is now the Dhamma that will serve as the competitor to them, and the object of comparison and contrast.

We will then begin to exert in our practice, and keep on driving inwards. At least we should try to make our heart calm, so that we can have peace and happiness. For one who has gone forth, especially if he is a practitioner, if he doesn’t have any calm within his heart, he will never have any happiness. Living amongst his peers, he will see that everything around him is antagonistic to him. Though he might not exhibit this externally, it will be building up within his heart. He will not be able to see how wonderful and noble all of his teachers are because his mind is burning with fire. All of his thoughts are fiery. When the mind doesn’t have anything unusual or marvellous within itself, but is fully possessed with the kilesas. Then, when he thinks about his peers, his fellows in Dhamma, and his teachers, it will all go in the way of the kilesas. He will not be able to see their marvel and wonder. He will become dull, weak, discouraged, always retreating, letting the kilesas trample upon him, totally tearing him into pieces. Does this befit us who are the practitioners, the followers of the Tathāgata, who take up the foremost and most supreme Dhamma of the Lord Buddha? We are making ourselves vulnerable to the kilesas, and letting them trample all over us from the tops of our heads down to the soles of our feet, for countless lives. And we still have not learned our lesson yet! When are we ever going to come up with any wisdom? How can we ever believe in the Lord Buddha? It is more correct to say that we take up ‘*Rāga-tañhā saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*’, lust as our refuge. There is just empty wind when we utter ‘*Buddhaṃ, Dhammaṃ, Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*’, for truly it is all the time ‘*Rāga, dosa, moha saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*’, as we are much closer to them than to the Dhamma. We only think about the Dhamma occasionally. But the kilesas are ever-present, deeply buried and completely merged with the heart itself. There is no way that the Dhamma can infiltrate the heart to make it marvellous and wonderful.

But when the mind has attained calm, we will then see our worth and assets, and see the merit and virtue of the heart, of our colleagues, and of our teacher. The more subtle and lofty the mind becomes, the more we will come to see the marvel and greatness of our teacher. And why is this so? Previously, when our teacher taught us the Dhamma instructions in their depth, profundity and subtlety, we could only listen. It never got to our hearts. But when we have experienced the Dhamma like the state of calm, we can see clearly that it is exactly as our teacher had explained. It is now a living reality within our hearts. All the various levels of sati and *paññā* instructed by our teacher have now also appeared within our hearts. We will see clearly within the heart the results that arise from the investigation of *paññā* that overcomes, uproots, and eliminates the

kilesas, until the heart becomes purified. The intensity of our conviction, belief, and admiration for our colleagues and our teacher, will become heightened as the mind remains with the way of Dhamma. You have to put in the effort yourselves. I try my best to provide all of you with favourable times and opportunities to practise. I try to keep all the extra-curricular activities to the minimum, so that you can really strive in your practice. If you find walking meditation is good for you, then you should keep on walking. If you are not doing any other kind of work, then you should do a lot of walking meditation. The body can be adversely affected if it is not given the proper work-out and exercise. You should, therefore, do a lot of walking meditation, as a way of working-out.

Sitting for a long time or sitting a lot depends on your ability. This is not something that can be forced upon you. It depends on your own disposition, and what is suitable for you. As far as I myself was concerned, in the beginning stages of practice I found it quite painful after sitting for about 30 minutes. But then I was able to extend it to an hour, an hour and a half, two hours, and three hours and four hours, sitting each time. During each session of sitting, I usually sat for about three or four hours. But when the time came for putting in an all-out effort, then it just happened by itself. There is a time when you come to a critical situation, with which you will have to contend until you come up with the results and come to true realisation and insight. This is when you go into the ring and put your whole life at stake, like sitting all night. I had never anticipated doing this before. But as I began to sit, then the kilesas would begin to gather up their forces and really strike at and swoop down on me. I began to wonder what was going on. It seemed like I was being obstinate and unyielding, though it was going in the way of Dhamma. I said ‘What is happening?’ This is the way of the magga, contending with my own kilesas. I’m not picking a fight with anyone. If I’m fighting with other people, then this is the work of the kilesas. But if I’m doing it for the purpose of conquering myself, then this must be the magga, the weapon to fight the kilesas with. My mind now begins to turn around incessantly, but when it stops, I then say ‘Alright, it’s either I realise the truth or death!’

I immediately set up a resolve: ‘Today I have to get to see the truth that is manifesting itself right at this time. What is it like? If I don’t die, then I have to remain sitting until morning before I will get up from this seat. From this moment until dawn, I will not let anything come to sidetrack me from this work’. The mind then begins to turn around investigating incessantly. That is how it was when I sat meditating all night long. When you have established a firm foundation from this way of practice, then this becomes a very good way to proceed. You will have no qualms, nor have any fear of the pain that you have investigated before, now that you know how to totally separate the pain from the heart. It can no longer enter the heart and affect it in any way. You have clearly realised the truth of the body. Every part of the body is one form of truth, it is as it is. The pain that appears doesn’t know that it is painful. It is one form of process or condition, one form of truth. It exists as it is. It is the mind that alleges that I am painful, that I am experiencing the pain, rounding it all into this ‘I’. When the body, the pain, and ‘I’ are mixed together, the mind then ends up burning itself, because paññā cannot catch up with this delusion. But when paññā has analysed and differentiated every part of the body and the nature of pain, and seen them according to the truth, then every part of the body is just the body, the pain is just the pain. They are all just as they are, and as they have been since ancient times. Pain is a condition that arises, remains, and disappears, as it is natural for it to do so. It is the mind that supposes, assumes and presumes. Saññā is really the chief culprit here. When you understand this, then the mind will steadily draw inwards. Actually it is saññā that is steadily drawing inwards. You will then get to see the truth within your heart. The heart then becomes real, the body is real, and so is the pain. They each are real. Although the pain did not disappear, it will not affect the heart. The heart will remain calm and at ease.

This is an extremely crucial technique, for you have now established a base. You are now bold and courageous, and the mind becomes sublime, elegant, brilliant and luminous. You can now see the indescribable marvel within your heart that you have never experienced before. With this much success, you are quite proud of yourself. You can now fearlessly face up to the pain, as well as coming face to face with death. You will just say, ‘Where will this death come from? What form of pain can deceive me? At the time of death, what kind of pain can appear if not this same kind of pain that is appearing at this time? But I have already understood the truth of the pain that is appearing at this time. For me, death really has no meaning or significance at all. All that is necessary is to get to know the truth. The four elements of earth, water, air, and fire, will just dissolve from this body. They just return to their original state. And how can the mind die? Whilst I think that it passes away, it instead becomes more distinct and remains knowing. So what really dies? Do the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire, ever really die? Have they ever been destroyed? Of course not! It never happened! And how can the mind die, when I can see it becoming more distinct and obvious? Is this the one that is going to die? How can it die? I cannot find the cause of it’. It just manifests itself more distinctly and obviously. I become very brave and courageous. This is speaking about the time when it is suitable to put in an all-out effort into the practice. This will come by itself.

May all of you put in your effort and strive in your practice. Don't relent or retreat, and be always and constantly endeavouring and striving. You have to take hold of this supreme treasure, and make it your own possession right within your heart. As far as the kilesas which are ruling over your hearts are concerned, they have been here for aeons, their origin untraceable. This is due to your delusion that makes you fall completely under the control of the kilesas, allowing them to trample on and damage your heart, pushing you to take birth in the various forms of existence. Whatever form of birth you take up, it is all due to the influence of the kilesas. It is the kilesas that lead you to be born and die, to suffer pain, trouble and hardship. If you cannot see the harm of the kilesas, then what can you see the harm of? There is nothing else that is harmful to you. The external conditions such as the climate, the hot and the cold weather, are all something quite ordinary. They are not as dangerous as the kilesas which hurt and oppress you. This is how you have to see the danger of the kilesas. Then it will be possible for the heart to live in peace and tranquillity. In practice, there are two essential keys to success. The first one is when you come to the true conviction in the principle of Dhamma, when you have established a firm foundation for the heart, and are completely certain that the mind will no longer deteriorate. It can be achieved by sitting all night. This accomplishment will be clearly perceived. You now know definitely that the mind will now not deteriorate. You then move on to eliminate rāga or lust by incessantly contemplating on the loathsome nature of the body, which is a bit tricky but you will eventually achieve it. You then move on to the last stage of your practice, to the pinnacle of the heart, to the pinnacle of knowledge, and to the pinnacle of your practice, where you will find that this is also a bit tricky to achieve. If you have not 'cracked' this secret yet, you will not be able to explain it to another practitioner. You can only learn it from practical experience.

This is similar to what the scriptures say: That an ordinary person who has not yet realised any of the four stages of enlightenment is not capable of solving the problems of a sotāpanna. A sotāpanna is not capable of solving the problems of a sakadāgāmī. A sakadāgāmī is not capable of solving the problems of an anāgāmī. An anāgāmī is not capable of solving the problems of an arahant. An arahant is not capable of solving the problems of the Lord Buddha. Also, no other arahant is capable of solving the problems of the Venerable Sāriputta and the Venerable Mogallāna, problems that are not about the elimination of the kilesas, but are beyond the ability of the other arahants. But when I spoke about the tricks needed to solve the problems of the sotāpanna, the sakadāgāmī, the anāgāmī, and the arahant, I meant the tricks used in the elimination of the kilesas. When you ask someone who has not learned these tricks that you have learned and seen not from written scriptures, but clearly from your practical experience, be it at any level, he will not be able to answer you. Even if he is a very learned scholar of the Tipiṭaka or Buddhist Canon, he will be stuck. Therefore, speaking from the practical experience point of view, how can anyone be contemptuous of the kammaṭṭhāna practitioner who can ask you questions that you cannot answer? Consider, for example, at the time of the Lord Buddha.

There was a well-learned scholar who had accomplished his study of the tipiṭaka. He was scornful of the kammaṭṭhāna bhikkhus and treated them with contempt and derision. All of these kammaṭṭhāna bhikkhus were arahants. So when the Lord Buddha heard of him and came upon the scene, he asked them some questions. He first asked the scholar, whose name was Poṭhila, but he was not able to give an answer. He then asked a kammaṭṭhāna bhikkhu, who happened to be an arahant. He was able to give an answer immediately. The Lord then asked another question on another level of Dhamma. He asked Poṭhila the scholar. Again he was not able to answer. When he asked the kammaṭṭhāna bhikkhu, he answered immediately again. When the Lord Buddha asked the scholar some more questions, he was not able to answer any of the questions. When he asked the kammaṭṭhāna bhikkhu, he was always able to answer right away. The Lord Buddha then said to the scholar, 'You should not be contemptuous of the kammaṭṭhāna bhikkhu, because you are similar to a cow-herd, a hired hand. You only get paid a salary to make a living from. But the arahants, who are the sons of the Tathāgata are similar to the owners of the cattle. They can do anything with the cattle at any time they please, for they are the owners. They are not the hired hands. They are the bosses. That was how the Lord Buddha expounded this discourse, as it was recorded in the scriptures.

There are a few tricks in the practice. When those who have already experienced them talk about them, they will all understand. They know what wrong view is. When you have the wrong view, although you may think it is the right view, and tell it to someone who has already attained, he will know. For instance, you may think that you have got rid of rāga or lust. When you tell it to someone who has already eliminated lust, he will know if you have really got rid of it or not. The important thing is that you should keep on practising and progressing until you yourself experience these sublime results which cannot be kept hidden from you.



Cause for Schism

June 10th, 1979

All the Buddhas attain their enlightenment through the realisation of the Dhamma that is inherent in this world. All of them attained the same knowledge and insight, and their teaching was all the same and conforms to the highest ethical and moral principles. They did not teach the Dhamma in an aberrant or corrupt manner like the Buddhist followers of today who are indecorous and ostentatious, trying to outdo the Lord Buddha. There are many of them, despite the fact that the ideal way of teaching is still extant. But they just don't want to follow it, because they simply want to be famous and distinguished. If one follows the principles of the Dhamma teaching, then one will be free of errors, flawless and impeccable. Whether one is a bhikkhu or a layperson, one will be possessed with *sīla* or morality and Dhamma. If one just practises following the principles of the Dhamma teaching that one has faith in, then how can one ever get into trouble? The cause for schism in various sects is the conduct that goes against the Dhamma-vinaya, crushing and trampling on the Dhamma-vinaya, which are the truth; thus replacing the Dhamma teaching of the Lord Buddha with the kilesas by thinking that this is the proper and correct way of doing things. If they are in accord with one's preferences and obsessions, then they must be right. These ways then keep on growing. These are the grosser kind of kilesas.

Concerning the more subtle ones that are found within the heart of everyone, including those of us practitioners who have been constantly fooled by their tricks, what are they? They are hatred, anger, and the obsessions with our feelings and emotions that are created by our thinking and concocting, which are influenced by the kilesas, with ourselves being totally unaware of them and are totally engrossed and immersed in them. They are all found within the heart of everyone. The Lord Buddha expounded that all of them are harmful and dangerous. Love, hatred, anger, animosity, and our obsession for the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and emotions are all harmful. They are influenced and created by the kilesas that give rise to delusion and infatuation. The Dhamma has already pointed this out, but we are always enticed and hypnotised by them. If we do not fall for them or be captivated by them, how can the heart not find any calm? We have to be vigilant, take care of our thinking and concocting, and curb the confusion and chaos of the heart that the kilesas create by manipulating *saññā* and *saṅkhāra* to afflict our hearts with trouble and hardship. This is something that we haven't yet seen the harm of. When the mind has not attained calm, then it is already obvious that it is being afflicted with harm. This damage is the state of confusion and restlessness which prevents the mind from coming to calm.

The reason why the mind cannot be calm is because of the agitating and disturbing influences that reside inside the mind. If the practitioner doesn't reflect on their harm, then he will not be able to find anything worthwhile. The wonderful quality of the mind, which is the state of calm, will not appear. We have to constantly see them as harmful and be very careful and vigilant. If we are not, how can we expect to come across the *magga*, *phala*, and *nibbāna*? If they constantly obstruct the *magga*, *phala*, and *nibbāna*, how can we ever realise them when every time we think, our thoughts always go in the way of the kilesas? Whatever we concoct or turn our mind to various thoughts, it is never about the Dhamma, but always about the kilesas, *taṇhā*, and *āsava*. How then can we ever come across the *magga*, *phala*, and *nibbāna*? We as practitioners must think like this. The kilesas are always influencing *saṅkhāra* and *saññā*. As far as the sights and sounds and the other sense objects are concerned, the kilesas only influence them when they come into contact with the sense organs. This happens from time to time. It is the feelings and emotions which arise from sensual contacts that disturb and agitate us that we ceaselessly think about and concoct. Whatever we concoct, it is always the work of the kilesas, not the work of Dhamma, not the work of *sati* and *paññā*.

If *paññā* investigates and contemplates, then it is the work of Dhamma. When *saṅkhāra* thinks with Dhamma, analysing and differentiating the element aggregates, reflecting and contemplating with discernment; then it will go in the way of Dhamma. Our perception or *saññā* must follow the investigation, like following a painted line. This is what *saññā* has to do. Then it will be in accordance with the Dhamma. But as it is, 95% of the time it is the work of the kilesas. Even the remaining 5% hardly ever goes in the way of the Dhamma. Thus, in the practice of Dhamma, we hardly ever come across and clearly perceive the Dhamma within our heart, the state of calm that is not really that far away from us at all. As soon as we curb and restrain our emotions with *sati*, the state of calm will appear. If we cannot calm our hearts and free them from these disturbing and agitating influences, how then are we going to come up with the *magga*, *phala*, and *nibbāna*? I have explained this to you countless times - more frequently than the kilesas have swarmed over your heart. By now you should be able to bear it in mind and take it up for contemplation and investigation.

The work of overcoming and uprooting the kilesas is a herculean task. There is nothing more tenacious than the kilesas, and I myself have already experienced this. I really had to put all of my life into it. Looking back at the way I practised, I cannot help but be in awe of the way I struggled, for now I would not be able to put forth that kind of effort. That is how intense it was. My physical condition is no longer favourable for this kind of exertion, and neither do I have the determination. These days, I am just passing my days doing nothing, living an ambitionless existence. There is no ambition, even for the magga, phala, and nibbāna, and this is not being contemptuous of them. I am speaking about my state of mind, as there is now a great contrast to before. All I had then was the intent and steadfast determination for the Dhamma and for the magga, phala, and nibbāna, the state of freedom. When one's aspirations are at this extreme, then everything is geared towards and concentrated on one's goal which acts like a magnet that attracts every facet of one's exertion, endurance, and perseverance. One's diligent effort, endurance, perseverance, and one's tenacity and aggressiveness will all come by themselves. This is because one's heart is full to the brim with one's determination and aspiration for the magga, phala, and nibbāna. Nothing can easily undermine this resolve. One can readily shake the kilesas loose, even though one hasn't yet developed one's sati and paññā to a very high level. One's determination is very strong and powerful.

Regardless of how toilsome and arduous one's exertion is, one just keeps on persevering, and keeps on fighting and struggling with these extremely tenacious kilesas. One cannot do it lightly, taking it easy and letting the heart drift aimlessly. One must be firmly grounded with truth and rationality. Having an unshakable conviction for the Dhamma is a crucial basis for the heart. Once one has a firm belief in the Dhamma, then one has to follow the instruction of the Dhamma. When the Dhamma says that we have to resist, we must resist. For instance, when we want to see something, we have to resist this urge. And when we want to listen to the things that go in the wrong way, and which promote the growth of the kilesas and are harmful for us, then we must not listen. Whatever we crave, we have to resist that craving, and this is not only about hearing and seeing. If there is any desire that goes in the way of the kilesas, we must resist it. There is pain in resisting the kilesas, but let us face this pain. This pain is for the overcoming and eliminating the kilesas that have been afflicting us and are embedded within the heart for a very long time. We are fighters, we must resist. If we are going to uproot the perils and poisons within the heart, we must act like a fighter - tough and hardy, enduring and persevering. Once we have established this crucial understanding, then everything will be manageable.

We will not be concerned with the four living requisites which are food, shelter, clothing, and medicines; for our interest now is all focused on the Dhamma, and ultimately on the magga, phala, and nibbāna, the state of deliverance. This intense interest is so forceful that it blocks all the other things from distracting the heart. We exist solely for the practice that will lead us to freedom.

When we eat, we only eat so that we can nurture our freedom, and when we go to sleep, it is only for the purpose of resting and re-strengthening the body so that we can exert for the freedom inside our hearts. Everything that we do is solely for this purpose. When our determination is this intense, then we will naturally become very tough and strong. Have the magga, phala, and nibbāna really faded away? Where are they now? They are found right within the heart. They are being concealed by the kilesas, making the heart worthless, lacking in moral excellence. This is because the kilesas have wiped them all out. Can't we yet see the harm of the kilesas? They have wiped out all the goodness and all the admirable and marvellous qualities of our hearts. The attributes that are appearing now are all created by the kilesas. We are merely substituting the genuine for the fake qualities. Aren't we ever disgusted with them?

We have to look up to those teachers who are renowned and are revered by many bhikkhus, sāmaṇeras, and the laity. We have to look at the way they have practised. I have already talked to Tan Ajaan Khao, who was terribly intense and resolute in his exertion. He told me that through one's exertion, one can get carried away with oneself without being aware of it, becoming fanatical. One can discipline oneself to the extent where it becomes damaging to oneself. This is due to one's aggressiveness and tenacity. In the application of one's exertion, one must therefore be flexible, enterprising and versatile. This is what he related to me. He was really rigorous and resolute. He also talked about the time that he was staying with his teacher in Chiang Mai, and also in the various places that he put forth his exertion. It was an uphill struggle for him. His striving was rendered difficult due to his age. When he was ordained as a bhikkhu, he was already quite old and already had a family. His teacher also tried very hard, - being aloof, delighting in solitude and seclusion. He just wouldn't allow anybody to come close to him. He was Tan Ajaan Mun. When Tan Ajaan Mun went to live in Chiang Mai, Tan Ajaan Khao tried to follow him, and eventually caught up with him and sought permission to stay with him, and listen to his Dhamma teaching. With his strenuous exertion, he put his whole life into it. I have also talked with Tan Ajaan Brom, and it was very satisfying. He had already

transcended and achieved the ultimate goal when he was living in Chiang Mai. All of these teachers were really resolute and determined.

The chance of coming across the magga, phala, and nibbāna is very slim if one just lives casually. Tan Ajaan Kum Dee was also very resolute and strong-willed, but his personality has now completely turned around. He said that before, he was very stubborn and unyielding, but that was due to the intensity of his resolve. He has now changed. That was what he said. One who is going to combat and conquer the kilesas must always be strong and forceful, and always opposing and resisting. One must not see anything better than the Dhamma appearing in the mind. Then the mind will be sublime, due to the Dhamma that one has cultivated. The mind becomes awful, terrible and totally worthless when it comes under the influence of the kilesas. There are many of these kilesas that obscure and prevent one from seeing the truth. The kilesas, taṇhā, and rāga, are like fires that constantly consume the heart. It is hot when one is standing, sitting, or lying down. In all postures one is always afflicted with this heat. One is totally overwhelmed with this annoyance, and one looks at everything in the wrong light. This is because the heart is in the wrong - it is being poisoned and is injurious to itself. One cannot remain calm and cool when one sees one's colleagues. One is vexed and edgy, finding faults with others as a means of venting the kilesas that are consuming one's mind. This can actually happen. No matter how transcendent one's teacher might be, one cannot perceive it because the kilesas which have completely enveloped the mind are not marvellous. How then can the mind see those wonderful and supreme qualities? It can only see whatever the kilesas direct it to see.

We must, therefore, discipline and train ourselves. We really must achieve this. At least we should attain calm, so that we can clearly see the result from our sitting in meditation. This will at least bring forth samādhi, concentration of the heart that is not beyond the training and disciplining of our hearts. We have been neglecting the mind for too long. In looking for benefit for ourselves, we have to make an assessment of the value of the stream of thoughts that has been constantly flowing for such a long time. What have we come up with from this thinking? We have been constantly following it and have been captivated by it. The more we oblige these thoughts, the more fuel we put on the fire that produces our trouble and hardship. Are we still going to persist in cooperating with these thoughts, to become enchanted and mesmerised by them, while we are wide awake? We have to ponder this. This is called Dhamma, the means of coping with the kilesas. If we don't develop sati and paññā, then we will never overcome the kilesas. We will only be groping and doing guesswork. When we sit meditating, we only sit as a mere token. And when we experience minor pain and difficulties while the mind hasn't yet attained calm, we will simply give up and go to sleep, which is merely a way of nurturing the kilesas. The more strength we gain from this sleeping, then the more the kilesas and rāgataṇhā will be enhanced.

We have to make comparisons and make assessments so that we can see things clearly. Then it will be possible for us to struggle with them. Why can't we dig and search and come up with the Dhamma, so that we can use it to compete and wrestle with the kilesas? When we are inclined to apply reason and Dhamma to liberate us from dukkha, we will surely achieve this one day. It will happen inevitably to one who likes to contemplate and reason things out for the purpose of liberating himself by using whatever logical arguments that he can come up with. People do not become brilliant from the first day of their birth. We all carry ignorance with us, as we are all born in the midst of the kilesas that cause all living beings to be ignorant of the Dhamma. To become wise, we have to depend on Dhamma, our teacher, and the work of disciplining and training ourselves. Our behaviour and bearing will steadily rise above average as the heart becomes steadily developed due to our exertion. For this reason, the work of development, learning, and hearing, are extremely crucial. We can be really captivated and enchanted by listening to the Dhamma of a teacher whose practices and attainments are indisputable. For one who has truly become enlightened, he will not speak with uncertainty and vagueness that will cause doubts to arise in the listener. Whatever he says is always true and valid because he has already truly experienced them, both the ways of practice that he has cultivated and the corresponding results. So when he talks about them, like the Lord Buddha when he expounded and proclaimed the Dhamma to the world, how can he be wrong?

The Dhamma discourses that can be accounted for number only 84,000, which as I see it is very small indeed. I really agree with what Tan Ajaan Mun said about this matter. He said that the Dhamma found within the scriptures is comparable to the water filling a jar. The 84,000 Dhamma discourses are comparable to the water inside a jar. It is hardly a great number. But the Dhamma not found in the texts is similar to the water in the ocean. How wide and how deep is this? And how great is the difference between them? He knows about this because he practised every day of his life and was experiencing and perceiving the Dhamma every day. The mind was really impressed with these Dhammas and was able to understand their various aspects. The depths and profundity of his Dhamma is immeasurable, for his mind was no longer involved or entangled with anything. It was the mind of one who had already attained freedom. He said that it was a

great pleasure and very gratifying to experience these Dhammas. The mind is like a large fish in the ocean that has plenty of room to move around as the ocean is very large and extensive and the fish is enormous. For the heart that has attained ultimate purity, how can its Dhamma experience be limited to a certain level of profundity and subtlety? There is no bound and limit for this heart. It can freely and easily go anywhere, for there are no longer kilesas to entangle and shackle it.

When it is tied up with and constantly surrounded by the kilesas, then it is not possible for it to roam about freely. It is totally restrained and prevented by the kilesas from going anywhere. The kilesas are all over it. One lives and thinks with the kilesas. One's thoughts all go in the way of the kilesas. Everything is influenced by the kilesas, making it impossible for the Dhamma to appear. But when the kilesas have been totally vanquished and one attains freedom, then it will be just like what Tan Ajaan Mun had described. Wherever he sat, the Dhamma experience arose continuously. He was convinced that the knowledge and insight that the Lord Buddha and the noble disciples who had attained freedom must have been immeasurably extensive and enormous. Their Dhamma experiences are like the sky and the oceans that have no bounds or limits. He said this based on his own personal experience. He had complete faith in the enlightenment and wisdom of the Lord Buddha and the noble disciples. He said that he had no doubt at all. What I wrote in his biography was just a brief sketch of the essence of what he said. When I listened to his Dhamma talks, I was so captivated. It was very impressive and pleasant to listen to, for it was the 'one who knows' who spoke. This is what Dhamma is like.

When the mind cowers, it really cowers, and when it is gloomy, it is really gloomy. When it is overpowered by the kilesas, it can become really gloomy. But as soon as one has eliminated the kilesas, the elegance and serenity of the mind will then appear. These qualities will be realised inside the mind. When the kilesas steadily diminish, then these mental qualities will steadily appear, because they are an integral part of the mind. The reason why they are not apparent is due to the filth that envelope them. The mind then becomes filthy, corrupted, worthless and undesirable. Is dukkha desirable? How then does it manage to overwhelm our hearts? Nobody wants dukkha. But we cannot avoid experiencing this dukkha, as it is inside our mind, and we are not yet capable of eliminating it with our sati, paññā, saddhā, and viriya. We, therefore, have to endure it. But in any case, we are fighters and must not retreat. We have to be firm and strong, as this is very crucial for us. We have to train ourselves to be earnest. Don't be frivolous and vacillating, like a post that is stuck in a pile of buffalo dung that keeps falling down. Don't toy with your practice, for then you will never be able to come up with any result. Whatever you do, you have to be serious, really commit yourselves, for you are the practitioners. If you are serious and earnest in what you do, then you will become powerful. When it is time for you to exert yourselves in the work of overcoming and eliminating the kilesas, you must be serious and earnest. When you are serious and earnest with your other tasks, it is not only fruitful for them, but it will also be fruitful for the mind and fruitful for the work of eliminating the kilesas, because it will also make the mind serious and earnest. This is vital.

I have to talk to you about this out of my concern for you although it is inconvenient for me. I put in my effort to teach you because I have already seen the harm of the kilesas and have seen how they trample and damage the heart. Sometimes they trampled all over me right in front of my eyes, as I didn't have the strength to resist them. But when I was able to muster up enough energy, I then attacked them at full force. I was seething with rage and vengeance, but as I was not able to fight them, I was forced to endure them. But I was really enraged and boiling inside. However, when I had accumulated enough sati and paññā, I then went on the offensive. When I had established enough sati, I was able to make the mind attain to calm and free it from the confusion and madness inside. I then felt relaxed and at ease. This is samādhi, or the state of calm. Once the mind has attained calm, then it will become restful, comfortable, satiated and not craving for anything. After it withdraws from the state of calm, if you tell it to investigate and contemplate with paññā, it will do so. It is unlike the time when the mind is hankering and craving for things. The mind will not investigate with paññā and come up with anything worthwhile. It just keeps beating around the bush and turning the investigation into speculation. Whatever it investigates it will turn into speculation. That is why the Lord Buddha said that paññā that is being supported by samādhi is of great result and benefit. Samādhi acts as the sustenance for paññā. Once the mind has attained calm and investigates with paññā, it will be paññā. The level of paññā will correspond to the level of samādhi. This will keep steadily progressing until paññā becomes incisive and brilliant.

The more one comes across one's results of practice, then the more one will become motivated. When one becomes wise and discerning, then nothing can slip through one's investigation. This is when one's mental strength has matured to the ultimate level. There will be no retreat. In the beginning stages, one is submissive and is trampled on by the kilesas. The kilesas keep on crushing one's head. Regardless of how infuriated and enraged one might be, one has to endure it because one doesn't have any strength, sati, and

paññā, to counter them. So during such time one has to give in to them. This was when my mind hadn't yet established any foundation. The kilesas then kept on trampling on and crushing me in all postures, standing, walking, sitting, and lying down. I could not find any peace and happiness. I went through enough of these experiences myself so I am telling you straightforwardly. It happened to me. Even while I was doing nothing, the pressure inside was so intense. I was burning hot within, like a fire burning rice-husks, burning and smouldering deeply within. I wonder how it managed to get to be like this. I kept on observing it, but it remained like that as I didn't have any sati and paññā to unravel the kilesas. I just had to endure. However severe this blaze and dukkha was, I had to endure it. No matter how offended I was, I had to put up with it. It was useless for me to become enraged, but I did not relent in striving until I came across the state of calm.

Once I had attained calm, I then went on the offensive. To enter into samādhi would be very easy for me. I did not have to go through the usual routine. I could enter into samādhi right away. This is the time when I became very adept with samādhi. The mind was now always ready to enter into samādhi. The samādhi that arises from sitting practice and is totally devoid of any thought is one type of samādhi. Another type called samādhi bhāvanā is the samādhi in which the mind remains calm but still thinks with the mind firm and stable as a rock. That was how firm my samādhi had become. By entering into the state of calm frequently, I was able to make my samādhi solid and firm. This is the way of nurturing samādhi. After withdrawing from samādhi, which is used as a way of resting the khandhas, I could see very clearly that my samādhi was very firm and solid. I was now ready to go on the offensive drive. If I intensified my efforts in the development of paññā, it would not take long. But instead, I become attached to samādhi. I was now so skilful I could enter samādhi any time that I wanted to. It took less than a minute to do it. As soon as I prompted it, the mind would go right into samādhi because I had already securely established samādhi. So it was very easy and quick to stop all mental activities and enter into samādhi right away.

If I developed paññā, I would advance very quickly. But I instead became attached to samādhi, by mistaking this samādhi as nibbāna. I therefore paid no attention to the development of paññā. It took Tan Ajaan Mun to shake me out of this delusion. When my mind was free from this delusion, it then became very energetic, ready and well-qualified. With that kind of samādhi, how can it not be ready? The samādhi of that level is very suitable for the development of paññā. Once the mind begins to develop paññā, it will do it relentlessly. It will realise the truth that will enable it to destroy all of the kilesas. I now became awe stricken with the power of paññā, for I could now see it clearly in my mind, which further enhanced my efforts. All the laziness totally disappeared. Please don't have the understanding that on the level of samādhi, one is not lazy, for one is, in not wanting to investigate. One just wants to rest in the state of calm and comfort. This is the lazy kind of samādhi. But after Tan Ajaan Mun goaded me to investigate, and I had learned how to investigate, then the diligent effort just came naturally. But for me, the mind tended to go to the extreme. Once it had begun to develop paññā, it was not able to go back into samādhi because it was no longer interested in samādhi. The mind just kept turning around incessantly investigating and struggling with the kilesas. Sometimes this went on throughout the night and I didn't get any sleep, and in the daytime I couldn't sleep either.

When I did the walking practice, I was not able to walk straight, for I kept crashing to the ground. This was due to the lack of sleep, because the mind kept on investigating and fighting with the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava. As far as surrendering myself to the kilesas was concerned, it was out of the question. I would rather die. The only way that I could be defeated was if I died. Giving in by retreating simply could not happen. It was not possible. It could only happen if my head was cut off. Defeat could only occur if I lost my life. To give up by retreating is just not possible. Once you have attained this level, this will happen. I am just telling you the truth. I am not boasting. I am speaking the truth of my practice, how I developed, how I exerted myself, how I had to wage an uphill struggle and how lazy I was. I was carrying the burden of the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava, and enduring the fire inside my heart, both day and night, standing, sitting, walking, and lying down. This fire had never been separated from my heart.

Once I had trained, disciplined, and developed my heart by earnestly exerting myself, enduring and persevering, my heart was then able to attain a state of calm and became strengthened. I was then able to drive harder. I could now intensify my effort in my practice of mental development. The calm would gradually increase and become more and more profound until I thought that it was nibbāna. I became heedless. Once the knowing becomes densely concentrated, then there is no thinking. It is as if the world does not exist. What remains is just this sublime and profound knowing. I therefore speculated that this is what nibbāna would be like. Fortunately, I did not claim it to be nibbāna. I just speculated that this would be nibbāna. It was only after I had investigated with paññā that I was able to discern what this state was. How could it be nibbāna? When paññā had been thoroughly investigated, I could then see the kilesas that were still hidden in the mind. They had merely been resting, merely been temporarily subdued by the power of samādhi.

But as soon as they emerged, they would be immediately eliminated by paññā. Paññā doesn't promote the growth of the kilesas. It only destroys them. Paññā will keep on advancing. This is the way it is with the mind of this level.

When you are dejected, you can be really demoralised. Living with your colleagues you keep blaming yourself for lagging behind in your practice, by thinking that all of your colleagues have totally eliminated the kilesas, leaving yourself behind to be consumed by the fire of the kilesas. This was the way I felt when I first went to stay with Tan Ajaan Mun. When I looked at all the other bhikkhus, they appeared to be serene and peaceful, though their exertion didn't seem to be that intense. But I, for my part, after finishing the morning meal, would go into the forest and practise until it was time to sweep in the afternoon. But I didn't achieve anything. That was because at that time my mind had deteriorated and I was intensifying my effort to bring the mind back to its former higher level. My striving was very strenuous and intense. After having some conversation with my colleagues, I got to know them better. And when I had established some samādhi, I also got to know more about myself. I could see this clearly, so could my colleagues. How could they not know? When I talked to my teacher I had to tell him the truth so that he could correct me when I was wrong. For this was the path that I had not yet trodden before.

Once I had gained the strength of samādhi and been goaded by Tan Ajaan Mun to develop paññā, I then really exerted myself. Now the kilesas could not remain at rest. I would drag them by the neck and chopped off their heads. I would grab their arms, their legs, and chop them off. Once you get to the level of paññā, the mind will investigate continuously. It will start with the investigation of the body, to see it to be loathsome or asubha. This paññā that investigates the body is very aggressive and forceful. Once the delusion of the body is shattered, and you have fully understood every aspect of the body, the mind will then become satiated. It will then stop investigating the body. Once you are full, what is the use of taking more food? Or doing the investigation any more? What, then, does it become attracted to? Now it will mostly become attracted to vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, and viññāna, with saññā the most important target, for it is very insidious. Saṅkhāra will just flare on and off, but with saññā, it will quietly permeate out to form a mental picture. It can subtly fantasise. You can't help but being amazed by its subtlety. You then keep track of it, and then it cannot surpass the ability of paññā.

Once sati and paññā become automatic, or become mahāsati and mahāpaññā, then what can slip away from it? Once sati and paññā investigate incessantly and naturally all the time, except when being forced to stop, then this is called automatic sati and paññā. Even when you are eating, this sati and paññā doesn't eat with you. It just keeps on investigating. This is how automatic the investigation has become. At this stage, all the laziness disappears. Sometimes you have to restrain it, or else you can die from exhaustion. You have to hold it back. Sometimes you overexert yourself until you are ready to drop dead. The entire body becomes dead tired. You cannot even walk another step, because during the night time you didn't have any sleep, and during the day time you just cannot go to sleep. The mind just keeps on investigating continuously. So I had to restrain it with the Buddho mantra by repeating 'Buddho' repeatedly and quickly, not allowing the mind to investigate and force it into calm. I had to drag the mind away from doing the investigation, which is the contention of paññā with the kilesas. It was not possible to tell whether I was using the sharp end or the blunt end of paññā. I was probably using the blunt end as I was so exhausted and tired. But the heart was still hell-bent on struggling with them. It was only after I had rested the mind that I realised what was happening. I forced the mind to take a rest by repeating Buddho very quickly and continuously, not allowing it to do any investigation at all. I really had to coerce it to get into samādhi, or else it would not get in. I had to really force it, but as it had already been used to coercion, it didn't take long for it to be subdued.

It began to slowly calm down, and eventually it became very still. At that point, it seems like you have now uprooted the thorns. Your strength, energy, and happiness, seem to arise out of nowhere, and spread throughout the whole body and all over the heart. Yet even when it has rested in this state of calm, you still have to restrain it. I could not let go of the restraint. As soon as I did, it would immediately withdraw from the calm and investigate. I therefore had to keep on restraining it. It became restrengthened. When I felt that it was the right time for it to investigate, I just let it go. It immediately jumped right back to investigate, and became totally involved with it. Now it seemed like it was using the sharp end, for it didn't take long to destroy the kilesas. Therefore, samādhi is absolutely vital. When it is necessary to take a rest, you cannot afford not to. When the mind becomes extremely weary and dead-tired, it is not right to think that the results of your work can only come through your exertion alone, without thinking about the importance of resting yourself so that you can become restrengthened and able to do more investigation. You should therefore take a rest, go to sleep, take some food, and not be concerned with the time lost from doing this, as it is for the purpose of restrengthening your body, so that you can do more investigation effectively.

It is true with both the mind and the body. In order for them to regain their strength and energy so that they can further attack and destroy the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava, it is definitely necessary for them to take a rest. When the mind has rested well in samādhi and is rejuvenated, then when paññā investigates, it will be like a sharpened knife. This is similar to a tired man trying to chop wood with a dull knife. After he has rested and the knife sharpened, then it doesn't take too much effort to cut the wood in two. It is likewise with sati and paññā of this level. Once it has regained its strength and energy, and gone out to investigate, it doesn't take long for it to kill the kilesas. You will then see the benefit of samādhi. This happens on a very subtle level of the heart. The kilesas are correspondingly subtle, and so are sati and paññā. They are all equally subtle. The sati and paññā of this level are like water that flows very gently. The investigation of the mental objects - vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, and viññāṇa - and the investigation of avijjā are done by the paññā of this subtle level. This investigation cannot be done in a rough manner, like the investigation of the body. The situation will dictate this and you will know it when you get there. It is the same way when you shape a piece of wood. You first use an axe, then you use a plane to shave the wood surface. You cannot thereafter use either a knife or an axe, for it will just ruin the wood surface. It is the same way with the mind. What level of paññā should be used in the investigation will be obvious. You will investigate until you destroy all of the kilesas and see the truth. When the investigation is sufficient, then the mind will let go. If it hasn't yet let go, then it is not yet sufficient. Once the mind has thoroughly investigated, then it will let go. For instance, when you investigate the loathsomeness of the body, you just keep on investigating until it is satiated. Then the mind will let go of the lust for the body.

In the investigation of saññā and saṅkhāra, where do they come from? They come from the mind. They deceive the mind, as they are the instruments of avijjā. So how can they not deceive the mind? If sati and paññā are not capable of catching up with them, then you will still be deceived by them. Therefore, you have to relentlessly analyse and differentiate them with sati and paññā. When you have investigated this many, many times, the investigation will eventually become satiated. It will first become satiated with the investigation of the body. Then it becomes satiated with the investigation of the vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, and viññāṇa and will let go of them. So what, then, is left that it is not yet satiated with? What remain are just the mind and avijjā that are entangled with one another. But you do not yet realise this. This is where you get to see the subtlety of the kilesas. When you finally come face to face with avijjā, you will see clearly that there is nothing more subtle than avijjā. You feel like you are staying in a tiger's cave. When the tiger roars and growls, you think the tiger is entertaining you. Avijjā is like a huge tiger, but instead of being fearful you become submissive to it, loving it and are possessive of it. This is due to the subtlety of the kilesas. The true and genuine master and ruler of the mind is avijjā, but it cannot withstand the power of satipaññā. Although the satipaññā of this level will first be deceived by the avijjā's subtlety, luminosity, bravery, boldness and the delusion that this is I and mine, it will not be complacent. Though it might be taking care of avijjā unknowingly, it is also vigilant and observant. As this avijjā is sammuti, how can the subtle changes of this sammuti not be evident to satipaññā which is constantly watching, perpetually investigating and analysing? How can they slip through? Eventually they will be revealed.

Satipaññā will then use this avijjā as the object of its investigation, just like all the other objects. So how can it withstand? It will eventually be broken up. Once avijjā is shattered, the mind then becomes satiated, for this is the final fulfilment. The mind is satiated with the investigation of the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, and satiated with the investigation of the body, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, and viññāṇa. Once it has thoroughly investigated, it becomes full. All that remains in the mind is avijjā. All the bridges have been cut off. There is no way for avijjā to come out. It cannot now get out by way of vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, and viññāṇa. Satipaññā now truly understands their nature. The inner bridge has been severed. As far as coming out via the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches is concerned, this is irrelevant. There is no need to talk about these because the mind has already transcended them as it moves in closer and closer. What remains is just avijjā. Now it doesn't have any place to hide, so it stands out very clearly, because everything else has now been uncloaked. The truth of the body has already been unveiled. The truth of feelings, be they good, bad or neither, coarse or subtle, has also been exposed. But the most subtle of feelings is still found within avijjā. After satipaññā has unveiled the truth of avijjā, then this most subtle feeling will disappear from the mind. As long as avijjā remains, this most subtle feeling will also remain. For this reason, whether it is correct or not, and speaking on my own authority because it is so clear within my heart, I dare to say that all the arahants who have already got rid of all the kilesas have no feelings in their hearts. I am not speaking about myself who is like a tiny mouse. How can an arahant have feelings within his heart? Whatever kind of feelings they might be, they are not found within the heart of an arahant.

Once the mind has become satiated with the investigation, it will stop. Once it is sated, it will no longer deceive itself. It will not be deluded any more, not even with the state of purity. Once it becomes satiated, it will come to a standstill. This is contentment. It no longer grabs at this or that. There is no craving. This

contentment progresses in stages by letting go in stages. Whatever the objects or conditions that it is satiated with, it will let go. It will keep moving further inwards until it finally becomes sated with avijjā and lets it go. The mind will now be completely satiated. Then all the problems come to an end, and there is nothing further to do. This is the elimination of all forms of dukkha. They will all disappear when avijjā is eradicated by the power of mahāsati, mahāpaññā, saddhā, and viriya which are like the most advanced weapon system. This is the end. From there onwards, it doesn't really matter where you live or what you do. Once the sammuti within the heart vanishes, whatever you do will be merely acting. The day and night will no longer be significant. Likewise with the days, months, and years, or Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, or the Year of the Rat, or the Year of the Ox, and so forth. They are all suppositions. It is alright to play with them when you are not deluded with them. But to play with them when you are deluded is not good.

This is the story of a mind that had to wage an uphill battle, nearly losing its life, and nearly losing itself to evilness and corruption due to the influence of the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsavas. This is the story of a dogged determination. This achievement is not above your ability. All that you have to do is to be serious and earnest. The Dhamma teaching of the Lord Buddha is beyond doubt in its ability to subdue the kilesas. There isn't a single kilesa that is sharper, keener, wiser or cleverer than satipaṇṇā, which is the magga. That is why it is called Majjhimā, which means suitability. It is suitable for the removal of every kind of kilesa. This is my favourite definition of Majjhimā. There will be a time when you will eliminate all the dukkha that arises from your exertion that will eventually come to an end. When all the dukkha is vanquished, it will disappear forever. There will be a time when we will put down our burden that we have been shouldering so heavily. There is an end to our exertion. We will then live in bliss. Is there ever an end to the worldly undertaking? Never! Even at the end of your life. When you die you will leave behind your work, your friends, your relatives, your father and mother, your husband or wife, and your own body. You will die leaving your work incomplete. But there is an end to your exertion, the conquering of the kilesas. There is an end to it. When the kilesas have been totally vanquished, then this exertion will come to an end.

The Lord Buddha called this 'Vusitaṃ brahma cariyam'. This can be simply translated as 'The end of your task'. The goal of the holy and chaste life is the elimination of the kilesas, which has now come to an end, because all of the kilesas have been totally eliminated. For those who have fully achieved this goal, their meditation practice from then on will be for the vihāra Dhamma, which is the maintenance for a peaceful coexistence between the body and the mind, and is left to each individual disposition and preference. For this practice has nothing to do with the removal of the kilesas. As long as the body still goes on, then there is still the necessity of maintaining it, feeding it, and giving it the proper exercise. This is quite natural. Everybody knows how much he has to eat or drink, how much he has to walk, stand, or take a rest, and go to sleep in order to keep the body healthy. It is the same way with those who have already become enlightened. They know how to take care of the body and the mind that still coexist with one another. But the heavy load that had oppressed the mind for a very long time has now been entirely discarded.

You must strive to achieve this goal yourself, for you are fighters, not cowards. You have to earnestly and seriously fight the kilesas, by putting all of your effort into the meditation practice. You should not be doubtful of the magga, phala, and nibbāna. Why must you be doubtful? Every aspect of the Dhamma teaching taught by the Lord Buddha is for achieving the magga, phala, and nibbāna. His teaching doesn't aim at futility. Why are you doubtful? This doubt is the work of the kilesas designed to lead you astray. You have to be confident of the magga, phala, and nibbāna, and confident of your ability. You must use chanda, satisfaction; viriya, strenuous effort; citta, concentration; and vimamsā, investigation in your practice. You must not practise blindly, lacking in satipaṇṇā. If you do, you will never achieve your goal. You will only amuse the kilesas.



The Dhamma Water

June 13th, 1979

In a scorching and burning world, we cannot survive without the Dhamma teaching, which is similar to water that puts out fire. Without the *sāsana* or Buddhism, the world would be similar to that of a village or a forest that is being consumed by fire with no water to put it out. There can only be destruction. In a place where there is enough water to put out the fire, that place will be safe and secure. In a place where there is not enough water, that place will be left in a total state of devastation. This is similar to the hearts of the people living in this world which need the teaching, the Dhamma water, to quench the fires of *rāga*, *dosa*, and *moha*, lust, hate, and delusion. If we cannot use the Dhamma to totally extinguish this fire, at least we should try to diminish it. This is like an illness which needs the proper medicine to cure it. In sickness, some may die and some may be cured and live. It depends on the ability of the doctor whether the disease can be cured or not. If he cannot do it, then the patient will die. If he can, then the patient will survive. It is the same way with our hearts. If we have the Dhamma water, we can then extinguish the fire inside our hearts.

If our hearts are cruel and malicious, and we pay no attention to good and bad, right and wrong, heaven and hell, but only the things that we desire, then our hearts will be on fire. No matter how much we can acquire according to our desires, if the heart is constantly burning and the Dhamma water cannot reach it, then the heart will always be ablaze. There will be more greed if we allow ourselves to pursue our greed, our *rāga taṇhā*, our lust. We cannot curb our greed by constantly pursuing it through delusion, not paying any attention to right and wrong, but allowing ourselves to be led astray by the influence of the *kilesas*, *taṇhā* and *āsavas*. Our hearts will then be on fire. Wherever we live, be it in a palace or a mansion, our hearts will always be consumed by fire because there is no water to put it out. This water is the Dhamma. So for this reason, the Dhamma is absolutely essential for all sentient beings, similar to water that is essential for putting out fire. As soon as the *sāsana* or Buddhism disappears from the world, then the world will be set ablaze. All sentient beings that live in the world will be scorched by fire. There will not be any happiness. That is why all the sages like the Lord Buddha have to teach the Dhamma to enlighten people's hearts. Therefore, the importance of the Dhamma is foremost, and nothing can surpass it.

Our body and speech are the servants, while our hearts are the master. They obey the commands of the heart. Therefore, the heart is paramount. According to the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha's path of wisdom: 'Mano pubbaṅ gamā dhamma, mano seṭṭhā, mano mayā', meaning that all phenomena are preceded by the heart. The heart is the most suitable vessel for the Dhamma. When the heart has the Dhamma, then whatever we do, through body or speech, it will always be auspicious. But if the heart is corrupt, then whatever we do, we will always be consumed by *dukkha*. This *dukkha* is like the wheels of the cart that follow the tracks of the ox that pulls it. *Dukkha* will always follow those who do bad or evil deeds, while happiness will always follow those who do good deeds. One who has virtue in his heart is one who always carries with him the medicine to cure his illnesses. Wherever he goes, there is always some form of cure for him that will alleviate his affliction.

Therefore, Dhamma is not something insignificant, something that we can disregard. We should not think that the *sāsana* is something merely inscribed on palm leaves or found just in the monasteries, that the *sāsana* only belongs to the *bhikkhus* and *sāmaṇeras*, that it only belongs to the Lord Buddha and the *arahant* disciples, that it only belongs to the Buddha, Dhamma, and *Saṅgha*. All of this is just misunderstanding. Because the Dhamma, in truth, is common property for anyone to use as they please. We can use it to quench the fire inside our hearts. Dhamma is the natural and common property of the world. One who seeks virtue, righteousness, gracefulness, and coolness, will not be off the mark if they take the Dhamma as their compass and guide. Nothing can surpass the Dhamma in wisdom. Where does *paññā* come from if not from the *magga*, the noble eightfold path? *Sati* is mindfulness, or constant awareness of the actions of our body, speech, and heart. This is the path, the *magga*. This is *sammāsati*, right mindfulness. Our actions of speech and body that are right and proper are called *sammāvacā* and *sammākammanta*. They are the factors of the path, the Dhamma teaching of the Lord Buddha which is perfect and flawless.

We aren't good or bad simply because we're born human. Whatever class of people we belong to cannot be considered either good or bad. Truly, it depends on our conduct of body, speech, and heart, and whether these are conducted in the right or wrong way, the good or bad way. We can only be judged by our actions. Simply being born as a human being doesn't mean that we are good. The only thing good about it is that it is the result of our past actions, and it is a good result. But as far as the good of the future and present is

concerned, this depends on our conduct, and the training of ourselves following the right and proper way of the Dhamma teaching of the Lord Buddha that can make us grow in a good way gradually until reaching the highest virtue. The Dhamma cannot be blamed for not making us good. For it is us who have to develop ourselves to be good. We aren't good and virtuous because we don't develop ourselves with the Lord Buddha's sublime Dhamma. How many sentient beings did the Lord Buddha lead out of the stream of saṃsāra and transform them into supreme human beings, like the arahants, the anāgāmīs, the sakadāgāmīs, and the sotāpannas, who have all purified themselves with the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha to the utmost of their ability. This is the way that people can be good through the way of Dhamma. Without the Dhamma teaching, we cannot be good.

Concerning those who have gone forth, these are the practitioners who have taken up the yellow robe and been ordained into the sāsa following the tradition established by the Lord Buddha and the arahant disciples. This yellow robe is dyed with the dye taken from the heartwood of the jackfruit tree, similar to how it was done in the past. This colour is not desired by the world, but it is appropriate and suitable for the life of a bhikkhu. We have to realise that we have now taken up the yellow robe and been ordained in the sāsa, but the kilesas themselves have not taken up the yellow robe with us. The kilesas are inside our hearts. How can we make ourselves good if we do not get rid of the kilesas? The kilesas are the evil ones and the enemies of the Dhamma. Every kind of kilesa, from the coarsest to the most subtle, is antagonistic to the Dhamma. In order to remove them, we have to always fight them. Sometimes we have to put our lives at stake. If the kilesas do not die, then we will. And if we do not die, then the kilesas must die. First, we should at least subdue the kilesas, then in the end conquer them and totally annihilate them.

This is for the purpose of making ourselves good. From the first day of our going forth, it is only ourselves that have gone forth. The kilesas do not ordain with us. To go forth or to be ordained means to abstain from the things that we should abstain from, and to develop the things that we should develop. We are the ones who have gone forth, and we must take up the Dhamma-vinaya as our guiding principle. This is especially true with the Vinaya, the monastic discipline, the tool to curb and suppress the coarser kinds of kilesa which can be clearly seen by all. The Vinaya will keep the kilesas within disciplinary bounds. It will restrain and suppress the kilesas that manifest themselves through the actions of body and speech that are initiated by the heart. And the Dhamma is used to correct the kilesas inside the heart.

Combating the kilesas, it is similar to the way the world wages war. For instance, in a boxing ring, the boxers put their lives at stake when they get into the ring. They put their whole effort into the fight, and while they are fighting they are not concerned with winning or losing, but only with exerting themselves to their fullest. If they have to lose their life, they are ready to give it up. This is an example for us practitioners to compare ourselves with. We must always consider every kind of kilesa as our enemy. There are many aspects of Dhamma. Dhamma is a tool or instrument. It also supports and lifts us. Satipaṇṇā is the tool to combat the kilesas. It will search and destroy kilesas wherever they may be hidden. Saddhā, which is faith or conviction, serves as a source of encouragement or support. This is the belief that the kilesas can be conquered, that we can defeat them. Viriya is another form of support, making us strive with the most diligent of efforts. This is the way to develop ourselves to be good and virtuous. This is the way to make the bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras good bhikkhus and good sāmaṇeras according to the Vinaya and the Dhamma. With the Vinaya, they are graceful to behold in what they do and say. With the Dhamma, they are cool, peaceful, calm and graceful, having satipaṇṇā to take care of their hearts.

Every form of kilesa is harmful to us and must be eliminated. They must be removed or suppressed during every moment of our exertion. The results of our struggling with the kilesas in the manner of a follower of the Lord Buddha will be attained first at the morality level. Then we will move up to the ariya or enlightenment level, beginning with the sotāpanna, to the sakadāgāmī, to the anāgāmī, and finally to the arahant level. These will be the fruits of our exertion in suppressing and removing the kilesas, stage by stage, according to our ability. These four levels of enlightenment, five including the morality level, are not beyond our ability and efforts, if we use the Vinaya and the Dhamma as our weapons to suppress and eradicate all of the kilesas inside our hearts. No time and place is as important as the place where the ariya-sacca, the Four Noble Truths, are found. These four truths are dukkha, samudaya, nirodha, and magga. And where is dukkha found? It is found in the body and the heart. And where is samudaya found? It is found in the heart. The cause of bodily illness is not considered samudaya because it is not induced by the kilesas. There are things that will cause the body to become sick, but they are not as dangerous as the kilesas or samudaya, the heart's greatest adversary.

That is why the Lord Buddha has to expose the nature of samudaya, so we can see it clearly for what it is. It is kāma-taṇhā, bhava-taṇhā, and vibhava-taṇhā. The Lord Buddha said this in the Dhamma-cakkapavattana Sutta, the First Discourse. Kāma-taṇhā is craving for sensuality. It is a form of kilesa. As far as

bhava-taṇhā, craving for becoming, and vibhava-taṇhā, craving for not-becoming, are concerned, we already know what they are so I shall not discuss them in detail. I will instead discuss with you the root of the Four Noble Truths. Where are these Four Noble Truths? Where can they be found? Dukkha is in the heart. This is the most important fact. This dukkha is caused by samudaya - samudaya is its source. Nirodha, the cessation of dukkha - where will this happen? Wherever dukkha arises, that is where nirodha, the cessation of dukkha will appear. What gives rise to nirodha? What gives rise to the cessation of dukkha? It is magga, the path, the majjhimā paṭipadā, the middle way of practice.

There are eight factors in this path, beginning with sammādiṭṭhi and sammāsankappo, right view and right thought. These are the two factors of paññā or wisdom. In doing any task, we usually choose a person who is wise to be our leader. If we have an ignorant person as leader, then they will usually lead our undertaking to failure. Nobody will trust such a person. Both sammādiṭṭhi and sammāsankappo, right view and right thought, highlight the wisdom of the magga, the path. And where can this magga be found? This magga is one form of cetasika dhamma, mental concomitant, and similarly with samudaya, the cause of dukkha. This samudaya arises from saññā, saṅkhāra, and viññāṇa. Where else can samudaya come from? When they cause the kilesas to arise, this is called samudaya, and when they cause the suppression and removal of the dukkha and kilesas, this is called the magga. Thinking in the way of truth and insight - this is called paññā. Constant awareness is called sati or mindfulness. Sati is magga, and it arises from the heart. It is the same way with the kilesas which also arise from the heart. But the kilesas oppress the heart and wear it down. They control and subjugate the heart, and subject it to a lot of affliction and hardship. They constantly place pressure on the heart.

Magga is the cleansing agent that is used to clean all of these kilesas so that the heart can elevate itself to the highest level, the state of freedom. Nirodha, the cessation of dukkha, will steadily come about following the strength of the magga. When the time comes for the heart to achieve the final and total cessation of dukkha due to the strength and ability of the fully developed magga, then this will happen in a single instant. This is when the arahattamagga, or the path of arahantship, instantly extinguishes all the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava that converge and hide behind avijjā. Nirodha, the cessation of dukkha, will be the outcome. When the magga has totally extinguished the kilesas, then nirodha will come to fruition. When nirodha, which is the result of magga, emerges, then the task of extinguishing dukkha also comes to an end, right within that instant. That is why the Lord Buddha said that dukkha should be observed, so that we can see it clearly, although we already know it within ourselves, since we are not dead. How can we not know it? But the reason why the Lord Buddha told us to study dukkha is that although we all have dukkha, we never look at it and analyse its nature so that we can know how to overcome and get rid of it.

For this reason the Lord Buddha taught his followers a systematic way of investigating dukkha. The Lord Buddha said that we should study dukkha and relinquish samudaya, its cause. And how are we going to let go of samudaya? Here the Lord Buddha said it very briefly, but the meaning itself is extensive. In order to let go of samudaya, we have to make diligent efforts, with satipaṇṇā leading the investigation. No matter how hard this may be, we have to commit ourselves to the task. This is the way of relinquishing samudaya. This is the way of getting rid of all the samudaya or kilesas from the heart, by the application of the magga, the majjhimā paṭipadā, the middle way of practice. Nirodha, the cessation of dukkha, will appear as a consequence. That is to say dukkha will disappear. These four noble truths do not happen separately. The way they are being discussed, it seems that they happen one by one. But really they all happen together.

When dukkha arises within the heart, the awareness that it has done so also arises at that same instant. The investigation into the cause of dukkha, that afflicts and disturbs the heart, also arises at the same time. Speaking of the disturbances of the heart, these are the ārammaṇa or mental objects or emotions that the heart has become attached to. For instance, when someone speaks badly of us, if we don't think about it, nothing will happen to our hearts. But when we think about it, we will become angry. This anger is called samudaya. When there is anger, how can there not be dukkha? It is this anger and ill-will that cause dukkha because we take the criticisms to heart. This is samudaya and causes dukkha to appear. How can one extinguish this dukkha? When we ask this question we are implementing the magga. This is when satipaṇṇā begins to investigate the deception of saṅkhāra.

Before, when nobody tells us of other people's criticisms of us, we are not aroused by anger. But when somebody tells us of this criticism that may have been made some time ago, we become angry and afflicted with dukkha. This is one form of samudaya. We are speaking of just one form of samudaya - anger. But there is also another side of samudaya - affection, like kāma-taṇhā or craving for sensuality, for instance. They are samudaya or kilesas, and similarly with dissatisfaction, they cause ill-will, and anger. Now we are investigating saṅkhāra, which creates all the deceptions. Saṅkhāra is the deceiver, and so is saññā, with which we assume and presume. Satipaṇṇā or mindfulness and wisdom, must round up all the deceptions,

bring them inside, subdue them, and finally eliminate them. Satipaññā must prise saṅkhāra and saññā away from thinking about this anger and affection, and calm them down. This is the way of curbing and eliminating the kilesas. Once these kilesas have been curbed and eliminated – for instance, when thinking about the criticism of us has been restrained, then the dukkha will disappear.

This is because both saññā and saṅkhāra are mesmerised by these deceptions. When satipaññā realises this, then they will stop, and dukkha will then vanish. When saññā and saṅkhāra, which are kilesas, have been subdued by satipaññā, then dukkha will disappear, and nirodha will appear simultaneously. Don't waste your time speculating about the world and the universe. It is a heavy load to shoulder and doesn't do you any good, such as when you imagine about the magga, phala, and nibbāna. This is just a waste of time. You should instead investigate, identify and remove the kilesas from your hearts. Otherwise, the kilesas will always remain inside your hearts to endlessly consume and afflict you all the time. All the dukkha arises in the heart. Samudaya is like an endlessly long string and the source of dukkha. If you don't cut this string with your satipaññā, you'll never find any moral excellence and happiness from your going forth. As I have said earlier, when we take up the robe, the kilesas do not take up the robe with us. We have to fight the kilesas, but most of the time we surrender.

There are not many practitioners who are capable of conquering the kilesas and attaining the highest fruit of arahantship. We have to face this fact and consider it many, many times. There is a great difference between the time of the Lord Buddha and our time as far as going forth or ordination is concerned. Nowadays people ordain more as a ritual, which is in great contrast to the days of the Lord Buddha, when people went forth for the Dhamma. They went forth with a perception of the harm of the things that they had experienced as laymen. They had experienced so much of them that they reached the point where they became sick and tired of it. So when they took up the robe, they took it up with saddhā, firm conviction, and the desire to be free from dukkha and all the oppressive influences. Therefore, there is a great contrast between the arahant disciples during the time of the Lord Buddha - the way they exerted themselves and the way the bhikkhus exert themselves nowadays.

During that time, the teacher who taught the Dhamma was the Lord Buddha himself. Listening to the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha is like receiving 100% pure gold. What the Lord Buddha taught was the real and genuine truth. The Dhamma that the Lord Buddha attained was experienced by himself and it was in accordance with the truth. He realised and experienced everything before teaching the sāvakas. It was not necessary for the listeners to decide which was right and which was wrong. All they had to do was just to absorb the teachings. After they had listened to the Dhamma instruction, they then went away to exert themselves to their utmost ability with diligence and conviction in their practice. In every mode of exertion, their hearts were filled with chanda, viriya, citta, and vimamsā - satisfaction, diligent effort, concentration, and reflection. These four Dhammas blended into one. How then could the result that followed not have emerged? And so it happened that some of them attained enlightenment on that mountain, in that forest, on that walking path, in that sitting position, standing up, or lying down. They attained enlightenment because they had earnestly committed themselves to their practice.

Both the Dhamma teaching and the teacher, the Lord Buddha himself, were both real and not dubious. Those who listened to the Dhamma had perceived the danger of living in the world of saṃsāra, so their hearts were ready vessels for the Dhamma. So when the Lord Buddha taught the Dhamma to them, they were able to fully absorb it and they applied it in their practice until they attained the highest goal. They then became the Saṅgha refuge. Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi. This was the way that people took up the robe in the time of the Lord Buddha. You must not think that the Dhamma of this time and that time are different, or the kilesas of this time and that time are two different kinds of kilesas. Truly, the kilesas of that time and the kilesas of this time are one and the same thing, and it is the same with the Dhamma. The Dhamma of the past and the Dhamma of the present are the same Dhamma.

The differences are only in the teaching techniques and the ability of the teachers. The important thing is to find a teacher who truly knows the Dhamma, faithfully teaches the Dhamma, and has attained the highest level of enlightenment, like the arahant disciples of the past. You should study with that teacher. They will give you the full benefit of the Dhamma teaching. You will not have to doubt their teaching because what they teach will be the true and genuine Dhamma. Where then can the Paths and Fruits be when you are ready for them? So as far as seeking a teacher is concerned, you should look for the best teacher, one who has attained the highest state of purity - the state of Buddhho or enlightenment. So when you practise to the utmost of your ability and with unshakeable faith in the Dhamma, then the result cannot be different from the sāvakas'. They must be the same.

People nowadays take up robes as a ritual, but those who took up robes in the past really had the purpose of getting rid of their sensual lust, their *kāma-rāga*. Some of them had grown weary of this lust even before they took up the robe, whilst others grew weary of it afterwards. Some of them even took up the robe without intending to remain so, but due to their underlying tendencies - their *upanissaya*, they eventually came to appreciate the Dhamma, took up the practice, and finally attained the *magga*, *phala*, and *nibbāna*. In short, they took up the robe to give up their sensual lust or out of weariness of it, and they really practised to attain freedom. Nowadays, most people take up the robe as a mere ritual, just to accumulate the *kilesas* and sensual lust. For instance, the lust for wealth and status can stir up the sensual lust within our hearts. Some are driven to insanity by their cravings. If a *bhikkhu* takes up the robe for these reasons, can you say that he takes up the robe to get rid of *dukkha* rather than just accumulating *kilesas* and causing disgust amongst the laity? People can easily get tired of this kind of *bhikkhu* because they take up the robe just to accumulate more lust. What is the use of doing this? It is useless. Think about it! I am not exaggerating, for this is the truth. We can all see it. But if you take up the robe following the example of the Lord Buddha and the *sāvakas*, then can the highest goal really escape from your practice? Your practice is really vital. So please take it to heart.

Every kind of lust is the product of the *kilesas*. You must always look at them as harmful to the heart, and always fight them. The word *phra* in Thai means *bhikkhu* and it also means noble. Don't be noble just in name, like a person with a noble name but who finds himself in jail. Let us be noble in quality. As a practitioner, you must not be heedless or complacent. In your conversations, don't get carried away, for this is a way of being heedless and negligent, and is contrary to the tradition of the *bhikkhu* and practitioner. You must always be mindful and cautious. Be very mindful in your conversations when you come together to work or have your refreshment. Watch your heart. As far as having refreshment is concerned, this is merely to keep your body going. But as far as the conflict between the *kilesas* and the Dhamma is concerned, you must always keep on fighting. If you ever want to acquire the most supreme and valuable treasure, it's essential that you must always watch out for *saṅkhāra* and *saññā*. As a practitioner, you must beware the chicanery of these two most significant *khandhas*.

As far as the eyes and visible form, the ears and sound etc., are concerned, they are not as incessant as the *saññā* and *saṅkhāra* that are always mesmerised by the thoughts that arise from the *kilesas*, *taṇhā*, and *āśava* that in turn entangle your heart. They continually exhibit themselves. Even when you are doing walking meditation, they draw up images of the *kilesas* right in front of you. *Saññā* recalls the past. It remembers past experiences of visible objects, sounds, tastes, smells, and tactile objects and the accompanying emotions that disturb the heart. It is *saññā* and *saṅkhāra* that create the various feelings and emotions inside the heart. Even while you are doing walking meditation, you can be creating the *kilesas* right there and then. This is because you are continually being deceived by *saññā* and *saṅkhāra*, both day and night. As soon as you wake up, they begin to create the images of the *kilesas*. But you don't know this. Whatever topics *saññā* recalls, and *saṅkhāra* thinks of, restlessness, agitation, or stress will follow, because they will only recall and think of issues that poison the heart. So how can the heart not be upset? If you are observant, you will know this. As a practitioner, how can you not know this? You will get to see very clearly how important *saññā* and *saṅkhāra* are. They are constantly creating feelings and emotions to disturb you.

As a practitioner, you must be earnest and serious in your practice. Totally commit yourself! I would really like to listen to my students telling me about the results that arise from their practice, my students who have come to live with me and received my instructions that I have given them to the utmost of my ability. I have not hidden anything or kept anything secret from you concerning the various aspects and levels of the Dhamma. In every aspect of the Dhamma, be it the practice itself or the results from it, I have completely revealed it to you without hiding anything. What happened to this Dhamma that I have taught you? Has it become void, without any result? Is this the reason why you cannot practise and attain the results that I have explained to you? This is really something worth thinking about. The heart of the practitioner must be strong, and resolute. Don't be weak and wavering. This is not good, because it is contrary to the Dhamma principles. Weakness is not good for you. When you defy the Dhamma principles, you do it vigorously, but when you follow the Dhamma principles, you do it feebly.

As far as *samādhi* and *paññā* are concerned, you must not wait for them to arise. Whenever it is appropriate to use *paññā* you must use it. *Paññā* kills the *kilesas*. *Samādhi* subdues them. They work together in subduing and destroying the *kilesas*. *Paññā* is terribly important. When you are investigating with *paññā*, and it suddenly strays into speculative thoughts and away from the truth, then you must first get back into *samādhi* to subdue the restless *kilesas*. You should use a meditation object that suits you to calm your heart. If you use the in-and-out breath as your meditation object, then you should be solely mindful of your in-and-out breath, and ignore everything else. Don't let anything distract you from your concentration. The

heart likes to think a lot. The chief culprit here are the kilesas that push sañkhāra to think, and saññā to speculate. They are a lot more restless than monkeys, making the heart behave like a monkey. For example, when you investigate the body with paññā, but you can't see the asubha or loathsomeness of the body, or aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā of the body, then it's because the kilesas have taken over.

The heart is now hungry for other thoughts. So you must immediately curb it by using samādhi. Be earnest, really commit yourselves! After the heart has gained calm, then you should investigate again. You must astutely direct your investigation if you want it to be fruitful. Then you are really investigating with paññā. This is only possible when the heart is calm. You must always observe your investigation. When you practise mental development, you cannot avoid observing - you have to observe. You cannot rely solely on the techniques taught by your teacher. You have to also devise your own techniques. Otherwise you will not gain any wisdom. Any time when it is suitable to investigate, then you must investigate. You can investigate the aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā of the body, or you can investigate the loathsomeness of the body, or any other way you like that accords with the truth and causes dispassion of the body to arise. They are the truth, but when the heart's view goes contrary to the Dhamma, then it is not willing to accept this truth.

What is your body like? Where does it come from? You must dig into it and differentiate it to see its true nature. You say that it is 'I' or 'You' or 'They' or 'Them', or that it is people, or an animal. Where does this body get its form? You must dig into its origins, which are the four elements of earth, water, air and fire. The body is mostly composed with the earth element, namely the hair of the head, the hair of the body, the nails, the teeth, the skin, the sinews, and the bones, and so forth. You can see them clearly with your own eyes. They are the earth element. Saliva, for instance, is the water element. The air element is the air that we breathe in. The fire element is the heat that digests your food. These are the four elements. But when the heart takes possession of this body, it then erroneously perceives it to be 'I' or 'They', or people or animals. This body is 'I' and it is 'mine'. The eyes, the arms, the legs and all the other body parts are all mine. Your heart generates these perceptions automatically. The same with animals. They don't have to be told because it's nature's way.

The kilesas are one aspect of nature. They do not need to be taught. These four elements combine to become the body and then become possessed by the heart. How long will they remain combined? From the time of conception, maybe ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years or more. From time immemorial you have been deceived by the kilesas to think that the body is I, is a human being, is an animal, is you, or is me, although it is just the formation of the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire. But the kilesas deceive you to think otherwise. When the body dies, where does it go? Do you still call it a human being or an animal? The earth element will return to earth, the water element will return to water, the air element will return to air, and the fire element will return to fire. They all return to their respective element. Can you still call this body a human being or an animal? Of course not! They are just elements, and truly so. But when they combine to form the body, why do you then give them a different name, although they are still the elements? You must investigate the truth with paññā. It is only the heart that can make this body move around. This body is just the elements. When it dies, it just returns to the elements.

But you keep calling it I or mine from the day of your birth to the present. You have been deceived by the kilesas! Do you still want to be deceived by them? You will be deceived by them until you die if you don't see its true nature. If your paññā cannot catch up with the kilesas, then you will always think in terms of I and mine, and of animals and human beings. Even after the body has gone back to its respective elements, the upādāna or attachment to this view will always remain embedded within your heart. When it takes up a new body it will consider the body to be I and mine again. This will go on forever without ever coming to an end. This is the way to investigate with paññā. In order to clearly see the truth, you must investigate again and again until it is permanently impressed within your heart. Your attachment will disappear naturally when you have really seen the truth. You can't force the attachment to disappear. Only paññā can do this. When paññā has seen the truth, then the attachment will disappear.

Whichever part of the truth you've seen, then that part will be free. That is why you are taught to investigate, because once you have investigated and come to understand the truth, then you will let go of these things, because they are all fake - they are not the truth. You are defying the truth, and are constantly living with false truth in all of your postures, standing, sitting, walking, and lying down, both day and night. You don't know this, so you must investigate. Speaking about paṭikkūla, or the filthiness of the body, it is full of excrement. This excrement comes out through the hair of the head, the nails, the teeth, or the pores of the body. They are all over the body. There is nothing there that you can call pretty or beautiful. This body is merely wrapped with a very thin skin membrane. Is it really impossible for sati and paññā to penetrate this thin membrane if you really want to? What is the purpose of satipaññā? It is for digging out the truth, especially that of the five khandhas or aggregates.

You cannot eat paññā. It's only used for the investigation of the various parts of the body that the master of deception has taken hold of. When you have seen it clearly, then the upādāna or attachment will vanish. This upādāna is much heavier than a solid mountain. When you have seen clearly, you will let go of your attachment, and the heart will become loftier. It will continue to elevate until it finally arrives at the state of freedom or purity. Be earnest. Really commit yourselves to your practice. You have to have standards and goals. Don't be lackadaisical. Don't see other places as more important than the place where you'll find the truth. This should be your main criteria. Wherever you are, you should think of this criteria. It's your battleground. It's where the kilesas are found.

The Lord Buddha taught the Dhamma clearly. His teaching was well taught in every respect, capable of leading the practitioner gradually away from dukkha, eventually achieving the complete freedom from dukkha, without any doubts. So how can you have any doubts? The kilesas do not have a teacher, so how is it that they can become your teacher? The Lord Buddha tirelessly taught us the Dhamma. How then can the Dhamma not prevail over the kilesas? Your practice can conquer the kilesas. The kilesas have no teacher, but you have a teacher who has taught you very well. Why can't you then beat the kilesas, which have not been to school at all? You have always been on the losing side. This is no good. Normally, in the beginning you have to struggle very hard. This is because the kilesas have always been very powerful. They have always dominated your heart. So when you subdue them, you must use maximum effort, sometimes even putting your life at stake. When it is time to give up your life for the noble truth, then you must do it. Make the results appear and the light shine forth in your heart! When you see the truth that really impresses your heart, then you cannot help but utter 'Fantastic! Now I know the truth of dukkha, the truth of samudaya, and the truth of attachment!' They cannot escape from paññā.

Be serious and earnest. Teachers that can really teach the Dhamma are very hard to find nowadays. There are many practising bhikkhus, but very few of them have discovered or come across the noble truth from their practical experience. And what is the reason? It is materialism and nothing else. This is the main culprit. It can really destroy people. The more materialism develops, the more will the heart degenerate. Although a banknote is merely a piece of paper, it is enough to burn a bhikkhu's heart. We all know that it is just a piece of paper. If you use it to roll a cigarette, it doesn't even taste good. But you are deluded by it. The heart will readily grab the fake things because it itself is full of fake things. So when two phony things come together, it is very easy for them to combine, because there is no truth in the heart. But when you have developed your heart through your practice and have, stage by stage, established the noble truth inside your heart, you'll then discard the fake things and the heart will change from being phony to being genuine. In the beginning, the practice is very hard, but you have to endure it. You have endured dukkha for aeons in the past. In this life the dukkha is also pervasive. When the heart constantly builds up worries and anxieties, how can you avoid dukkha? These khandhas are the tool of the kilesas that enable the kilesas to constantly exhibit themselves. As soon as kilesas appear, dukkha also simultaneously appears. So how can you not experience dukkha? If you can't see the danger of the kilesas, you'll never see the Dhamma.

I have instructed you to the utmost of my ability and really want you to practise. I don't want to see zero results. When doing walking or sitting meditation, there is just sleepiness. How then can there be any result? So what are you going to do? Today it is like this. Tomorrow you'll do the same thing and get the same result. No new result to surprise the heart. You'll then become discouraged. The teaching that your teacher has given you will be meaningless because the kilesas win. They make no exception for any class of people. They dominate and influence your heart and make you suffer. You have taken up the robe for the purpose of eliminating the kilesas through your own diligent efforts and strenuous exertions. Why can't you do it? When you have eliminated some of the kilesas, you'll see the benefits of your efforts. When the heart has calmed down from the restlessness and agitation from your meditation practice, you'll see how valuable your practice is. You'll then move forward.

If you keep using satipaññā, it will mature. When you investigate the body and the other khandhas, the truth will gradually appear. Paññā will arise from your investigation. When you have seen the benefits of paññā, you'll want to investigate more and more until paññā becomes automatic. As the kilesas steadily diminish, your diligent effort will steadily increase until reaching full capacity. Then you'll always want to go into battle. To fight the kilesas will be your main preoccupation. Your laziness will disappear because it is the product of the kilesas. The more the kilesas diminish, the more intense will be your conviction and efforts. The more the kilesas disappear, the more the Dhamma will appear. When all the kilesas are totally eliminated, you'll then see that all the dukkha that used to consume your heart has all disappeared. The heart then becomes totally empty. Nothing can disturb or afflict it any more, because you have totally relinquished your attachment with paññā. When paññā has investigated to the point of clearly seeing the noble

truth, it will let go of everything. Then the heart becomes empty, devoid of the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava that used to poison the heart in the past. This emptiness is the absolute Dhamma.

All that is left behind are the khandhas that still remain functional, just like the lizard's tail that still wriggles and wriggles after it has been cut off the creature's body. These khandhas will remain functional until death when they finally cease. They are insignificant and don't know that they are so. For instance, the body doesn't know that it is a body. Neither do vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, or viññāṇa. They appear and then disappear. Saññā recollects then disappears. Viññāṇa becomes aware of the sensual objects and then disappears, because avijjā, the main culprit, is no longer there to direct them. The khandhas then become the instrument of the Dhamma. Before, they were the instrument of the kilesas. But after the emptiness or absolute Dhamma has appeared in the heart, then the khandhas are used to benefit the world, like the Lord Buddha and the sāvakas who used the five khandhas to teach the Dhamma to the world. When all the kilesas have been eliminated, then all the khandhas will become the instrument of the Dhamma until death following the law of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā. They are sammuti or conventional reality, and must follow the law of sammuti. The khandhas are sammuti, so are aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā. They must go their natural way.

The one who has attained purity doesn't have any problems. He is free from worry. 'Nibbanaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ' – Nibbāna is the supreme bliss. Where do you find it? When the kilesas have all disappeared from the heart, that's where you'll find it. What else are you going to seek? You have always been afflicted with dukkha because of the kilesas. But after the kilesas have all disappeared, where are you going to find any dukkha? And where are you going to look for nibbāna? If you're still deluded, you will still seek it. But after you have become enlightened, you won't look for it any more. 'Nibbanaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ' is eternal. The Lord Buddha said that nibbāna is permanent. When the heart has attained absolute contentment, and has let go of all sammuti, it won't be upset by any problems, because it is totally devoid of them. What problems can there be? Living or dying poses no problem because they are part of nature. This heart has transcended all the problems of the world.



Calming the Citta with Paññā

June 22nd, 1979

All of you who come here for instruction, please be earnest and resolute in your practice. I'll do my best to give you the instructions. Sometimes I cover everything that I know, and sometimes I only touch on a few points. But I have never hidden anything from you. I have told you all that I know regarding my practice and how difficult it was. I revealed it to you so you can use it as an example. It's not for showing off. When fighting the kilesas you have to be aggressive, or else you will not even scratch the surface of them. There are times when you can practise lightly, but there are also times when you have to commit your total effort. Such a time will come and it will happen within your hearts, and you will know it, if you practice with discernment and sound judgement. You'll know when you arrive at a situation that forbids you from retreating, that you must only go forward. You'll either lose your life or realise the truth. I myself have experienced this. I'd never thought that I would become your teacher. Looking back at my stupidity and the restlessness of my citta, I never thought that I would be in this position. But the citta is not above training. It can be trained.

When the citta becomes very restless, you have to be forceful. You have to reduce your food consumption and intensify your exertion. You have to discipline yourself in every respect. When the body weighs heavily on the citta, you have to fast. This is the way of training yourself. Even when the body is not oppressive to the citta, but it's still restless, then you must intensify your investigation to search and destroy the kilesas. When you are forced to totally commit yourself, then you will come to experience the result of your wisdom and mindfulness. I have a coarse temperament. I could not practise lightly but had to practise very aggressively in order to achieve results. That is why I can attest to you that in times of stress, when you're driven into a corner, you can surpass it, you'll not remain stupid. During such a time, you'll be forced to think of a way out. When you do, then wisdom will arise. It is the same when you're surrounded by the kilesas, you'll be forced to figure out a way of escape. You'll have to utilise satipaññā to get you out of the mess. The kilesas will then retreat, leaving you in a state of calm.

At such a time you'll gain confidence in your wisdom and mindfulness that is capable of destroying the kilesas. You'll never forget the result that arises from this strenuous exertion because it will be impressed in your hearts. This is why I want you all to use paññā. You shouldn't wait until you have established samādhi before using paññā. When you are developing calm, you have to commit your total effort. The kilesas are in the citta, and so is satipaññā. So there is no reason why satipaññā cannot get rid of the kilesas in order for you to calm down. If you are resolute, then the state of calm cannot slip from your grasp, and the citta will definitely calm down. You must not let the citta lead you astray, but rather you must use your mindfulness to direct it into calm. When you want to be calm, you have to closely watch the citta because the citta is the one that prevents itself from calming down by thinking endlessly; that in turn creates mental pictures to fool you. There is not a single moment in which the citta does not conceive these mental images. To see where the citta is leading you to, you have to watch it closely. No matter how fast the citta becomes, mindfulness will be just as fast, because the citta can't escape from mindfulness. You will then get the citta to calm down. This is the way of calming the citta. In the beginning stages of practice, calming the citta can be quite difficult, but you should not let it obstruct your practice.

When you're about to pass away, the pain will be very severe, especially if you haven't developed any Dhamma in your heart. You won't have any mindfulness and wisdom to protect you, and you'll be entirely engulfed by pain. But if you have the Dhamma, you'll be strong and firm to face up to this final moment. The kilesas are strong, so you cannot be weak. You must be strong too. Usually it is the kilesas that are always strong, and you're always weak. You can't be weak but must be equally strong. When you've established some calm, you should investigate and develop paññā. Sometimes, you can also use paññā to calm down the citta - this is called 'Paññā develops samādhi'. Because the development of samādhi isn't restricted to only being mindful of your meditation object. The calm that arises by paññā will make you very courageous, much more so than from concentrating on a meditation object. I really want you to experience this. What I have told you is from my own practical experience and I have not added anything to it. This is exactly how it was. I am showing you the results that I've experienced within my own heart. It is the truth that is now within my heart, and I am telling you just this truth and nothing more. Be really earnest, and really commit yourself to the practice.

Don't speculate about the magga, phala, and nibbāna. Just observe and focus your attention on the one who is confused, because this is the one who obstructs the magga, phala and nibbāna from you. It's your thoughts, imagination, and delusion which are the thorns that are obstructing you from attaining the magga, phala, and nibbāna. You have to calm the citta. Once the citta calms down, then happiness will arise and become the magga, phala, and nibbāna's living proof. After you have emerged from this state of calm, then you should investigate. You must investigate the body - look at it clearly. It is always with you. Why can't you see the truth of this body? It's merely a piece of skin that wraps around the skeleton, that you mistake for a human being, a person, and for being beautiful and permanent. You are deceived by your own delusion, because the body is aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā. It's a living cemetery. It's the same with everybody who lives in this world. You have to investigate to see this truth, then you'll see the Dhamma. To think that this body is permanent is really the delusion created by the kilesas. If you believe the Dhamma, then you must not believe the kilesas. You have to investigate and analyse in order to remove the delusion created by the kilesas. Then you'll see that this body is not I or mine, not niccaṃ, not sukkaṃ, not attā, not permanent, happiness, or a self. It's truly aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā - impermanent, suffering, and not-self. Get to see it clearly. Investigate earnestly.

You have to have calm as a practitioner, and especially so as a bhikkhu. You'll really waste your human birth if you can't realise from your Dhamma practice peace of mind, freedom from suffering and nibbāna. It'll really be a shame. So don't speculate about the magga, phala, and nibbāna because this is just the kilesas' diversion. You should follow the Dhamma which teaches you to look at the heart because the kilesas are in the heart, and the means of eliminating the kilesas are also in the heart. Where are the Four Noble Truths? Where is dukkha? The dukkha of the body and the dukkha of the heart are inside yourselves. You are their creator. Why then can't you see the truth of dukkha? And what is it that causes this dukkha to arise and consume your heart? What else can it be if not the kilesas which the Lord Buddha called samudaya - the cause of dukkha? It's in your heart. Who'll detect this samudaya if not satipaṇṇā? You'll see the kilesas and the cause of dukkha within your heart with satipaṇṇā. You must not speculate, but must delve into your heart because that's where the truth is. When it is time to use satipaṇṇā, you must use it. You can do it, otherwise the Lord Buddha would not have taught you to do so.

Some of the sāvakas had to struggle just like you're doing now. You can see this from the scriptures. For instance, the Venerable Culapanthaka who could not memorise some chants for four months. So his brother got very disappointed with him. When they were invited to go for dāna with the Lord Buddha, his brother did not invite him, because he considered him very stupid. Because of this, the Venerable Culapanthaka became very depressed and took the opportunity to investigate the Dhamma using his satipaṇṇā, and attained enlightenment right on that very day. When the Lord Buddha noted that not all the bhikkhus had come yet, he told someone to go and fetch the missing bhikkhu. The Venerable Culapanthaka, in addition to his enlightenment, had also attained the supernatural power of being capable of creating a thousand images of himself. So when the person to fetch him arrived at the monastery, he met many Culapanthakas, and did not know which one to invite. He returned to tell the Lord Buddha about this. The Lord Buddha told him to grab the first Culapanthaka that he saw by the robe. When he did this, all the other Culapanthakas disappeared.

The Lord Buddha already knew that the Venerable Culapanthaka had attained enlightenment because his brother disciplined him by not inviting him to go for dāna with the other bhikkhus. His brother did this for a reason, and the Lord Buddha did not reprimand him for it. His brother was already an arahant. You can see how difficult it was for them, but when they strived, they could eventually attain enlightenment. You're human beings like them. Although you might not possess any supernatural power, you at least have the power to subdue and destroy the kilesas. You must really commit yourselves - be really resolute and earnest. The magga, phala, and nibbāna are right here within your heart, but you just let the kilesas trample all over you. Not to be able to enjoy the taste of the Dhamma is really a shame for a practitioner. You tend to let yourselves be dragged away by the kilesas all the time. So you should be very strict with yourselves.

And what is magga? It's sīla, samādhi, and paṇṇā. You're already keeping sīla, so what is there to talk about other than samādhi and paṇṇā. What prevents the heart from being calm? You know that it is because of the kilesas luring you away from your meditation practice. You must therefore apply satipaṇṇā to calm the citta or use a mantra. But if using a mantra does not calm the citta, then you must use satipaṇṇā to investigate what the citta is thinking about. It has been thinking from the first day of your lives up until today, but what good has this ever done you? You have been continually deceived by the delusion created by the kilesas within your minds. Aren't you tired of this? You get tired of many things, but why don't you ever get tired of being fooled by the kilesas? If you're really desirous of enlightenment, then you must use satipaṇṇā. You have to ask yourselves what you are thinking about, because this is the way of using satipaṇṇā. At this moment, if you're going to think, you must think of the Dhamma. You have to be really earnest in order

to achieve results. Satipaññā will remove all the delusions that have blinded the citta, and gradually bring about nirodha through the development of the magga. Once the magga is fully developed, then all the kilesas, from the coarsest to the most subtle, will disappear.

You can develop satipaññā to defeat the kilesas. Then the magga, phala, and nibbāna will appear in your hearts. After the kilesas have been vanquished, then there is no need to ask where nibbāna is. The arahants themselves never ask about nibbāna because the word nibbāna is just a signpost pointing the way to nibbāna. For example, if you were to put up the name of this monastery at the entrance, it would not make any difference to you, because you already know that this is Wat Pah Baan Taad. But to those who have not come here before, it would make a difference. When they first arrived, they would ask ‘What monastery is this?’ After seeing the sign they would say ‘Oh, this is Wat Pah Baan Taad.’ Those who live in the monastery don’t need the sign. Similarly with those who already know the magga, phala, and nibbāna. They don’t have to read about them because they already know within their hearts. The important thing is to remove all the kilesas. Then there won’t be any questions.

What are sammuti and vimutti? What is the real truth? The term ‘nibbāna’ is sammuti. What is it that is given the name nibbāna, if not the purified citta? What else could it be? You have to purify your citta, and after you have done that, you will have no doubt. After you die, where will you be? If you’ve attained nibbāna, this will not be an issue. It will only be an issue for those who still have the kilesas. Wherever they are, they will always be devoured by the kilesas. It is not nibbāna that afflicts the world but the kilesas. As practitioners, you must be resolute and earnest. Totally commit yourselves to eradicating all the kilesas from your hearts. There has never been a single arahant so out of his mind to ask what the state of purity is or what nibbāna is. All that’s necessary is to have your citta purified. Every question will then be answered. The question regarding the time and place of the Lord Buddha’s and all the other Buddhas’ entry into parinibbāna will be answered in the purified citta. Looking from a purified citta you will understand because it’s the same truth. They merge perfectly together. All questions will disappear the instant you attain the state of purity. Wherever you are, you will always be with the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, right within your heart. Once the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha have arisen in your hearts, they will become the Dhammapadipo - the Light of Dhamma. They all become the One Dhamma. As far as the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha are concerned, this is merely a conventional way of describing these three aspects of the One Dhamma. But after they’ve appeared in your hearts, they will become the One Dhamma.

I translate Majjhimā, the Middle Way as suitability. This is the suitable practice for the eradication of the kilesas. If the kilesas are forceful, then the majjhimā must also be forceful. When the kilesas become more subtle, then the majjhimā must also become more subtle. When the majjhimā overwhelms the kilesas, it will then destroy all the kilesas, and will retire from active duty, because the Majjhimā Paṭipadā or the Middle Way which is the means of eliminating the kilesas, is sammuti. The kilesas are also sammuti. They are the binding sammuti, whilst the majjhimā is the unbinding sammuti. The Four Noble Truths - dukkha, samudaya, nirodha, and magga, are also sammuti. Nirodha is the cessation of dukkha. Once dukkha has ceased, what else is there to do? At the final moment when dukkha completely disappears, you’ll know that it has forever ceased. What is there to seek for? You’ve already achieved your goal. The one who knows the cessation of the kilesas, is not the Noble Truths. The cessation of the kilesas is what you’re actually after. But the one who has attained this state makes no comment at all. He doesn’t say that he takes or gives, for he has now arrived at the absolute suitability, the natural state of majjhimā, being in the middle of love and hate, just right, proper, and appropriate, being contented, not hungry, nothing is too much or too little. It’s not affected by praises or criticisms because it’s fully contented.

Concerning the four maggas, the four phalas, and nibbāna, if you haven’t practised, you’ll always be in doubt. But after you’ve practised and become enlightened you’ll not be in doubt at all. At the final moment, when the citta completely gets rid of avijjā, it happens in a single instant. At that instant, the magga merges with the phala. And immediately after that, it’s mistakenly described in the scriptures as the arahatta phala, the fruit of arahantship, when in fact it’s nibbāna. Because when the magga and phala are still in action, it can’t be nibbāna, because it’s still sammuti. It’s similar to walking up the steps of the sālā or building, where you place one foot on the sālā floor whilst the other foot is still on the step. You haven’t yet accomplished your goal. But when the other foot is lifted from the step and placed on the sālā floor, then right at that instant you’ve achieved your goal, which is similar to achieving nibbāna although the scriptures describe it as the fruit of arahantship. When you get there it won’t be an issue. The Lord Buddha had to clarify this point because had he not done so the sāvakas who had attained nibbāna would have asked him anyway. ‘Why didn’t you mention this point?’ That was the reason why the Lord Buddha divided these attainments into nine stages: the four paths, the four fruits, and nibbāna, in order to be precise and prevent any confusion amongst all the arahant savakas who must pass through these nine stages.

After you've attained the ultimate goal, all relationships will then disappear. When the path merges with the fruit, there's still a relationship. That's why the Lord Buddha emphasised that *nirodha* must be completely realised. *Nirodha* is the cessation of *dukkha*. In my own words, it means that you should strive for the total cessation of *dukkha*. But you usually interpret it to mean something different from what it's intended to. Instead of exerting for the removal of the *kilesas*, you become embroiled with how to achieve *nirodha*. As soon as you've got rid of the *kilesas*, *nirodha* will appear. The truth and theory are two different things, two different worlds. The truth is absolute, whilst the theory can change and mustn't be used to measure the truth. For instance, when you hear about the heavenly abodes, or the paths, the fruits, and *nibbāna*, you can't help but speculate, because your *citta* hasn't actually attained them yet. You can only commit them to memory. Although the *citta* may be able to remember by heart what *nibbāna* is, the *citta* itself hasn't yet realised *nibbāna*, for it's still fully possessed with the *kilesas*. This is what is meant by memory. Please remember this well.

But when the *citta* has passed these various stages of attainments by practice, they'll then become real. They are the truth. Your questions and doubts will be eliminated. For example, if someone tells you about London, England, all that you can do then is to speculate and imagine in your minds. But when you yourselves actually go to London, then what you've imagined in your minds will totally disappear, and be replaced by what you see. What you've imagined is false and will be replaced by what you actually see. What's left impressed in your minds will be the truth. It's the same with the four paths, four fruits, and *nibbāna*. You remember them, but are always doubtful. But when you've realised them, all your doubts will be eliminated. The truth and memory are two different things. They are worlds apart. For this reason, no matter how many *arahants* there might be, even if there were a million or more, there would not be any doubts or contradictions amongst them. Similarly with those who have gone to London, there would not be any contradictions amongst them, because they all have seen exactly the same thing. Before, you would have questioned: 'What are the *maggas*; what are the *phalas*; what are the paths and fruits of the *soṭāpanna*, or the *sakadāgāmī*, or the *anāgāmī*, or the *arahant*?' But as soon as you've practised and passed through these stages, then you'll know what they are. After you've reached *nibbāna*, there'll be no more contradictions because all the *sammuti* have disappeared. Doubts and questions are *sammuti*. After you've seen the truth, all the doubts and questions will disappear. The Lord Buddha called this *vimutti*, which means Freedom.

You've been shouldering the futile burden of memory and speculation for a long time. Why don't you shoulder the truth for a change? See what it's like, how heavy it is. Shouldering the burden of memory and speculation is a very heavy load, but you don't realise this. You should carry the load of truth to see whether it is heavy or not, and to see the difference between them! You've learned many truths from the scriptures. Now you should learn the truth from your practice. If they're not different, why would the Lord Buddha have taught you to practise? The Lord Buddha taught you to develop *pariyatti*, *paṭipatti*, and *paṭivedha* which means studying the scriptures, practice, and then attainment to the results. *Pariyatti* is the studying of the Middle Way. You can study from the scriptures, or from your preceptor on the day of your ordination when he teaches you the five parts of the body - *kesā*, *lomā*, *nakhā*, *dantā*, *taco*, hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, and skin. You must then apply them in your practice by continually investigating these body parts to see them all the time. This is *paṭipatti* or practice. When you've achieved this, it's *paṭivedha*, the gradual realisation of the truth. *Paṭivedha* or the results from practice don't usually appear all at once but appear gradually. When you've uprooted all of the *kilesas*, you'll then achieve the full *paṭivedha* or result. All of your burdens will be shed. The problems caused by the *kilesas* will all come to an end and you'll forever live in peace. The victory of the world is different from the victory of the Dhamma. The Lord Buddha said that no matter how many people you might have killed in battle, even if it were millions, it wouldn't bring you true peace and happiness. To destroy all the *kilesas* within your hearts is most supreme. To conquer yourselves is the greatest victory. Don't you want this kind of victory?

Therefore, all of you who come to live here, and there are many of you, must watch your *kilesas*. You have to be especially mindful of the *kilesa* that thinks very highly of itself. This is very important. You should not display your *kilesas*, but should instead display the Dhamma if you want to live together peacefully. You should always follow the Dhamma teachings that exhort you to always have *mettā* or loving-kindness for your colleagues, regardless of whether they're good or not, accomplished or not. You should always treat them well. If they have achieved something, then you should praise them. Then you'll all live in peace, harmony and happiness. All of you come from different places, and have different temperaments. So you have to blend together to become one body.

The Four Satipaṭṭhānas

June 27th, 1979

For the Lord Buddha and the sāvakas, the Dhamma is most important. They weren't interested in building temples and monasteries, but were solely interested in their Dhamma practice. After they became enlightened, they were only interested in propagating the Dhamma teaching to the world, like Tan Ajaan Mun, for example. Did he build any monasteries? All he ever did was to develop his citta to his utmost ability. After he became enlightened, he then tirelessly taught the Dhamma. You should take him as your role model. People all over Thailand and abroad have great esteem for him. After you've attained enlightenment, your ability to teach the world the Dhamma will be immeasurable. Think about it! This will only happen after the Dhamma becomes established inside the heart. The heart is, therefore, of paramount importance. After enlightenment, it will have extraordinary powers. Has there ever been a temple or a shrine that can teach the world the Dhamma and make people good? Have you ever seen any shrine capable of doing this?

I'm not speaking in contempt. I'm just saying this based on facts and common sense. I'm not saying that shrines should not be built. In places where it is appropriate, I wouldn't object at all. But in places where it's not suitable, then it shouldn't be built because it will only destroy those places. This monastery, for example, is the place for the development of the heart. After you've achieved this goal, imagine the benefits you'll give the world. I've carefully considered this point. Therefore, all of you who come here from the various parts of the country and the world, please be earnest and take this to heart. I always have compassion for you. That's why I have never let go of my responsibilities in teaching you. Although I may not always have the time to teach the laity, I always find the time to teach you. After you become enlightened you can then help the world by propagating the Dhamma, which will happen naturally.

When you have the treasure of the Dhamma, then you can share it. But to share something you don't have is pure delusion. To teach the Dhamma when you haven't yet become enlightened is counterproductive. You'll do more harm than good. The Lord Buddha and the sāvakas didn't do it this way. They became enlightened first before they taught the Dhamma. If they hadn't yet realised the Dhamma, what could they teach? There's no truth in empty wind, no substance with which to attract people's attention, and no basis for others to depend on. But when we have established the Dhamma within our hearts, our teachings will become invaluable. This is the benefit of developing the citta. So please become more determined - be serious and earnest in your practice. Don't speculate about the magga, phala, and nibbāna to be in various places other than in the body and the citta, for they are found right in these two places which make up the five khandhas. Take this to heart.

When the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects contact the heart they will entrap it with love and hate. It's therefore imperative to investigate them with paññā until the heart has understood their true nature and let go of them and retreated inward. Paññā will constantly feed the heart with the right information to prevent the heart from being confused, anxious or worried. When it's time to develop samādhi, it'll be easily achieved. The heart will be cool and calm. You must solve your problems with paññā when it's appropriate to do so. Don't be idle. Paññā is extremely important, whilst sati is the workhorse that directs your practice and keeps you mindful and attentive, and enables paññā to investigate at its fullest. When you've seen the results of your investigations with paññā, you'll become encouraged to intensify your investigation further. This is similar to a businessman who has made a profit, he will be encouraged to work harder. But if he keeps losing, then he'll become discouraged and lazy. It is the same way with the development of the heart. When you've gained some results and progressed, you'll be encouraged to intensify your efforts.

Don't remain idle like a tree stump, lacking appreciation for the Dhamma. Don't get involved with worldly matters because they are all devised by the kilesas to oppress, depress and delude the citta, causing it to be totally ignorant of the truth and Dhamma. When you walk or sit in meditation you only do it with your body, not with your citta because it's involved with worldly matters, with the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects, with the past, and with the future, which cause it to be restless and agitated. How then can you profit from your practice? When you're not profiting but losing you'll become discouraged and lazy. This laziness is created by you and it's you who has to pay for it with dukkha that devours your hearts in every form of existence. This is the fruit of laziness, so you must see its harm. You must use your satipaññā to devise a way to overcome your laziness. This is the way of a wise man. Developing yourself is much more important than developing anything else. Whether it is hard or easy, it's not beyond your abilities.

The Lord Buddha taught the 84,000 Dhamma discourses to suit our temperaments and abilities. They can be summarised into three categories namely, *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. So they aren't really that many, and involve just the body and the citta. Why can't you develop them? When you do walking meditation or *caṅkama*, you should have continuous mindfulness. It is the same way when you do sitting meditation or *samādhi*. You're your own master when you practise diligently. You mustn't think that mastering yourself is a thorn, and doing what you like is a good thing, for this is the kilesas whispering to your heart to lead you astray. If you see practising diligently as your adversary and see the kilesas as your friends then you might as well be dead because you'll repeatedly be born and die, again and again.

Therefore, you must really be earnest. Really commit yourself. The practice environment in this monastery is fairly suitable, though not quite like that in the time of the Lord Buddha when they were mainly forests and mountains. But there are quite enough forested areas here. I am trying my best to help you in all respects because I really consider your welfare. I can tell people who come to this monastery, regardless of their social status, not to disturb your practices. I'm not afraid of anybody. I'm only afraid of contradicting the Dhamma. I have more respect for the Dhamma than for anyone else. When it's time to speak the truth, I will do so. I can tell them not to disturb you, because you're meditating. 'Don't bother them!' I will tell them. 'They're practising. If they see you coming they'll have to move somewhere else. You'll disturb them.' I will also tell them when it is the proper time to see you. If they're disappointed or dismayed, that's not my concern, because speaking the truth should be the norm. There is nothing wrong with that. If it's wrong, it's because they're thinking wrongly. They don't know that it's essential to have privacy during practice.

If sitting meditation is hard on your body or if you're not engaged in any physical activity, then you should do a lot of walking meditation instead. At the same time, you should also develop your mindfulness because your practice depends significantly on it. In your investigation, you should consider your body as well as other people's bodies, both male and female, to see their true nature, because this is the way of developing *satipaṇṇā*, mindfulness and wisdom. *Magga* can be developed by investigating internal and external objects, because *samudaya*, the cause of *dukkha*, is created by clinging to both of them. Attachment to forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects, which are outside the heart, is a form of *samudaya* that arises when you become attached to this or that person, this or that thing. You must, therefore, develop *satipaṇṇā* to eliminate this attachment because *satipaṇṇā* is the *magga*, the path to the cessation of *dukkha*. You can investigate anybody's body, male or female because they can all be the object of your investigation. You must investigate by using the Dhamma teaching as your guide, for instance, investigating to see the loathsome nature or *asubha* of the body, to see its filthiness or *paṭikūla*, to see it as a cemetery, and to see it as *aniccam*, *dukkham*, and *anattā* because they are the truth. You can investigate either your body or someone else's body.

You must always fight the kilesas because they've always been your enemy and are inside your hearts. Most of the time it's the kilesas that have the upper hand and you don't even know this. How can you not know when you're knocked out by your opponent? If you do, you'll be spurred into developing your *satipaṇṇā*, *saddhā* and *virīya* to fight and eventually destroy all the kilesas. This is the way of a fighter. If you fight with all your might, you'll eventually win. If you don't fight, you'll never achieve any result from your sitting or walking meditation, such as calm or insight to encourage you to strive harder. When it's time to be tough, you must be tough. When it's time to go easy, you can go easy. When the kilesas are aggressive, you must also be equally aggressive. If you should die, so be it! I, myself had been in this situation. I am not speaking without anything to back up what I say. When it's time to let it all out, I really let it all out. When this happens, I can assure you that you'll achieve results and destroy the kilesas. You have to investigate using your own devices because each practitioner has a different temperament and abilities. But let me warn you that the kilesas always like to be weak, and the Dhamma always likes to be resolute and strong, and can overcome weakness. Wisdom can overcome ignorance. It is the kilesas that make you ignorant, but the kilesas themselves are not ignorant. In fact they're very clever. Therefore, you must develop *satipaṇṇā* to gradually eliminate ignorance from your hearts. The splendour of the heart will then gradually appear.

The treasure of the Dhamma is vital for the world's well-being, without it the world would be burning hot. Wealth alone can't make you happy, peaceful and cool. For this reason, the *sāsana* or the Lord Buddha's teaching is extremely essential. The *sāsana*'s critics accuse it of being a narcotic and an addiction. If you've never practised or benefited from the *sāsana*, you'll probably not be able to answer their accusations. They criticise the *bhikkhus* for doing nothing. But they never find fault with the pots and pans for not ploughing the rice fields, because they are cooking utensils not ploughs and perform different functions. A battery charger is for charging batteries. The *sāsana* is for charging your courage and uplifting your spirits. This is the purpose of the *sāsana*. If a sick person doesn't seek help from a physician, how can he get well? He

can only become a corpse. Think about it! Patients need physicians and medicine. If they think relying on physicians and medicine is harmful or addictive, then they will surely die. It's the same with people who are afflicted with the kilesas. They are suffering from one form of illness. They can't tell right from wrong, good from bad. They need the sāsana to tell them, and cure them of their illness.

Greed, hate, and delusion are mankind's deadliest threat. If left unchecked, they will tear the world apart. If you use the sāsana to subdue and eliminate them what harm can this do? How can the sāsana be harmful or addictive when it makes people good and the world peaceful? How can medicine and physicians be harmful and addictive to patients? Narcotic drugs will destroy you, but the sāsana, physicians and medicine won't. Only the dead don't have to rely on anything, but the living still do. They have to rely on medical professionals for their physical well-being and the sāsana or the Dhamma teaching for their mental health. Cars need roads to get to their destinations. Patients need physicians and medicine to get well, whether this is an addiction or not is irrelevant. To accuse the sāsana of being a narcotic drug is just dirt that comes out of dirty mouths and dirty minds. Common sense will tell you that when you're sick, you need physicians and medicine to make you well.

It's the same with the citta. When it's still afflicted with the kilesas, tanhā, and āsavas, then it has to rely on the Dhamma teaching to show it how to remove them. When it has finally removed them, it'll transcend both good and evil and won't need the Dhamma teaching any more. It's like walking up the stairway to this sālā or building. As soon as you reach it, the stairway becomes irrelevant. You don't cling to the stairway. The sāsana doesn't teach you to cling. When you're cured from your illness, you won't need your doctor and medicine any more. It's the same with the citta, when it has fully developed, it will no longer need the sāsana and will let go of it naturally. Right now you must exert yourself to the full. Use your satipaṭṭhāna to help the citta eliminate the kilesas. It's the kilesas that are the addiction! But the critics don't say this. If the Dhamma helps you remove the kilesas, how can it be harmful? It's the kilesas themselves that are harmful and have been for aeons and countless existences. But you don't know this. It's very hard to find someone who's really sick of the kilesas to the point of ditching them. They've attached themselves to the heart and are completely hidden from view. Why doesn't anybody criticise them for doing this? It's only fair that the kilesas should also be criticised. You should think sensibly and fairly.

Mindfulness is extremely important, and you mustn't be without it. You should devise different techniques to entice the citta to practise. Then your mindfulness will become continuous. For example, you can try a different mantra or a new method of practice. Then you're really developing your satipaṭṭhāna. I also practised in this way. You have to apply satipaṭṭhāna in your investigation of the body, your own body and other people's bodies until you see clearly the body's true nature. In the Four Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, or the Four Foundations of Mindfulness Discourse, the Lord Buddha said that you should alternately investigate the internal and external body and then compare them. This is the way of developing the magga or the path and the correct way of investigation. It's the same way with the investigation of the inner and the external vedanā or feelings. Actually, the external vedanā here isn't about other people's feelings but about the bodily or physical feelings, whilst the internal vedanā is about the mental feelings. I've gained this insight from my practice and I'm profoundly convinced of this, but I do not deny that the external vedanā can also refer to other people's feelings.

But this is very far from the four satipaṭṭhānas that are in yourselves. If the internal and external vedanās are not in the body and the citta, where else could they be? Then the four satipaṭṭhāna would not be complete. But truly, the four satipaṭṭhāna are complete in each individual, and you'll see them vividly and clearly if you investigate them. Dukkha, samudaya, nirodha, and magga are also in the body and citta. When you're absolutely convinced that they're in yourselves, it doesn't hurt if you compare them with those of other people. You can investigate anyway you like, but your findings mustn't contradict the truth or the Dhamma. The Lord Buddha taught you to be wise, not stupid. What's essential here is for you to practice until the kilesas disappear from your hearts by the power of your satipaṭṭhāna. This happened with my investigation of asubha or the loathsomeness of the body. When I got myself really involved with this investigation, I became so disillusioned with the body that I burst into tears. I said to myself: 'Is this really how to see the asubha of the body!?' When satipaṭṭhāna probed into the body, it would slowly decompose and disappear like pointing a torch at it.

You should investigate until you see this asubha image clearly in your mind. Don't imagine or speculate. When you've seen the truth of asubha, you'll ditch the perception of beauty right away because you can see that it's just paṭikkūla or filthy, and it's made up of the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air. How then can you be deluded? You've now seen the truth of asubha, and realise that it was your imagination all along that obliterated the Lord Buddha's Dhamma. You can now see how powerful and clever the kilesas really are in deceiving you to mistake loathsomeness for beauty. According to the Lord Buddha, the body

is aniccaṃ or impermanent, constantly changing, and it's just the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air. But the kilesas manage to convince you that it's permanent, it's a human being, an animal, you or I. According to the Lord Buddha, the body is aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā, but the kilesas wipe it all out by convincing you that it's otherwise, just like the critics of the sāsana who wipe the sāsana out by labelling it harmful and addictive.

The Lord Buddha said that the body is aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā, but you see it otherwise. When you believe the kilesas you'll wipe out the Dhamma teaching. Asubha can be seen very clearly, but you don't see it. You see beauty in the body instead. But after you've seen the truth of the body, how can you go on contradicting it, and perpetually shoulder the burden of this contradiction? You'll definitely let go of the perception of beauty after you've seen the truth of asubha and seen the harm of your attachment that results from your investigation based on the Dhamma teaching. When your perceptions don't contradict the Dhamma teaching, you'll see the truth. The heart will let go of this wrong perception and become empty, peaceful, and at ease. You'll then investigate for more truths.

You must investigate the asubha of the body, as well as all the organs of the body, such as the muscles and sinews that hold the bones together, and the skin that wraps the entire body. This skin is like a shroud, a garment in which a corpse is wrapped. How can it be beautiful? You must investigate until you see the truth. Then you'll let go of your misperception naturally. No matter how dark this perception may be, it's just like the darkness of the night. After you've turned on the light, the darkness will disappear. It's the same with satipaṇṇā. Whatever object it investigates, that object will become illuminated. No other light in the world can be brighter than the light of paṇṇā. The light of the sun can't pass through opaque objects, but the light of paṇṇā can penetrate through every object. One who has this light of paṇṇā is called Lokavidū, the knower of the cosmos. All the truths that you've realised with paṇṇā and are firmly established within your heart are similar in nature; they are all aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā.

You should choose the method of investigation that suits your temperament. If you enjoy investigating the asubha of the body, then you should concentrate on this investigation until you truly see the loathsome and filthy sides of the body. You'll definitely see the truth and discard your delusion if you're not lazy and don't let the kilesas lull you to sleep. The reason why you're still attached to this body is because you're still deluded and think that the body is I and mine, that the body is an animal or a human being. You then become attached to the body and brush aside the Dhamma teaching. But after you've investigated with paṇṇā and realised the truth of the body, then your delusion and attachment will disappear. You'll let go of the body. Then you'll be anālayo or devoid of any desire because you've completely severed your attachment to the body. You'll become blissful, light and at ease, and feel like a businessman who has made a lot of money and become very rich.

Next, you must investigate vedanā or feelings. The Lord Buddha said that they're merely feelings that appear and disappear. They can be good, bad, or neither good nor bad feelings of either the body or the mind. How can there be a human being, an animal, you or I in them? After you've investigated them using paṇṇā, you'll see that they are merely mental objects or phenomena. As far as saṇṇā or perception is concerned, it's the most subtle of the five khandhas. It'll quietly create mental images to fool you. On the other hand, saṅkhāra or the thought process will stir before it begins to think. You can distinctly feel this stirring. But with saṇṇā there's no stirring at all. It'll create images to deceive you long before you realise it. The citta is continually deluded by these five khandhas. They deceive it with sammuti or relative truths that are created by saṇṇā and saṅkhāra. With the power of paṇṇā, you'll discover that you've been deluded all along. When you probe the citta with paṇṇā, you'll see the mental images appear and then disappear and you'll realise that they are all created by the five khandhas and you have unknowingly become deluded by them. These images are not real. The citta is deceived by the five khandhas. It has taken whatever the five khandhas conjured up as the objects of its pleasure and sorrow for aeons. Regarding viññāṇa or cognisance, it flicks on and off. It flicks on to acknowledge the sense data and ideas as they occur, and flicks off when they disappear, similar to a lightning flash, or the light of the firefly.

When you've developed satipaṇṇā by continuously investigating the activities of the kilesas, you'll become distrustful of the five khandhas and want to know their true nature. You'll then earnestly investigate them and will eventually realise the truth. Then you'll know that they are merely physical and mental phenomena. Actually, whether you realise this or not they still are what they are. But due to your delusion and desires, you mistake them to be something else. These desires are samudaya, the cause of dukkha, and originate from the citta. Now, as satipaṇṇā advances with its probe, the scope of the investigation becomes narrower as satipaṇṇā understands more and more, and eventually converges on the citta. Whatever now appears, you'll know that it comes out of the citta, not from saṇṇā or saṅkhāra because satipaṇṇā is now capable of differentiating them. As soon as the citta produces them they will immediately disappear, just

like the light of a firefly. Once satipaṇṇā has caught up with the citta, it can't go on creating them. When satipaṇṇā is always watching, they can only appear and disappear.

Satipaṇṇā will now make its all-out effort in waging the final battle. All that is left now is avijjā. Both avijjā and the citta have become one and the same thing as they are blended together. If you're possessive of the citta, you'll also be possessive of avijjā. If you cherish the citta, you'll also cherish avijjā. If you're attached to the citta, you'll also be attached to avijjā. If you blindly believe the citta, you'll also blindly believe avijjā. For both the citta and avijjā are together. Satipaṇṇā will now keep on advancing with its probe because it's the only thing it can do. Retreating is not possible. When the investigation has been consummated, paṇṇā will then drop its atomic bomb on its target and completely demolish it. Then the seed of births and existences, avijjā, will be completely destroyed and you'll see clearly that there is no more birth and death for you. The Lord Buddha said that this is the end of the holy life, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ. As soon as the citta has been freed, the knowledge that freedom has been realised will appear simultaneously. This is where the bhikkhu's endeavour comes to an end, not anywhere else, but right here.

After satipaṇṇā has crushed avijjā, all of its enemies will also be destroyed. Satipaṇṇā which has been investigating relentlessly, will now itself stop investigating because it has nothing more to do and no problem to solve. There aren't any kilesas left to be eliminated. After the master of the vaṭṭa cakka, the ceaseless cycle of birth and death, has been destroyed, then everything else comes to an end. The result obtained from your strenuous exertion will surpass everything else. Your misperceptions will all be removed. You'll perceive the present clearly. Whether you live or die, you'll have no more problems with the past, present, and future. It's no problem how you may die. After you've attained to the level where there are no more problems, then everything else ceases to be a problem. So there is no problem for an arahant when he passes away. An arahant can pass away in any posture, either standing, sitting, walking, or lying down. He can pass away in any position of his choosing, just like I wrote in the biography of Tan Ajaan Mun. And what's the reason for this? It's because the dukkha-vedanā, which is sammuti, can't enter the citta to cause any more trouble. So why couldn't an arahant pass away in any position that he sees fit, when he has already transcended sammuti? Dukkha vedanā is sammuti, and remains in the body. It can't enter the citta of an arahant to cause any trouble. So there is no reason why an arahant, for his last act, can't pass away in any position that he finds appropriate.



The Ovādapāṭimokkha

July 12th, 1979

The teaching of all the Buddhas as encapsulated in the Ovādapāṭimokkha can be summarised into three main topics. One, Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ, to avoid doing any kind of evil. Two, Kusalassūpasampadā, to develop wholesome or meritorious actions, which really means the development of wisdom. Kusala means skillfulness, mastery, or wisdom. Three, Sacitta pariyodapanā, to purify the citta until it becomes bright and pure. Etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ, this is the teaching of all of the Buddhas. These three endeavours form the basis of the Lord Buddha's teaching. He then elaborated further: Anūpavādo, to abstain from criticising others. Anūpaghāto, to refrain from harming others. Pāṭimokkhe ca saṃvaro, to adhere strictly to the monastic discipline. Mattaññutā ca bhattasmiṃ, knowing the right measure of dispensing with the four living requisites, such as eating moderately. The Lord Buddha said that we should know moderation and the right measure, which means knowing what is suitable or appropriate. Pantañca sayanāsanā, to seek and dwell in seclusion and solitude. Adhicitta ca āyogo, to develop the citta until it becomes sublime. Etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ, this is the teaching of all the Buddhas. These are the verses that are recited at the end of the bhikkhus' fortnightly meeting to recite the Pāṭimokkha, the monastic discipline.

You have to be resolute with the Dhamma teaching. Don't merely skim over it or after having read it and committed it to memory, then claim it as your own possession, because it's not yet your genuine possession. It's only a memory of the Dhamma teaching that you have to correctly apply in your practice. It can't be considered your true possession yet. The Lord Buddha called this pariyatti or theoretical understanding. However much you might have studied, it's still pariyatti, theoretical study. Paṭipatti is the practice of Dhamma for the removal of the kilesas, and the development of moral excellence. This Dhamma is the magga or path to the cessation of suffering and stress, which fundamentally consists of sīla, samādhi, and paññā. You've got to do this yourselves. Paṭivedha is the gradual and complete realisation of the four noble truths. It's the result gained from practising Dhamma. First, you've to study either from the scriptures or from your teachers, especially from your upajjhāya or preceptor who taught you at your ordination the five kammaṭṭhānas: kesā, lomā, nakhā, dantā, taco. These five kammaṭṭhānas are considered to be your most important tools for uprooting births and existences, for the destruction of the vaṭṭa saṃsāra, and for the removal of the kilesas and taṇhā from your hearts.

You have to uproot the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsavas with these kammaṭṭhānas because they like to hide behind kesā, the hair of the head, lomā, the hair of the body, nakhā, the nails, dantā, the teeth, taco, the skin, aṭṭhi, the bones, and the rest of the thirty two parts of the body. You have to study them to see their true natures. Then the kilesas won't be able to hide behind them because paññā will gradually expose them. Wherever you are, you mustn't lose sight of this undertaking which is highly sophisticated and subtle. It should be done continuously, not periodically like working for the government or seasonally like farming that starts in the morning and finishes in the evening. This is how the world does its work. You mustn't use this worldly method in your Dhamma practice to develop moral excellence and eliminate the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsavas, because it's ineffective. The world's undertaking has time frames, schedules, and seasons, for example, the civil servants and factory workers work from nine to five, whilst farming is done seasonally.

But your practice is delicate, comprehensive, intensive and strenuous, but not wearisome. It's subtle work because the kilesas are very subtle. For this reason, you have to probe and investigate continually both day and night, sitting, walking, and lying down, except when sleeping, and it must always be foremost in your mind, having sati always directing it. You must practise all the time, using any kammaṭṭhāna of your choice to eradicate the kilesas. For example, you should mindfully investigate the hair of the body, the hair of the head, the nails, the teeth, the skin, the flesh, the bones, or any other parts of the body with your resourceful and versatile paññā probing and analysing. You mustn't do it blindly, nor speculate aimlessly. When you haven't developed any paññā yet, then you must first rely on sati to calm your citta by curbing your thought process using any samādhi method that I have previously explained. This will help consolidate the strength of the citta. After the flows of your thoughts retreat and converge inside the citta, the citta will become strengthened. Normally the citta likes to drift and scatter its thoughts aimlessly. There isn't a single moment when the citta is free from thinking aimlessly, except when it's sound asleep. When it's not, then it will be dreaming instead, which is another way of thinking aimlessly.

If you're intent on bringing to fruition the complete cessation of suffering and stress in your hearts, then you must strive in developing the magga or the path factors such as sati, samādhi, paññā and viriya. The

objects of your investigation, like *kesā*, *lomā*, for instance, are also the *magga* and can be found everywhere if you just look at them objectively. Without *sati*, the *citta* will drift aimlessly and become weakened. It will then definitely gravitate toward the ever-present lures of the *kilesas*. For this reason it is necessary to use force and discipline to free your *citta* from the *kilesas*' and *āsavas*' enticements, which are like magnets that attract your *citta* to fall under their spells and influence, that drive you to be born, to die, to suffer, and to become deluded. The *kilesas* and *āsavas* are the main culprits. You mustn't think that it is anything else. You must therefore summon all of your efforts to develop your *sati* until it becomes *sampajañña* or continuous mindfulness. Being always mindful of and attentive to what you're doing, and doing it purposefully is *sati*, or the correct way of practice. This is right exertion, and it is also the *magga*.

This exertion is completely different from all other exertions. If you truly intend to be free from *dukkha*, you'll not be concerned with the time. If your determination is full to the brim, you'll always be exerting, enduring and persevering. No matter how difficult it gets, you'll not waver, but will always be tough and resolute. This is due to the unyielding strength of your resolve, acting like a magnet that galvanises your diligent efforts and energy. You'll become stronger and more resolute. You mustn't be fond of or engage in worldly activities that you've already experienced from the first day of your birth. You should by now lose all interest and curiosity. If you still enjoy them, you'll still cling to them. As far as practitioners are concerned, the world is the *kilesas*. The *kilesas* are *sammuti* that ceaselessly oppress the heart, and never stop to rest like other workers.

To develop the *Dhamma* you must therefore rely on the continuous application of your diligent efforts. You have to strive and exert yourselves to the utmost. *Chanda*, one of the factors of the *iddhipāda* or the keys to success, is crucial to your accomplishments. With the *iddhipāda* you can achieve any objective. By definition *chanda* means to delight in the exertion for freedom from suffering and stress. *Viriya* means to strive relentlessly in all postures of exertion. You must constantly watch your thoughts to see which direction they are heading. They almost always head in the *kilesas*' direction. If there is *sati*, then the *kilesas* will retreat. But if you don't have any mindfulness, then the *kilesas* will attack you. *Citta* means being attentive. This is the *citta* of the *iddhipāda*. You mustn't let yourselves and mindfulness be far away from your exertion, for this will lead you to your objective, which is freedom from *dukkha*. You've to tirelessly attend to your exertion because it's part of your practice. *Vimamsā* means *paññā*, which is an indispensable tool for the destruction of the *kilesas*, and for making the heart sublime, magnificent, courageous, bright, skilful and discerning.

The *citta* must always be possessed with *satipaññā* to supervise it, because the *citta* itself can't tell good from bad, right from wrong. It has to rely on *satipaññā* to tell it, and to keep it safe and secure. If it's not protected by *satipaññā*, then it will definitely follow the *kilesas*. If you don't have any *satipaññā*, then you must be insane, because *satipaññā* is extremely vital to your sanity and tells you what's right or wrong, good or bad. A deranged person usually wanders aimlessly along the streets, pays no heed to what is right and wrong, and drifts following his whims and fancies because he doesn't have any *satipaññā* to supervise his actions, and to tell him whether they are right or wrong. He isn't rational because he doesn't have any *satipaññā*. If you're totally devoid of *satipaññā*, then you're crazy because your heart merely knows, but it can't tell right from wrong.

Your actions will be directed by the all-pervasive and powerful *kilesas* whether you're sitting, standing or lying down, and wherever you go. It doesn't bother you how filthy you may be because you can't tell the difference between filthiness and cleanliness. You can't distinguish, you merely know, but you don't know good from bad, cleanliness from filthiness, right from wrong, and what's proper from what's not proper, like sitting in the middle of the intersection and causing a traffic snarl. Your heart is completely under the influence of the *kilesas*. You don't have any *satipaññā* to help you discriminate between things. If you have enough *satipaññā* like normal people do, then you're not crazy, but this normal level of *satipaññā* is not enough to eliminate the *kilesas*, *taṇhā*, and *āsava*, as you would like to. You have to rely on a higher level of *satipaññā* that is developed by your *Dhamma* practice. Then you'll be able to destroy the *kilesas*, and establish calm.

To keep the *citta* concentrated on your meditation subject and not drift away to other thoughts, you must always have *sati* directing it. The *citta* will then attain calm. It'll only gain calm with *sati*. When it's time to investigate, you must do it with the resourceful and ingenious *paññā*. For example, investigating your own body and other people's bodies, and then comparing them. This is the correct way of developing the *magga*. Then you'll always see the noble truths because they're everywhere, especially the truths of *dukkha* and *samudaya* that pile over the hearts of every sentient being. Are *dukkha* and *samudaya* worth desiring? *Samudaya* is the creator of *dukkha*. How can you find any happiness from them? For this reason, you have

to counter them with another noble truth, which is hostile to them and is the weapon to destroy them. This noble truth is the magga, the application of diligent effort and strenuous exertion.

You have to investigate with paññā so that you can see clearly the noble truths. What is there in your body? You have to investigate according to the truth, and must not contradict the Dhamma teaching. If you do, you'll be under the influence of the kilesas. You have to examine the top, the middle, the bottom, and each side. The top is the head, and the bottom is the feet. Look into this heap of noble truth which is your body or the rūpa-khandha. You must also look inside. What is there inside this body? There are pieces of bones connected together by the sinews, wrapped by the skin and cushioned in between by the flesh. Externally, it is covered by a very thin sheet of skin, and that's all there is to it. However, you can't see this yet because you're so deluded. You should be very ashamed of your kilesas, taṇhā, and āsavas. You shouldn't really be deluded with this thin layer of skin, but you are, because the power of the kilesas far exceeds the Dhamma that is needed to defeat them.

You haven't yet developed the Dhamma or satipaññā to be effective enough to destroy the kilesas. For this reason, the kilesas can still infiltrate your investigation. Though you might try to investigate this body to see it as asubha, or repulsive, as aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā, the kilesas can still prevent you from seeing it as such. All you can see is a human being, I, and mine. You see this heap of filthiness or paṭikkūla, this living cemetery as a living person, attractive, and delightful. This is how you see this body, every piece, every organ. This is how you contradict the Dhamma and are beguiled by the kilesas. It's, therefore, absolutely vital to develop satipaññā to direct your investigation. You have to investigate over and over again until you see the truth. You have to see the truth of kesā, lomā, nakhā, dantā, and taco. When you truly see it, you'll be overcome by your disillusion. This has happened to me. When I got to see it clearly, I was so deeply moved by it that tears started rolling down my cheeks. I couldn't help thinking: 'Why? Why? Why didn't I see this body like this before? I have been investigating this body from the first day of my going forth, for the purpose of seeing the truth of this body following the teaching of the Lord Buddha. But why didn't I see this before, and why today? It's as if this body just appeared today although it has always been with me for all these years. But why didn't I get to see it until today?'

I was really impressed by this realisation. Whenever I looked at any particular part of the body, paññā would spread over it like ink spreading over blotting paper. This is how paññā will probe, then the truth will appear, and I became profoundly moved. Paññā examines every aspect and every organ of the body, both the top and the bottom part, as they are all the same, impermanent and repulsive. So, how could I not be impressed? When I visualised the body gradually decomposing, I could see this very clearly. It gradually decomposes and dissolves. What will it look like when it's dead? I had to keep on visualising until the body began to decompose and dissolve, leaving behind just the skeleton. I became more impressed and the citta became very light, as if it was about to fly. During the time that I was investigating, my heart became deeply moved. That's the way you'll see the body. I saw it that way.

But you won't see the body the same way every time you investigate it. You'll see it differently each time. But it's still definitely seeing the truth of the body. You also won't be moved with the same intensity, because each realisation differs from one another. The emotional impact, therefore, has to differ accordingly, depending on the nature of your investigation. This is the way you should investigate with paññā. You have to keep a tight rein on your investigation, not allowing it to stray from your object of investigation. You can investigate the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally. For example, you can investigate any particular part of the body, such as head-hair, body-hair, nail, teeth, or skin. This is contemplating the body as a body. You can investigate another person's body, and then compare it with your body. The Lord Buddha had clearly elucidated in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta or the discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, that you should investigate both the internal and the external body for the removal of the kilesas, taṇhā, āsavas, avijjā, and upādāna. This is the task of the bhikkhu. This is how you should investigate.

You shouldn't be concerned or worried about anything. Just think that you're alone with a heap of bones that you carry wherever you go, whether you're walking, sitting, sleeping, or discharging excrement. You're entirely consumed by your concern and worry for this body, because it's its nature to impart us with such troubles. The more you become attached to it, considering it to be I and mine, the more heavy will your worry become to the point where you'll not be able to put forth your exertion. Whatever you do, you'll become very tired and weary, weak and exhausted, devoid of any mental strength. This is how to lose to the kilesas. To become enlightened, the Lord Buddha and the sāvakas had to traverse the road of the four noble truths, the road of dukkha and samudaya. Let's face it, dukkha is dukkha. Wherever dukkha appears, that's where you have to probe. You have to examine this dukkha and the object that is undergoing dukkha. Separate them apart to see their true nature, because according to the natural principle, dukkha-vedanā is

a mental phenomenon. It isn't the flesh, the body, or the skin, the body-hair, the head-hair, the nails, or the teeth, which are physical phenomena.

Even when dukkha is completely engulfing the body, the body doesn't know that it's being afflicted with dukkha. It doesn't know anything. The dukkha that appears also doesn't know the meaning of dukkha or of any particular part of the body. None of them know anything. They merely appear because it's their nature to do so. You should investigate with paññā to see them as they are, then you'll be able to tell them apart. You should look at dukkha until you realise its true nature. What gives rise to this dukkha, and where does this dukkha appear? You should examine with paññā the object that's being afflicted with dukkha. You must not retreat, but must really concentrate on your investigation of the bones that are being afflicted with dukkha, and are about to burst apart with you experiencing a lot of pain. What is really being afflicted with dukkha? Is the bone really being afflicted with dukkha? In a dead person, is there any dukkha? When the bones are being burnt, do they show any signs of pain, show any signs of anxiety, or show any signs that they are being afflicted with dukkha? Of course not!

The skin, flesh and bones are similar in nature and don't know what they are. It's the citta that interprets and defines them and then becomes deluded with its own interpretation and definition, by thinking that they're dukkha, that they're me and mine. Once dukkha and the body become entwined, the citta will be duped into shouldering a lot of dukkha. If you investigate with paññā, you'll see very clearly that dukkha is just a phenomenon or *sabhāva-dhamma*, and the body is also a phenomenon. All of your interpretations and definitions are the work of *saññā* that's being manipulated by the *kilesas* that use *saññā* to conjure up the notions that this or that object is afflicted with dukkha, that they are this and that. You have to keep on investigating. Is the citta dukkha? Are they the same thing?

You must now separate the citta from dukkha. The citta merely knows. It's not dukkha. Dukkha is just dukkha. Bones are just bones. Dukkha is real, so is the citta, the one who knows dukkha. After you've analysed up until the point of seeing the truth clearly, then the dukkha and the citta will separate. Then the dukkha won't be magnified and get out of hand. No matter how severe the dukkha in the body might be, it won't afflict the citta, because the citta now thoroughly understands the nature of dukkha, the nature of the body, and the nature of the citta itself, due to the investigative power of paññā that enables the citta to see them as they are. You can now live in peace and in comfort. This is the way when one investigates with paññā.

When you get into a crisis, paññā will step in. You can't remain ignorant and helpless. When you're up against the wall, you'll have to rely on yourself to develop *satipaññā* to get you to safety. This has already happened to me. I'm telling you this from my own experience and not from speculation. I said to myself: 'You're not forever ignorant or stupid. When you're in a crisis, you can become wise and smart, because you'll be forced to develop paññā to deal with the crisis, like when you're driven into a corner by dukkha.' Every part of my body seemed to burst apart. That was how severe the dukkha was. But I kept on investigating with *satipaññā* until I understood the nature of dukkha, the nature of the body, and the nature of the citta. Then the dukkha wouldn't intensify. Even if it does, like when you're about to die, it would merely be the dukkha of the body. The citta wouldn't be affected in anyway; it would remain calm and collected. You'll see this very clearly.

So how can you have any qualms about dukkha or death. Because dukkha, death and the citta, the one who knows *sukha* and *dukkha* are all real. Paññā is also real, they all are real, so they won't disturb each another. At the time of death when the dukkha becomes very severe and you can't stand it any more, then you should just let it happen. You've been investigating birth, ageing, illness, and death from the very first day of your practice. So when death beckons, you shouldn't run away from it if you practice for enlightenment. After you've become enlightened, you won't become deluded again. What could you be deluded about, when they're all real? You wouldn't be bold or fearful either. What is there to be bold about? What is there to fear? They are all *sammuti* or conventional reality. But if you're not enlightened, you'll still be fearful and bold. When it's time for you to be bold, you'll be bold, for this is the nature of paññā or *maggā*, to be fearless in facing up to dukkha-*vedanā* or pain. You'll keep on fighting relentlessly until you die. When you traverse the path for the cessation of dukkha and stress, you have to be bold. But after you've achieved your goal, after you've become enlightened then there won't be any fear or boldness left, because you've arrived at the realm of normality, where everything is perfect, peaceful and natural, and where nothing can cause it to increase or decrease, because it's the absolute reality.

This is the way of investigating with paññā. You have to be resourceful, and versatile. It will be helpful if you can come up with different techniques every now and then. When you continually investigate, *satipaññā* will be very powerful, and you'll be able to probe the entire body, as well as the entire world of

samsāra. You'll investigate everything, internally and the externally until you become enlightened. Then you'll become a lokavidū, a knower of the world, one who has truly realised his true nature, as well as the true nature of the world, the true nature of samsāra, and the true nature of sammuti. What then is there to be deluded about? Such is the power of paññā. You should therefore vigorously develop this enterprising paññā, and must not remain complacent. You're now living in a secluded and quiet environment. I have tried my best to provide you with as much time as possible for your practice, so that you can concentrate your sati, paññā, saddhā, and viriya on rescuing the heart, which is constantly calling for help, from all the oppressive kilesas.

Whether you're standing, sitting, walking, or lying down, your hearts are constantly being oppressed and subjugated by the kilesas. You must, therefore, help your hearts with your viriya, sati, paññā and saddhā, in acquiring freedom, or at least to alleviate some of your dukkha. To alleviate dukkha, you have to curtail samudaya, the creator of dukkha. If samudaya is not curtailed, then your dukkha won't be alleviated. Therefore, samudaya is the chief culprit. In the Dhamma-cakkappavattana Sutta or the First Discourse, the Lord Buddha pointed out the three aspects of samudaya namely, craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, and craving for not-becoming. They are in your hearts and not in the scriptures. The real craving for sensuality or kāma-taṇhā is not in the scriptures, but in your hearts. The scriptures just list the names of kāma-taṇhā, kilesas, and the Dhamma. You have to rely on the Dhamma to guide you in your practice because it's the only correct way. You should first study and commit them to memory, and then apply them in your practice of mental development.

You have to strive and exert yourselves to the utmost at all times, day and night. If you're not engaged in any physical activity, and your body becomes very lethargic, then you should do a lot of walking meditation to exercise your body. If you do a lot of sitting meditation, it can be very painful to the various parts of your body, and the utilisation of your body postures is not in balance. This is not good for your health. You should equally stand, walk, sit, and lie down. After you've got out of the sitting position, you should then do walking meditation until you get really tired before changing into another posture. This is the proper way of practising mental development. It's also healthy for your body, and makes your body function smoothly. During the three month period of vassa or the rains retreat, you should intensify your practice. Don't be concerned with anything. Your food and living requisites have been plentifully supplied by the laity. You take up the dhutaṅga or austere practices in order to receive and consume a small amount to speed up your meditation practice. But you end up getting more than you normally do. Look at the number of times that you have to empty your bowls on your almsround!

That's the lay devotees' way of making merit by generously supporting this monastery. But you shouldn't take the lay supporters for granted or get intimate with them. You should always be intimate with the Dhamma and take the Dhamma as your refuge. As far as being hungry or full, having plenty or not is concerned, this is just the nature of this world that is full of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā. Nothing in this world is certain, but you shouldn't be concerned. You should consistently concentrate on your practice. This is the correct way. As far as the dhutaṅga practice of not accepting any food after piṇḍapāta or almsround is concerned, I have practised this ever since I began my teaching career to serve as an example for my students to follow. You should really exert yourselves. Don't waste your time wondering about other people's business. You should only look at your heart that is constantly craving and producing a lot of samudaya. You should take control and discipline your hearts with the various techniques of practice and paññā. It can be tedious if you keep meditating with the same meditation subject. You should try different techniques of satipaññā to turn your citta around. It's not good when your practice becomes dull. You should use paññā to come up with new initiatives and ideas that will attract your interest. I myself have done this before.



Investigation Methods

July 18th, 1979

It's not unusual for a Dhamma practitioner, who traverses the path to the cessation of dukkha, to encounter problems that arise from practice, with the only exception of a khippābhiññā, one who becomes enlightened quickly. But for you ordinary practitioners, there will be problems to solve. You'll have to muster all of your mental resources to solve them. Your mind will be spinning like a Dhamma cakka or wheel of Dhamma. When you're developing paññā, this is the way it will be. In developing samādhi, you'll have to use sati to control and subdue the citta. When there is no sati to control it, the citta will ceaselessly think and conjure up images to deceive you, although they are just shadows. The producer of these images is inside the citta, but the shadows are projected outward to fool you to become obsessed with them. This will happen to every practitioner. If you don't know this fact, then your citta will never calm down. You should, therefore, always watch your citta with sati; then when it begins to conjure, you'll feel that there is something emerging. But you usually won't know this because it only emerges when you're not mindful. You'll only realise it after it has already conjured up these images. By then you'll already become deluded with them. They are merely shadows.

All of your conceptualising is created by saṅkhāra that keeps on conjuring up thoughts and images without end. You then become deluded and obsessed with them by creating more thoughts and images. You might think that you're sitting meditating, but actually you're being obsessed with your thoughts because you're not watching your citta where your thoughts and images are created. Sati is not watching, so how can the citta find any calm. You should always keep this in mind. This is the way it really is, it has already happened to me, so I really know it. If it hadn't, how could I tell you? When you're developing calm, you must focus your mindfulness at the citta where your agitated and restless thoughts are being generated. Sati is a mental factor that functions as a watcher. You should develop it to watch the citta where all your thoughts and mental images are created. You must not speculate or theorise, you must experience it. Just concentrate your awareness right at the citta to see what the citta is generating.

If you use a mantra as your concentrating device, then you should be solely aware of your mantra whilst keeping on reciting the mantra. This kind of saṅkhāra or mental concoction is not samudaya, but magga, because it doesn't make you restless or agitated, but it makes you calm. It'll curb your thoughts and imaginings that make you restless and agitated. Dhamma doesn't make you restless and agitated, but your thoughts on worldly matters will. This kind of saṅkhāra or mental concoction is samudaya. No matter how much it concocts, it'll never stop or be contented. It will keep on thinking and deceiving you, both day and night, without any beneficial result. If you're seeking benefit, you should develop your sati to be firmly embedded in your mind, by concentrating your attention at your mantra if you choose it as a device to calm your mind. After you have developed some calm, you should begin investigating with paññā the thirty-two parts of the body or rūpa, or investigating the feelings or vedanā (that can be sukha, dukkha, or neutral), of the heart and of the body. Keep on investigating with the methods that work for you until you become enlightened.

When the citta calms down, the kilesas will all gather inside, and all cravings will temporarily disappear. This state of calm will serve as your base camp where you'll rest, recuperate and plan your next move. Without calm you'll always be restless, agitated and disturbed by what you see, hear or think. This is the way of feeding your heart with the poisons of dukkha, worries and anxieties. After you've rested enough and emerge from this state of calm, you should then investigate with paññā the external body, either the body of a man, a woman, or an animal, and compare it with your body. They are similar in nature: they are filthy or paṭikkūla; they are repulsive or asubha; they are impermanent or aniccaṃ, and they get old, get sick and die. This is true with every body. The citta should ceaselessly investigate with paññā. Sati, which is indispensable like household medicine, must be ever-present. Sati must accompany every task, like the development of calm or samatha, and the development of insight or vipassanā. If sati is not directing your investigation then it will turn into speculation or saññā.

In the beginning stages, your investigation will generally be saññā or speculation, because you haven't yet experienced the result of your investigation. To achieve results you have to rely on sati to continually direct your investigation until you see the true nature of the object under investigation. Only then will saññā turn into paññā, and eventually become entirely paññā. Saññā will then disappear. From then on your practice will be smooth sailing. It's rather difficult in the beginning stage of your practice, either in developing calm or paññā. But you shouldn't let this difficulty block your path. The reason why you can't exert at full

capacity is because of your fear of difficulty. You then become weak and lazy, and won't make any progress. Your heart is filled with interest for mundane matters, that by now you should see as harmful. You've engaged with these worldly activities from your childhood days and should see the damage done to you by thinking of them now.

You're now striving to emancipate yourselves from the kilesas with your Dhamma practice. You should therefore concentrate all of your efforts into this task. Your exertion will be futile if there is no sati directing it. Sati is indispensable for both walking and sitting meditation. You must always have sati when you meditate for calm or paññā. Sati must always oversee your meditation practice. If you haven't achieved any results yet, it's because you have very little or no sati at all. What's the reason for this lack of sati? It's because you're not putting enough effort into continually developing sati to grow to its full potential. Similarly with developing paññā, in the beginning stages it's an uphill struggle, because you haven't yet seen what paññā can do. When you do, you'll be so hooked and absorbed in your investigation that it can turn into uddhacca or restlessness, one of the higher fetters or saṃyojana, because you get carried away. Uddhacca is the citta's obsession with its investigation. This uddhacca is not the uddhacca of the five mental hindrances that an ordinary, unenlightened person experiences, or the consequence of thinking about the affairs of the world; rather, it is the result of relentlessly investigating with paññā to reveal the ti-lakkhaṇa or the three characteristics inherent in all conditioned phenomena.

Sati and paññā when fully developed will be ever-present and relentless with their investigation from the very first moment that you arise from your sleep. I had never speculated that it would be like this until it actually happened to me. From the first to the last moment of my waking hours, I was never off-guard or absent-minded. Listen to that! This is how sati and paññā can become, functioning automatically all the time. How then can you ever be off-guard? For you have now attained the level of automatic sati and paññā. During the time of the Lord Buddha, this was called mahāsati and mahāpaññā. Tan Ajaan Mun had always exhorted his students to develop their sati and paññā to become mahāsati and mahāpaññā. He would say: 'How else can you compete with the deception of the kilesas that have accumulated in your heart for aeons and countless existences? Your heart is entirely filled with these very powerful kilesas, leaving no room for the Dhamma at all. If your sati and paññā isn't up to par how then can you subdue and vanquish the kilesas? To eliminate the kilesas completely, it's, therefore, vital to develop sati and paññā to become more powerful than the kilesas.'

Tan Ajaan Mun would always forcefully exhort his students, for he was a man of fortitude and determination, bold and courageous, nimble and efficient. He would teach in a straightforward, honest and sincere manner and was always smarter than the kilesas. Whatever kind of trick the kilesas might have up their sleeves, he would always know how to outdo them with his wit and skill. As practitioners, you must, therefore, follow his example if you're going to take possession of your citta's greatest and most supreme treasure. But right now, your citta is completely surrounded by the kilesas that prevent you from seeing what the real citta is. All you can see is just the kilesas. All your thoughts and perceptions are shaped by the kilesas. Not a single moment are they shaped by the Dhamma. When you're overwhelmed by the kilesas, then all the mental phenomena will be led by the kilesas, because you haven't yet developed any sati and paññā. To beat the kilesas, it's therefore imperative for you to seriously and earnestly develop sati and paññā to overwhelm them.

When you continually nurture your sati, it will gradually grow to its full potential. As far as paññā is concerned, you mustn't think that it will develop by itself, without doing any investigation, regardless of what level of samādhi you might have accomplished. There are many practitioners who believe wrongly that paññā will appear automatically following the realisation of samādhi as suggested by some texts. How can this be possible? What I have clearly experienced in my practice was otherwise; how then can I be deceived by this belief? Do you know how many years I was addicted to samādhi? It got to the point where Tan Ajaan Mun had to forcefully drive me out of my samādhi addiction. I had to start traversing the path of paññā, by probing and investigating with the firm and steady support of samādhi that provides the citta with ever-present contentment and satisfaction, because it was very strong and firm, the highest level of samādhi. But did paññā arise automatically from this level of samādhi? No, it never happened!

I had become so skilful in establishing samādhi and stopping all my thoughts that it took me just a few minutes to do it. After the citta had entered calm, all that remained was this knowingness that I became addicted to and thought it to be nibbāna. I didn't know that there were all sorts of kilesas still hidden within it, and never thought of it, because I didn't have any paññā. But when I began to investigate with paññā, I started to see them and wanted to remove them. I would then keep on investigating until all the kilesas were eliminated. I could now see the benefits of paññā as it kept on advancing. The more results I achieved, the more I became motivated to investigate. Eventually, I would blame my samādhi addiction for preventing

me from advancing in my practice. You should keep in mind that regardless of the samādhi level you might have attained, it won't automatically generate paññā. If you don't investigate, paññā will never appear. If paññā were to arise by itself, then it should have happened to me because I had already developed the highest level of samādhi. But paññā didn't appear. If you develop samādhi, you'll only get samādhi. If you want to develop insight, you'll have to investigate. You'll then acquire insight or vipassanā, which means clear understanding of the inner nature of all phenomena.

You mustn't be complacent and remain idle. You should investigate as soon as you've withdrawn from calm. Each level of calm will support each corresponding level of paññā. This is the correct way to practise, and it will save you a lot of time. You won't have to worry about whether you're doing it correctly or not because you have me to guide you. All you have to do is follow my advice. Your practice will be easy, because you've no doubt in your mind. I've no doubt in my teaching because I have clearly experienced both the path and the fruit, like when I told you about sati and paññā relentlessly and ceaselessly investigating to remove the kilesas with assorted investigation methods to suit the different kinds of kilesas. From the time I woke up to the time I went to sleep, there wasn't a single moment when I was off my guard. I kept investigating until I went to sleep. This had actually happened to me! However, you shouldn't duplicate it though. This is not the way to practise. You should use it as a guideline. It doesn't have to be identical, but you must more or less adhere to my instruction. What I've told you here is a true story of my uphill struggle in developing my sati and paññā to their full potential so they could continually investigate to eliminate the kilesas without ever being off-guard. It will be like this when sati and paññā are fully developed.

You've got to work really hard in your quest for enlightenment and the paranormal that are hidden in your citta for it to become marvellous and wonderful. But right now it's worthless and filthy, because it's being completely covered with the worthless and filthy kilesas. It's, therefore, imperative to wash them away with your diligent effort. You should apply all of your paññā resources available to you, and not solely wait for your teacher's advice. By devising your own investigation methods, your paññā resources will never be depleted. Your teacher can only show you how to do it, but you have to adapt it to fit your practice. Then it will be your true and genuine possession. To develop your paññā resources, you have to investigate the body's loathsome nature or asubha. You have to reveal this repulsive nature by going on a kammaṭṭhāna sightseeing trip, investigating repeatedly your body from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet, and then back up and down again and again. You should also investigate the skin that wraps around the body. What is being wrapped by this skin? It's a bunch of filth or paṭikkūla. The skin itself is also filthy. It's only the surface of the skin that's good enough to look at. Then, there is sweat and grime that you have to constantly wash off. You've to continually investigate the body if you want to advance speedily in your practice, because the body is one of your major battlegrounds. Kāyagatāsati or the development of mindfulness of the body is absolutely necessary as long as the citta still clings to the body. You've got to keep on investigating with paññā until you clearly see the true nature of the body.

When you're establishing calm, you shouldn't be concerned with paññā. You shouldn't do any thinking at all, but should only be mindful of your meditation subject or theme. You mustn't let the development of calm and paññā to get in each other's way. After the citta has calmed down, rested and emerged from calm, it's time to investigate with paññā, without being concerned with samādhi. This is the correct way of practice. You should do one task at a time, like directing water to flow through just one channel, because it'll be very efficient. If you're concerned with paññā while doing samādhi and vice versa, then you'll be distracted and inefficient. You won't make any progress in your practice if you're not earnest and resolute. When you do walking or sitting meditation to develop calm, you shouldn't be thinking about anything else but your meditation subject. You shouldn't think about the world. The world will not disappear. All there is to this world is just birth and death that piles one on top of another, and this has always been so. The affairs of this world are about birth and death, about dissolution and separation. It'll always be like this, so why should you have any concern?

The body that you take for a walk, stand up, put to sleep, discharge excrement from, and constantly feed, is changing all the time. It was an infant. Now it has grown up. What's this growth really about? It's about aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā which accompany this growth. There aren't any benefits from the growth of the body, but there are benefits from the growth of your sati and paññā. If your sati and paññā don't grow, you'll never know how to free yourselves from dukkha. You'll cling to and die with the body. You'll go on endlessly taking up birth, aging, illness, death, and dukkha. If you want to destroy this cycle of rebirth, you'll have to earnestly investigate the nature of the body. If you have to endure dukkha from your practice, let it be. Nobody born into this world can experience only happiness. From birth to death you'll experience happiness and suffering, whether you're rich or poor, clever or foolish. This body makes no exception for anyone, because dukkha is inherent in every body. You've experienced dukkha before, so you shouldn't be

discouraged by the dukkha that arises from your exertion. This kind of dukkha is for the supreme result. It's the dukkha of an ariya or Noble One. It's the dukkha for the elimination of the kilesas, for freedom from dukkha, and for the destruction of the cycle of rebirth.

No matter how severe this dukkha might be, you're willing to face it. All you need to have are your sati, paññā, saddhā, and viriya battling this dukkha. You mustn't just endure dukkha without doing any investigation, for this will be of no benefit. However much dukkha appears, paññā must probe into dukkha to see dukkha as it truly is. That it's just a phenomenon. And to see clearly that the body and the citta or knowingness are also phenomena. Saññā or supposition arises and ceases. It supposes the body to be I, and to be mine; it supposes this feeling to be sukha, and that feeling to be dukkha. These are all deceptions. When you've thoroughly investigated and seen it truly, the body will then be just body, vedanā just vedanā, and the citta just the citta. You will then have achieved the establishment of the four satipaṭṭhāna or four foundations of mindfulness. You can also call the four satipaṭṭhāna the four noble truths or the four ariya-sacca.

Be serious and really exert yourselves. Don't relent or become discouraged. I have great concern for all of you. That's why I have to constantly teach you. Otherwise your citta will become slack and dull. You have to arouse your citta and develop it with the Dhamma in your practice. If you're drowsy, wash your face or find some other ways to overcome your sleepiness, like the ways the practitioners during the time of the Lord Buddha did. What's the purpose of inscribing what they did in the scriptures, if it's not for the purpose of teaching you? If you sit meditating and become drowsy, then you should get up and do walking meditation instead. If you're still sleepy, then you should follow the examples of the noble disciples or sāvakas. One of them walked into the water. After he was knee-deep in the water and still couldn't get rid of his sleepiness, he went deeper. And if he was still sleepy, he would soak some grass with water and put it on his head before he could get rid of his drowsiness. He then investigated until realising full enlightenment. Listen to that! I think he was already highly attained. But this sleepiness makes no exception of anyone, highly attained or not. That's why he had to devise with his sati and paññā practical methods to free him from dukkha, and to overcome his drowsiness by walking into the water and placing soaking grass on his head. He must be highly attained because he didn't relent in his exertion. The body, however, felt drowsy and wanted to take a rest.

Now consider the case of the Venerable Sona, who exerted himself with walking meditation until his feet became blistered. Because he was so relentlessly and ceaselessly engrossed in investigating with his sati and paññā that he completely lost track of time. This wasn't a proper way to practise being overly obsessed with his investigation. This is uddhacca or restlessness, being so preoccupied with his investigation that it made him forget to take time off to rest in samādhi. Had he alternated his investigation with resting in samādhi, this would then be the correct way to practise. Like a workman who becomes tired and hungry after a hard day's work, he then takes a rest and feeds himself. The next day he will work some more. It's the same with the citta. After it has investigated until it becomes exhausted, it has to rest in samādhi or calm, where all activities of the citta are halted, leaving the citta with just the knowingness and tranquillity. After it has fully rested, the citta will be strengthened and after withdrawing from calm it'll investigate with paññā again. Paññā is similar to a knife that has been resharpened and the workman who has regained his strength from eating and resting. It'll now have the strength and sharpness to swiftly destroy the kilesas. The Lord Buddha said that paññā developed with the support of samādhi is very powerful.

A cook who has all the cooking ingredients ready can cook up any dish he likes. But if he doesn't cook, then these ingredients will remain ingredients. Vegetables will remain vegetables, chillies will remain chillies, and meat will remain meat. How can they become stew? Samādhi will also remain samādhi. It'll not become paññā automatically if it's not used to support the citta's investigation. Samādhi can only strengthen the citta and make it powerful. After the citta has established samādhi, it will be contented and strong, and will be ready to investigate efficiently. Samādhi can't destroy the kilesas. It can only temporarily subdue the kilesas. But samādhi is an indispensable support for the development of paññā because the citta that has become contented from samādhi can investigate efficiently and won't turn into speculation or saññā-ārammaṇa. When you've eaten your food and rested, you can then work to your fullest capacity. What's it like for you to work when you're hungry? You'll be inefficient, and your temper can arise very easily. When you investigate without the support of samādhi, your investigation will go astray, will turn into speculation and won't produce any results. Samādhi is, therefore, an indispensable support for the development of paññā.

The Lord Buddha said that the paññā that has been developed with the support of samādhi is very powerful. The citta that has been developed by paññā will definitely be freed from the kilesas. It's only paññā that can destroy all the kilesas; samādhi can't. But it plays a very vital supporting role. Sīla, samādhi and paññā are like staircases. You need sīla to get you to samādhi, you need samādhi to get you to paññā, and

you need paññā to eliminate all the kilesas. To be freed from all the kilesas is the greatest reward. It's the consequence of your fearless exertion and your willingness to sacrifice your life for it. This is the goal that you should aspire to. All the dukkha that you experience in your practice are nourishments that nurture and develop your heart, and deliver you to nibbāna while you're still alive. You have to be resolute and earnest with your practice. In developing the citta, you've to follow the Lord Buddha's teaching. You've to be strict with yourselves. Anything that opposes the Dhamma should be considered to be the kilesas. You have to resist them until they're all destroyed.

When you've attained absolute perfection, there won't be any resistance left. After you've purified the citta, there will be nothing to resist you. You'll see that what had been opposing you were just the kilesas. When your citta becomes pure, there will be nothing to oppose you. You'll have nothing to push or pull you because you've realised the ultimate freedom from the world. To you, the world doesn't exist although you're still living in the world with the body that you're no longer attached to. In your citta, there is just this indescribable knowingness, and only you know very well what it actually is. This knowingness is free from all attachments. Nothing can hurt, oppress or manipulate it. It exists independently and naturally. What is there to pull and push it? It's only the kilesas that constantly push and pull. You have to eliminate them forcefully. You must not retreat. If you want to be free from dukkha, you mustn't be deterred by the dukkha that arises from your exertion to destroy every kind of kilesa that goes against the Dhamma. You have to oppose the kilesas because the kilesas oppose the Dhamma. This is where you have to fight and face the dukkha. This is the dukkha for victory. It's right here. You must not look elsewhere, in this place or at that time. They are only the places and the times of your exertion. But the kilesas that you want to eradicate are inside your citta. This is where you've got to fight.

The Lord Buddha taught you to live in the forest because it's a suitable place for your exertion. But you don't follow his teaching and overlook the kilesas that are oppressing and hurting your citta. This is wrong. You've to be serious and earnest with your practice. After the citta is freed from all the kilesas, it'll be like floating in space, free from the earth's gravitational pull. Floating in the space of the citta and the space of the Dhamma is living in this world free from all attachments between the body and the citta, unlike before when you've to shoulder the burden of your body. This attachment or upādāna can really cling and becomes a very heavy burden for taking the body as I and mine. But after you've investigated and truly realised the body's true nature, you'll let go of the body. You mustn't contradict the Dhamma teaching because you'll be following the kilesas. No matter how hard and difficult your practice might be, you've got to keep on exerting. You mustn't retreat. Dhamma goes this way, so must you. You have to resist the kilesas.

Dhamma teaches you not to have affection, so you mustn't have affection. If you've any fondness, you have to remove it. You've got to find out its cause and eliminate it. The same with hate. The Dhamma doesn't teach you to hate. When the citta has reached the middle or natural way, it'll see that both affection and hatred devour the citta like the parasitic vines that devour the tree that they grow and depend on for their nourishment. The nature of the kilesas is to consume. They will sap the citta and afflict it with a lot of dukkha. You've got to get rid of them all, then you'll realise perfect bliss. Then it won't matter whether you live or die. Death is just a conventional reality or sammuti, and living is just a string of sense experiences of visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations that have existed in this world for aeons. They were here long before you were born, and will still be here long after you're gone. What can you expect from them? There's nothing in this world that is really fantastic. If there was anything in this world apart from the Dhamma that was wonderful, then many people would have already become fantastic and wonderful.

But it's not so, because wherever I go, I can only see mountains of dukkha. I can see this very clearly just by observing. The oppression of the kilesas is very severe. They drag you away from the Dhamma, incite you to defy the Dhamma, and force you to follow them. If you're weak then you'll always follow them. Their attraction is very strong. That's why you've got to build up a lot of strength and develop sati and paññā to fight them. Whenever they drag you, you must resist with all your might. It can then be said that you're opposing them. If you always follow them, then it can't be said that you're fighting against them because you're being dragged by the nose. You have to keep on opposing them. When they become weakened, the Dhamma will become stronger. When the kilesas seem to have disappeared, you'll have to search for them with the automatic sati and paññā or mahāsati and mahāpaññā. When you find them you'll fight and destroy them, and search for more. That's why the citta at this stage is always busy because the kilesas of this level are so subtle they have to be searched for which is work for the citta. When it finds the kilesas it has to fight and destroy them which is also work for the citta. The citta's work will come to an end only when all the kilesas are totally eliminated. This is the work of the kammaṭṭhāna bhikkhu or meditating monk.

You've got to keep on investigating until you become fully enlightened. Then your work will be accomplished. This is *vusitam brahma cariyam*, you've now accomplished your task, there's nothing more for you to do because all of your attachments have been removed from the citta. Before this you're attached to everything, from visual objects, sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations to the citta itself. This is how powerful the kilesas are and how far they will become attached. After you've investigated and removed your attachment to all the visual objects, sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations, you're then left with your attachment to the citta. This attachment or kilesa is *avijjā* that coexists with the citta. You become inadvertently attached to it because you don't know that this is *avijjā*. Even *sati* and *paññā* of this level can at first be outwitted. You can imagine how subtle this kilesa is! That's why this *avijjā* has been anointed the ruler of the three realms of existence. You now have to investigate until it's completely eliminated. Then there will be no attachment left. The citta will no longer be attached to the citta. If there is still attachment to the citta, it isn't yet freedom. You're not yet free from *avijjā*. But when *avijjā* has been completely destroyed, then all of your attachments will disappear. You'll then enter into the space of the citta where you'll never become attached again.

You have to destroy all the kilesas before you can enter the space of the citta which is comparable to the outer space where it's totally devoid of any attracting force. When you do, you'll truly understand the nature of the citta. When there's nothing left inside the citta, then there'll be no attachment to the citta. The kilesa that causes this attachment is called *avijjā*. It causes the citta to become attached to itself and become egoistic. After *avijjā* has been destroyed then the ego will disappear. There'll be nothing left to attach to. The citta will become like outer space devoid of any attracting force. It will live in this world devoid of any attachment for all living beings and the five *khandhas* like the body, feelings, perceptions, thoughts and sense awareness that appear and disappear as it is their nature to do. They don't know what they are. The body doesn't know that it's the body. It's the citta who calls it the body and becomes attached to it. The same with feelings, perceptions, thoughts and sense awareness. After the citta's delusion has been removed it'll realise that everything is *aniccam*, *dukkham*, and *anattā* and realise that it had been deluded all along. When it sees this truth, it'll let go of them and will become empty like outer space, existing in solitude. This is the solitary existence of this indescribable knowingness. Nobody can describe it correctly. But the one who experiences it knows what it is and knows it's impossible to describe it. You've got to practise hard. This *svākkhāta* or well-taught Dhamma is genuine and fresh. It's the middle way of practice, *Majjhimā Paṭipadā*, that's very suitable for the eradication of all kinds of kilesas, at all times.



Looking Always at the Heart

July 23rd, 1979

The diseases of the heart are chronic. They can easily flame up and it is very hard to curb them. So as we gradually correct and remedy these diseases, we should at least try to get some calm in the process, so that the citta can be cool and peaceful. This is good and proper for us as bhikkhus. If we cannot find any calm in our hearts, then we will be like the laypeople, and there will only be restlessness and agitation inside the heart. We must therefore focus our attention on the truth and Dhamma of the Lord Buddha. In every text, the Lord Buddha told us to take care of and restrain the citta and the sense organs. When the sense organs come into contact with the sense objects, one should not delight in them, like forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects.

Listen! The Lord Buddha said that we should not take delight in them. We must take this to heart. The Dhamma has been well taught, and what it teaches has no mistakes in it. It teaches that we should not take delight in forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects when they come into contact with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. And how can we practise so that we don't take delight in these things? We need to have discipline and control, and investigation to prevent the citta from taking delight in or having aversion for them. Or else we cannot be called practitioners. We must constantly concentrate on taking care of the citta, for this is the duty of the practitioner - one who takes care of his heart. Apart from taking care of the citta, one must also nourish it. This nourishment is the calming of the citta or the calming of the heart, providing the heart with coolness and peace. Then we must also investigate with paññā, for the purpose of uprooting those harmful things inside the heart. This is the way of giving nourishment to the heart by our diligent effort in our various modes of exertion.

I was a young bhikkhu once, and was possessed with all sorts of kilesas. This I have never forgotten. I don't remember much about the dukkha that I experienced as a layperson, but I remember very well the dukkha that arose in my heart as a bhikkhu, and this experience of dukkha taught me a very good lesson. When I was studying the texts, all the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava never seemed to appear or become apparent, but when I began to practise all of these kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava came up from nowhere. They really gave me a strong fight and I had to struggle with them with all that I had. During the days of my practice, I could never gain any ease and comfort while doing nothing. This is part of my temperament. Whatever I do I really commit myself to, and the determination that I had for Dhamma was not just mere determination. I was determined for the Dhamma of deliverance from dukkha, and this determination was firmly embedded inside my heart. Before I took up the practice of the Sāsana Dhamma, I was already convinced that it was possible to attain the magga, phala, and nibbāna. There was no doubt in this because I had a strong belief in the magga, phala, and nibbāna, though I was not totally certain of my conviction.

But when I went to Tan Ajaan Mun and heard his Dhamma, I was then totally convinced and believed in the magga, phala, and nibbāna - totally one hundred per cent, was the belief. All my doubts about the magga, phala, and nibbāna had been dispelled because Tan Ajaan Mun had shown them to me in every respect. And so my determination was total, without having anything to bring it down. So as it was like that, my exertion and diligent effort were at their maximum. So when I took up the practice, I really concentrated on my work of bhāvanā so that I could get to see the marvels of the citta again. I had experienced this only three times in all the time that I had spent studying the texts, and I was really determined to master and take hold of this citta. I would not retreat, but struggled, coped and combated the kilesas that had been ruling over the heart for so long. I had to do it to the utmost of my ability by putting my life at stake. Therefore, my exertion had to be very intense and I had to experience a lot of dukkha and hardship.

The dukkha that arises from one's exertion is similar to the dukkha that a boxer experiences in the ring. He doesn't pay much attention to it because he is being very careful and on his guard, and is totally committed in his effort in knocking down his opponent. So he is hardly bothered by this dukkha. It was the same way with me - I forgot all about this dukkha, the dukkha that arose from my exertion, and did not even think about it. This was because my exertion was so intense that I was constantly fighting and fighting. And it cannot be beyond your ability, so please listen well and take this to heart. All of us have the kilesas in us, and we have been carrying them with us for countless lives. It is my conviction that as long as the citta is still possessed with avijjā inside it, it will always continue on to take up new births, and then die again and again. I believe in this conviction firmly, and nobody in the whole universe, in the entire three worlds, could ever come and contravene this belief, because I strongly believe that when one dies then one also takes up birth.

This is what I believe, and I have found verification of it as I have practised and attained the more subtle Dhamma. I could see the cause and the source of birth, ageing, sickness and death, and what is the cause?

It is the same old cause that functioned in the past, and this is Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā – Ignorance causes the arising of saṅkhāra. It cannot be anything else but this. We have all experienced dukkha, so we should not see anything good in this world but just the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, or in short, just the Dhamma. It is only the Dhamma, the teaching of the Lord Buddha that can uplift us from dukkha through our exertion in applying this Dhamma, using it to help and uplift ourselves. Please don't ever imagine that you can find any marvel or rarity from anything in this world, to the extent where you totally forget about your exertion, the truth, and Dhamma, and turning this truth and Dhamma, which is the most supreme, into something useless or worthless, by seeing those things that have no worth or value as the real essence. This is a misperception, and is the understanding which follows the commands of the kilesas, which we have always followed in the past without ourselves being aware of it.

Dhamma must always be opposing the kilesas because the kilesas always oppose Dhamma. For this reason we must accumulate and develop satipaṇṇā so that we have enough of it to combat the kilesas. Satipaṇṇā is the means or tool with which to combat the kilesas. Not a single type of kilesa can surpass sati, paṇṇā, saddhā, and viriya, diligent effort. You must be firm and tough because you are a man and a bhikkhu. Be earnest and resolute. Don't be weak or discouraged. Both discouragement and weakness are the kilesas. They are not the Dhamma. This is not the way of Dhamma and this way of thinking is not in line with Dhamma. This kind of thinking is on the side of samudaya, which will cause more kilesas to afflict us with more dukkha, thus creating more discouragement in us. The result that we seek will never appear, and it will be contrary to our purpose and intention, and our determination for Dhamma. The kilesas are always permeating and hiding within us, so we cannot be off-guard. This is because as soon as we are off-guard they will hit us. Remember this point well because the kilesas are always waiting. As soon as satipaṇṇā is off-guard, then the kilesas will emerge. As soon as we are off-guard, then saṅkhāra will begin to concoct.

As far as saṇṇā is concerned, it is a lot more subtle than saṅkhāra, as far as I can observe this khandha. When saṅkhāra concocts, it stirs suddenly, but saṇṇā doesn't stir at all. As one establishes the khandhas to become still and quiet, and one begins to observe to see which khandha will arise first, saṇṇā khandha will slowly permeate out like ink permeating across a piece of blotting paper. It slowly flows out until it creates a picture - a mental image, and then it will cause saṅkhāra to begin to concoct the various stories following the image that has been created. All of these pictures or images that are created by saṇṇā, all come out by themselves. Saṇṇā draws up the images by itself, and then saṅkhāra takes hold of these images and begins to concoct the various concepts and stories about them. This is how it will happen when we are off our guard.

If it is hard, we should endure it. We should not be concerned about this difficulty. As practitioners we should never be bothered by the hardships that arise from our exertion. The Lord Buddha went before us, and he experienced all sorts of hardships and difficulties. So when he taught the world the Dhamma, he selected and refined the teaching and came up with the majjhimā paṭipadā, the Middle Way of Practice. This is the shortest and most direct way. Please follow this path, no matter how difficult or easy it may be, for this is the shortest and most direct way to go. Let us not be concerned with the hardship for if we tread the roundabout ways, we may eventually get lost and not reach our destination. We must stick to this path. We must make our hearts brave and courageous. Be tactful and versatile, and watch out for the kilesas, for they will whisper to us right inside the citta. Please don't ever think that the kilesas are anywhere else but right inside the citta. In the scriptures there are only to be found the names of the kilesas, or the names of Dhamma, or the names of greed, hatred, and delusion, or the names of rāgataṇhā, be it in the Book of the Discourses, or the Discipline, or the Abhidhamma. They only contain the names of Dhamma, and the names of all sorts of kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava that manifest themselves inside the hearts of all sentient beings.

The Lord Buddha expounded and pointed to the heart, but a few years after he had passed away, the Dhamma was collected and put into the scriptures so that it could be used as a signpost pointing out the way. We then study these texts and become attached to them by taking up the knowledge that we have committed into memory as our own knowledge. One thinks that one is wise and discerning, although the kilesas are constantly consuming one's heart, and burning it worse than an erupting volcano. Such is the way when we commit things into memory. It can only increase the kilesas by letting us think that now we know the truth, and that we are very wise from doing a lot of studying. But this is the wrong way of learning. The correct way is to learn about the names of the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava, and the technique and method of coping and correcting and getting rid of these kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava. Then we must take up this learning and apply it inside our hearts, for this is where all the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsavas are.

Where are rāga - lustful desire, dosa - hatred and anger, if they are not found within the heart? They are found in the heart, and this is where they exhibit or manifest themselves. Where are cravings and ambitions? The texts or the scriptures never exhibit the greed, hatred, and delusion for us to see, but all of these things actually exhibit themselves right within our hearts. They are right here, so we must turn around and hit them right at this point. The kilesas are found here. Don't look in the scriptures, for that is merely a compass pointing towards the heart. I am not speaking in contempt. There are both the internal and external Dhammas. The texts are merely the external Dhamma which serves as a compass or a signpost pointing back towards the heart so that we can practise and develop this heart. That is really the message of the texts. Don't turn into worms eating up the paper. Let's do it at this point because this is where the Lord Buddha attained his Enlightenment.

Be courageous and joyful. In your practice you must always use sati and paññā - mindfulness and wisdom, because they are the most important weapons. In your exertion sati is the foremost. It is the primary weapon. Even in the beginning stages of practice, you must depend on sati as your primary weapon and when you begin to investigate with paññā, you must also depend on sati. That is why sati is always vital. That is why the Lord Buddha said that sati is always needed in every circumstance. The Lord Buddha said all circumstances - there is no exception at all. Whatever you do, whether it is the internal or external work, you must always have mindfulness. You really must try to develop your sati. Don't be interested in or pay attention to other things. Don't ever have the idea that forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects, or other people, are harmful to us. They are merely the creations or concoctions of the heart that create images and concepts to fool ourselves, bother and disturb our heart. The one who really stirs up trouble is the heart itself. It is the heart that creates all sorts of troubling affairs.

You must always look at this point. When you have continuously observed and watched this point, then you will eventually come to realise that all the troubles that have been created come out from this point, this you will find out for yourselves in the heart. Once the heart comes to calm, then all the troubles also disappear. During that time the world is not apparent, although the world is there, but the heart doesn't give it a thought. Because at this time the heart or knowingness or awareness remains just with itself, and it doesn't concoct any concepts about anything. It is likewise with the five khandhas that are found within ourselves. Once the citta does not form any concepts about them, then they become just like any other objects that we can see with our eyes. They are like the four elements - the earth, water, air, and fire. These things form no concepts of themselves. It is we who form these concepts and give them names or labels like calling them earth, water, air, and fire. That thing is a mountain, a tree, a man, or a woman. We just keep on forming concepts without end. This is the way of building up insanity because there is no mindfulness. But when the citta doesn't form any concepts, and is very cautious and watches itself very carefully, then it is as if there is nothing there.

Then we can really have fun in analysing and investigating the main cause that creates all the problems inside the heart. But if the citta still cherishes the various concepts and thoughts about this and that, then this is really the work of the kilesas pushing us outward. The kilesas fool us and lead us to go out and be involved with the external things, rather than being concerned with the internal things. They fool us and lead us to go and chase after shadows. The real kilesas are found within the heart but we never have the chance to capture them. That is why we must concentrate all our effort right at this point. If we cannot yet pinpoint the spot where the citta is concocting the various concepts, then we must depend on our meditation object to take us there. Be solely aware of just the meditation object and nothing else. It can be 'Buddho', 'Buddho', 'Buddho', or anything else, but the point is to only be concentrated on that particular object. Constantly focus your attention just on this meditation object, so that eventually your awareness will become continuous. Then the flow of the citta that goes out to the various objects will now begin to be drawn back, as it cannot withstand the power of discipline and control. This flow of the citta will steadily return back to the citta itself which will then calm down. One will gain coolness, and one will be able to see this very clearly. This is one aspect of practice, and it is the same way with the investigation of the body.

Every piece and part of this body is asubha and paṭikkūla - loathsome and filthy. This is the truth. Our perception and view that runs contrary to Dhamma, the seeing that this body is 'I' and 'Mine', as people and animals, this is precisely the kilesas. You must, therefore, try to investigate and analyse this body, in both aspects of paṭikkūla, or filthiness, and the dhātu or elements. And what are the elements? They are the earth, water, air, and fire, and mano - the knowing element which is the heart. You should also investigate that. As far as people are concerned, after they have been born and die, does the body have any value or worth once it becomes a corpse? Is there any value in a dead person? There is none. It cannot even compare with a fish. When a fish dies, one can take it to the market, and similarly with all the other kinds of animals. Every piece and part of them becomes useful after they die because it can be sold in the market. But with

people, once they die, their bodies are not useful at all. In order to be useful, we must, therefore, do what we can now whilst we are still living, especially we who are bhikkhus, because we are of a special breed. Our duty and work is to cultivate and develop ourselves so that we can release ourselves from the kilesas and āsava. And we have full support from the laypeople without them coming here to bother us at all. You must therefore exert to your fullest. Be resolute and earnest.

In your investigation of death, you must investigate so that you can really get to see the truth of it. In this whole world of saṃsāra, every person, every man, every woman, every animal, must all die. Wherever they may be, there is always a cemetery. Even right here where we are sitting there is a cemetery, for there are all sorts of little animals or organisms that die all over the place. It is just that we never think about it in that way. We don't think of it as a cemetery. We just call it a sāla or assembly hall. In our bodies there can be found many organisms living inside us, like the germs for instance - they are one form of animal. And inside this body there is nothing that one can call attractive or beautiful. You must investigate and analyse to see according to the truth of the Lord Buddha. The kilesas tend to see it as something beautiful, as people, as animals, as 'I', as 'mine', and this attachment to this view, our upādāna, is much more tenaciously fixed than a nail driven into a piece of wood. It cannot be easily dislodged. This is because of the influence of the kilesas or our misperception of things. We must, therefore, uproot and correct this misperception which is truly the work of the kilesas with the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha, using sati, paññā, saddhā, and viriya - diligent effort. We must get to see it clearly. We have to establish our perception so that we really see this body passing away because death is the undeniable truth.

So why can't the citta accept this truth? What is the cause or the reason for it? And it is the same way with paṭikkūla or filthiness - it is all over this body, and it is also the truth. It is really that way, so why cannot the citta see it like that? What is the reason? You must therefore probe and examine until you can really see it as such. You must open it up and reveal it with your sati and paññā. This work and undertaking is your work, and nobody can help you do this work. Your teacher can merely point out the various means and techniques of doing it. In doing this work, you must do it yourself. Attāhi attano nātho – you are your own refuge. When you have heard the instruction from your teacher and learned the various techniques, then you must use and apply these techniques in your practice. The benefit that you gain while listening to the discourse of your teacher, is that either you will gain calm, or you will learn the various techniques and methods of practice. But other than that you must help yourselves. This is essential. You should really get into it.

I really have great concern for all of you, and that is why I always have to give you instruction. Although it can be hard on me, I try to struggle along. We are living in a Buddhist country which is the most suitable environment for us to strive for the elimination of dukkha by the means of our exertion and this is our sole duty as bhikkhus. I try my best to prevent other people from coming to disturb your exertion in your practice, because the most vital factor for a practitioner who is striving for the realisation and penetration of truth is in his exertion, that is, in his walking caṅkama and sitting in samādhi bhāvanā, having mindfulness as the most important tool in that exertion. This is more vital than anything else. I do not see any other work in the world that is more weighty than the work that we are doing, such that I could be led into doing anything else, like building projects that might interrupt the exertion and ruin this most important work. I only do this extracurricular work when it is extremely necessary. But if it is not really necessary, I would not do it or allow anyone else to do it.

I want you to do this work. That is, you should concentrate all of your effort that you have spent in doing other things, on the work of overcoming and uprooting the kilesas. When we have many kilesas in ourselves, then we experience a lot of dukkha, and this dukkha is caused by nothing else but the kilesas right within our hearts. Please really take this to heart, and do keep in mind that the intensity of your dukkha is proportional to the intensity of the kilesas. There is nothing else that can cause the heart trouble and hardship but just the kilesas. Please listen well and take this to heart and really see the menace of the kilesas. Then you will be able to exert to your fullest. It is the only way to catch up with the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava, which have been so powerful and domineering for such a long time, and have been so for countless aeons.

So are we still willing to go on being born and dying, again and again? In these three worlds of existence, who is the one who stands out as the most extraordinary? There is nobody else but the Lord Buddha - he was the first. For he had truly discerned and realised the peril of the kilesas. Apart from him, nobody could perceive this. No one could perceive the danger of lobha, dosa, and moha, greed, hatred, and delusion, or rāgataṇhā, lustful desire. Everybody was obsessed with and deceived by them, and had to wander in the cycle of births and deaths over and over again without being able to find anything definite or certain. The only thing that was certain was their kamma. But again, what they had done - that is, what kind of kamma

they had made could not be of any guarantee either, because they did not know what they had done or kept an account of their deeds.

The Lord Buddha saw the danger of greed, hatred, and delusion, and he exerted to the utmost of his ability, putting his life at stake and striving and struggling against the kilesas, until finally attaining victory and becoming the world's greatest Teacher. He attained the pure heart, and this is the knowledge and realisation of the Lord Buddha, which differs from the knowledge and realisation found in the three worlds of existence. No one else could have attained this knowledge that can be used to cope with, suppress, or defeat the kilesas, and all those things which are harmful to the heart, as the Lord Buddha did. He then taught us how to achieve it. We have all set up our determination to come here to listen to the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha so that we can take it up and practise it, and it is only we who can practise it to the utmost of our ability.

You must therefore commit yourselves to this work. I would really like to see you experience the calm that will arise from your meditation practice. Furthermore, I would also like to see you use paññā in your investigation, following what I have explained to you concerning the internal and external objects, or the investigation of the body. But if you are inclined to investigate the external objects, then you must set them up in front of your mind. Whether it is the form of a man or a woman, you must take the form that is the most detrimental or harmful to your chastity. In the beginning, if you are not certain of yourself, then you should not set up this form too close to you, but instead put it at quite a distance. You must establish this form and make it break down, decompose, go rotten, and disperse. Establish it with the vultures and dogs scavenging and devouring it. Set up as many forms or bodies as you like. Establish all of them so that they appear loathsome, filthy, and as a living cemetery. Then you must turn this inwards into your own body, and then compare your own body with those bodies. You have to investigate this again and again and again.

You have to coerce the citta to traverse this path. You must not let it go out to perceive all the attractive and pretty things, for is it really pretty, beautiful, or attractive? Of course not, there is no such thing! This is merely looking for trouble. The kilesas create trouble for us and we tend to believe in them. Where is this charm and beauty? All there is is just a collection of filth. We must look into this filth so that we can see it very clearly, following the way that the Lord Buddha described it to us. You should really investigate it. Then you should bring it closer and closer, at the time when having investigated you notice that the citta has become bold and courageous. Move it closer and closer towards you, so that you can see it very clearly. Next, you must form the image of beauty, and spread the image of asubha, or loathsomeness, all over it, similar to the way you might pour petrol over something and then set a match to it, letting it go up in flames. This is the technique of satipaññā, and it is up to each individual to come up with it, for they are all Magga or the Path to enlightenment.

Saṅkhāra is concoction. If it is the kilesas that influence this concoction of saṅkhāra, then it falls on the side of samudaya, the creator of dukkha. But if saṅkhāra is influenced to concoct the truth of Dhamma, then it is the means of correcting and overcoming the kilesas, similar to the way one analyses and investigates the parts of the body in their various aspects of asubha, loathsomeness, or paṭikkūla - filthiness, as a living cemetery, and as it decomposes, until it eventually breaks down into the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air. These saṅkhāra fall on the side of Magga, the Path. This is the means of correcting and uprooting the perception of beauty of an individual, of people, or of animals, so that one can see them decompose and break down into the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air. How then can one have any affection for this body? It is merely earth, water, air, and fire. It is the same way with a pile of corpses - does anyone have any affection for these corpses? When one looks at these corpses, there can only be sadness and sorrow, aversion and creepy feelings for them. How then can one see this body as attractive and beautiful? One must investigate this again and again repeatedly. Satipaññā must force one to make the citta tread on this path of investigation continually, and then one will be fighting and battling with the kilesas. If we only investigate this way occasionally, once in a long while, then it is not possible to consider this to be the work of investigation to combat the kilesas. This is useless. This is not the way of exerting for the sake of Dhamma and the truth.

As a follower of the Lord Buddha, you must be earnest and resolute - really commit yourselves in this work. There are many techniques of paññā that we can come up with. If we can calm the citta with the means of sati and paññā, then we must do so, and if we can calm the citta with the use of a parikamma object like 'Buddho', then we must use that particular method. Or if we can calm down the citta by our command, that is, if we can calm the citta down any time we want to, then it means that we already know the way of getting the citta to calm down. Then you must investigate with paññā. You must not remain idle and lie clinging to this state of calm. I was stuck in this state of calm before, and I have told you this many times, so I shall not repeat it again. If one clings onto one's samādhi, then one can only gain just this samādhi, and one will never be able to progress along the Path. But when one begins to develop paññā, then one begins to

see all the things that come into contact and be involved with oneself, and one can manage to cut them down and get rid of them. Then one can search and dig for them further, struggle with them, cope with them, and eventually destroy them, with the means of our sati and paññā. This is the way of developing our satipaññā to become strong, piercing, bright, sharp, and absorbed in this investigation, and it is up to each individual practitioner to devise his own different techniques of sati and paññā.

What has been elaborated here is only presented in general terms, and it is up to each practitioner to come up with the different specific means of coping with his problem. When you have come up with your own technique, then this becomes your own possession, and you should not let what the teacher has presented to you slip out of your hands and go down the drain, for this will be of no benefit to you. You must take what the teacher has given you as your source of investment in your business of practising, so that you can come up with more profit. No matter how much one has studied in higher education, one cannot help but become the tools of the kilesas if one doesn't have any Dhamma inside one's heart. The kilesas can really enjoy using one who has learned a lot and studied a lot. When there is no Dhamma inside the heart of one who has learned and studied a lot, and who is an influential person, he can only create a lot of damage and trouble for others and himself, without him realising it.

This is because one's lobha or greed, and one's ambition, and one's delusion in one's power and position of influence, blocks one from seeing these things and from being aware that one has done wrong to other people. But if one has some Dhamma, then one must know. Why be so greedy? When one dies, one just lies in a coffin. The bhikkhus just come and chant the kusalā Dhamma, the meritorious Dhamma. But once the body has been cremated, all that is left is just bones and ashes. So why be obsessed with greed? When one has enough to eat and a place to live, that really is enough. Why then be so greedy? Greed never makes people happy, and neither does one's hatred and anger make one happy. It is the same way with rāgataṇhā, sensual lust. When it arises, it really makes people struggle like a dog in heat. Where can any happiness be found? But when all these things disappear, then one doesn't grasp or struggle for things. When the citta calms down, it will not be grasping at things. And when one has totally got rid of all of these disturbing influences, then there will be no grasping or struggling inside one's heart at all. Nothing can disturb or bother one any more, and this is what the Lord Buddha means by freedom.

One can then see very clearly that what was harmful to oneself was one's greed, one's delusion, one's hatred, and one's sensual lust. They are like heaps of fire or like volcanoes erupting and burning one's heart constantly. Before we never saw their harm, but now we can see it very clearly. Once one has learned the nature of the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava, and has dispersed and scattered them from within one's heart, then wherever one looks outside and sees other people, one cannot help but understand every action that people take, because one now understands the driving force that urges people and oneself to do these things, because they are of the same nature. The things that people do are usually driven by the kilesas, but they don't realise that. You must, therefore, try to learn the deceptions and tricks of the kilesas within your hearts. Get to see them very clearly. You must be very careful in observing your heart - take care of it well.

When greed, hatred, and delusion, and rāgataṇhā arise, please realise that they arise out of the heart, because it is the heart that creates them. It is the heart that conjures them up, and it is the heart that is always in the state of hunger. You must look at the heart and investigate what it is hungry for. You have to analyse the object of hunger so that the heart will get to know the nature of this object and then lose its curiosity and hunger for it. For instance with rūpa or form, the form of a woman is inimical and harmful to a man. One must investigate this form or body to really see the truth of it - not that it is a man or a woman, but that it is just made up of various bodily parts, like the hair of the head, the hair of the body, the nails, the teeth, the skin, the flesh and the sinews, for example. Apart from that, there is just filth all over the body. How can there be any beauty in it? Then one must mentally decompose the body. When a person dies, his body slowly decomposes, and becomes rotten and foetid, and eventually scatters and disperses into earth, water, air, and fire.

Get the heart to see this very clearly. Then this misperception, this presumption and assumption, will steadily diminish. It will lessen and lessen. The truth will increasingly become more distinct - the truth of asubha, loathsomeness, paṭikkūla, filthiness, and the truth of the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air. They will all become obvious. The truth about the four elements is the truth on a very subtle level. When one has entered into the knowledge of the four elements, then one has entered into the subtle truth. What then can come and bother the citta? This is the way of correcting the citta. This is the way of correcting ourselves. We must take a good hold of sati and paññā. We must not remain idle. We must come up with the various techniques and means and methods that will develop ourselves.

I really want to see all of you experience the Dhamma, for it is within a hand's reach - because it is right within our hearts. The attainment of deliverance from all of these things is right within the heart, and all the kilesas are also found right within this heart. The sati and paññā, mindfulness and wisdom, that will penetrate and pierce the kilesas are also found right within ourselves. But why can't we pierce and penetrate the kilesas? On the other hand, when the kilesas want to pierce us, they seem to be able to do so very efficiently. When we want to pierce the kilesas, all we can do is to poke at their shadows, not the real kilesas themselves. We have always been deceived by the kilesas to go after something else other than them. The real kilesas are right within our hearts. The deceptions are found right within our hearts, but the kilesas that deceive us draw up the pictures and images and project them to the outside, and fool us to go and chase after shadows. So we never seem to be able to achieve anything. We must now turn around to look inside to find where the principal culprit is. It is right within the heart. When one attains calm, it is inside the heart, because when the kilesas are subdued, they are subdued within the heart, and satipaññā, the tools to curb the kilesas, are also found within the heart. Be really earnest, and really get into it. When we have attained some calm, then it will be possible for us to see clearly what the citta is like. We will be able to differentiate between the citta and the khandhas. Even though it might not be clearly distinct, we will at least see the difference between them.

The calmness, cool-heartedness, and brightness of the citta will become apparent corresponding to the intensity of our exertion in correcting and overcoming the kilesas. The enormous change in the citta will come when one begins to investigate with paññā. The more the kilesas are being eliminated by paññā, then the more skilful and adaptable will be the citta. The conditions of the citta namely feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and awareness will steadily change and become more and more subtle as we progress in our practice and exertion. All of these are sammuti or mundane, and until all of the things that are involved with the citta, even the most subtle things like avijjā, have been eradicated, then the citta will cease to exhibit any changes. It will now remain stable and unchanging. As we progress in our practice, the change will steadily occur, following the change of the Sammutti Dhammas found within the citta. There will only be change on the good side, and will become more and more subtle. This is because good is sammuti, and so is evil, and so is wholesomeness and unwholesomeness. They are all sammuti. When one has come to this subtle level, one will understand this. And once one has attained and passed beyond this stage, then one will become one who has relinquished or let go of both good and evil. It means that now one has let go of all sammuti, both the good and evil, the coarse and the subtle. One has now let go totally of all sammuti - none of this sammuti is found within the citta any more. All that is left is just the natural state of knowingness.

Therefore, I am not very certain about the translation of the Pāli verse which says Sacitta pariyodapanam which translates as 'Purify your citta until it attains the state of luminosity'. If it had been translated as 'Purify your citta to the state of purity', then I could accept this wholeheartedly. Furthermore, consider the Dhamma which says 'Behold, bhikkhus, the true original citta is luminous, but the kilesas act like visitors, which make the citta become dull'. The Lord Buddha did actually describe this true original citta as the original citta of the Vaṭṭa Cakka, the Cycle of Birth and Death. The Lord Buddha did not say that the true original citta is purified, and for what reason? This is because the original citta of each individual has avijjā deeply embedded within it, without any exception. That is why the Lord Buddha said 'Behold, bhikkhus, the true original citta is luminous'. But it was due to the kilesas that came in, which means that whatever comes into contact with the citta, the citta then takes up that object to be its own or itself. This is what is meant by the kilesas coming in as a visitor. The Lord Buddha spoke in sammuti or mundane terms.

But when one has purified the citta until reaching the state of purity, then this state of luminosity ceases to be an issue. This is because this state of luminosity which is stated in the Dhammapada, must be met with by the practitioner who will come across it. When he has arrived at this state of luminosity, the citta that is luminous, then he has come face to face with avijjā, or the avijjā citta. This luminosity, or the magnificence of avijjā, is the most subtle level of the kilesas. Avijjā is the most clever and most deceptive of the kilesas. So when one has attained that state, then the citta becomes very luminous and very bright. One then becomes deluded with that state of luminosity. This thing is really like a trap or a deception. It is not the real thing. It is only after this luminosity has broken apart that one attains the state of purity, the purified citta. This purified citta doesn't take up any more birth, but the luminous citta will still take up birth. It is always ready to take up birth, because this luminosity itself is the creator of birth. But once this luminosity has been dispersed, then there is nothing left within the citta. During practice, as one progresses to the different stages, at the stage of samādhi, there is one form of calm. It has its own foundation, the firmer the samādhi of the citta, the firmer will be its foundation. It is not easily shaken by anything, and for this reason samādhi is a very good nourishment for the citta.

The citta will not be restless or agitated, or hunger for anything, because it has samādhi as its nourishment. For this reason, the Lord Buddha taught that one must now develop paññā because now the citta is full and content. One must take this citta which is now full and content with samādhi, and put it to work by investigating with paññā, for it will then be able to perform its duty at its fullest.

It is not like the citta that is still hungry for other things, because when it investigates in the way of paññā, it will all turn into saññā-ārammaṇa, memory. The only exception to this is when one is driven into a corner and one has no other means, then one must use paññā to do the investigation on some occasions which I have discussed before, in what we call 'Paññā develops samādhi'. This is when one is restless and agitated, and one cannot calm down the citta. One then has to investigate and find out the cause of this agitation and restlessness. This then becomes a special case, a special occasion. Where is this citta going? One now must begin to investigate and dig into it, not allowing the citta to go out of the confines of the kammatthāna, the forty meditation subjects. One must keep on probing, examining, and investigating, until eventually the citta calms down due to the power of paññā. One will become very bold and courageous from this practice of paññā that can coerce the citta to enter into calm. When one withdraws from this calm, one feels sublime and majestic, and this is one case of samādhi.

The reason for discussing this is because it really happens within the circle of practice for some people, although it might not happen to others. It happened to me, and that is why I have written about it and discussed it. I wrote about my own experiences, and there were no fabrications there. That is how it actually happened. It was when the citta became restless and agitated, and when I tried to investigate any aspect of Dhamma, the citta would not accept it. It kept on going in a different direction, so I had to be tough and strong in trying to discipline the citta. I had to investigate with paññā, using it to round up the citta. This is similar to being in a close encounter or in close combat, until the citta cowers and calms down. This manner of calming the citta with paññā can really bring the citta to be tame. When the citta enters into calm, it enters with boldness and bravery. And when it withdraws from the state of calm, it does so with courage and it becomes very grand and magnificent. This is one special case, but generally it is the way of samādhi develops paññā. Samādhi is the support for paññā because samādhi is a good nourishment for the citta. It is the support for paññā that lets that paññā keep functioning and doing its work without hungering for other things, so that one's investigation doesn't turn into saññā-ārammaṇa – memory, because the citta will now perform its function as it has been told, and this is the purpose of samādhi. It is one form of foundation.

Now, when one begins to do a lot of investigation with paññā, this foundation of samādhi seems to have completely disappeared. But this is not comparable to one who does not have any samādhi at all. This is because the citta's total awareness now revolves around paññā. The awareness of the citta doesn't remain with the citta so that it forms samādhi, for it has now come out from the power base of samādhi and now turns to paññā; so now the base of samādhi that one used to have has totally disappeared. Where does it go? All of it has now gone and concentrated on the development of paññā, because the citta now does not want to take any rest. So when one wants to enter into calm, one must really force the citta to come and rest in samādhi. When one has to do this, the citta will indeed enter into samādhi, but one must really force it to do so. Once the citta no longer goes against our will, then it will have to follow our command. This is because the satipaññā of this level is capable of controlling the citta, since at this stage there is nothing except the citta and sati and paññā. There is nothing else to become involved with it. There is nothing that can come and drag away the citta, so that when one has to try to coerce the citta, it really means that one has to drag the citta away from the work that it has been doing. One has to do this dragging away with sati, so that it can come and rest itself in the state of calm.

I had to control and master the citta to remain calm by using the parikamma object of Buddhō, Buddhō, Buddhō. I haven't forgotten this because I had to repeat it very quickly, or else the citta would go out and do more work. Not that it would have gone out to be immersed in the pleasure of anything, it wouldn't. The citta had no interest in anything else at all. The citta at this stage has no interest in anything in the whole universe. It is now totally immersed in the pleasure of doing the investigation with paññā, and that is why at this stage it is called uddhacca, restlessness. That is, it is too engrossed in this investigation, and this is one of the higher fetters, the saṃyojana, for now the citta has gone overboard. Instead of resting in the calm of samādhi so as to replenish itself and recuperate and serve as the base for paññā, it doesn't do so. But when it gets too exhausted, it will eventually have to come and rest in samādhi, when it cannot go any further from exhaustion. It must take a rest. So when it gets too exhausted and tired to the point when it cannot go on any more, then it must return and rest in the state of samādhi.

After having rested long enough to gain strength and become very light without the burden of the work, then it will just get right back on to the work very energetically, and become wholly concentrated on the work of investigation. At this stage, the base or the foundation of samādhi is no longer there to be found.

From my own experience, this is what happens. The base of samādhi was there during the time when I concentrated my whole effort into the development of calm and samādhi. But then I was not interested in the investigation of paññā. But when I began to concentrate on my investigation with paññā, then that base of samādhi entirely disappeared. As far as the luminous citta is concerned, this is not the base of samādhi - it is something else. The more paññā can cleanse the citta, then the more luminous the citta becomes. When it is the time for it to be empty, this emptiness can be seen very clearly. I could see this emptiness - the citta being empty of the body, the citta being empty of everything else. Whatever I looked at appeared like shadows; they were just like shadowy images. Looking at a whole mountain, or a solid rock, they just appeared like shadowy images. The greater part of the citta is empty, and it seems that there is no solid rock - just an image of the rock. Walking on the ground, it also appears shadowy - the citta appeared to have penetrated it. It just happened that way.

And as far as the body was concerned, it was comparable to the globe of a lantern, for inside it was very bright and very clear. This is the emptiness of the base of samādhi, or the emptiness of the base of the citta. It does not really feel right to describe it as the emptiness of the base of samādhi, but when I describe it as the emptiness of the base of the citta, that does feel right. That is, I feel very positive about this description. In the state of samādhi, it is also empty, but when one begins to focus the citta on the external things, then it is not empty any more. But when it is empty by virtue of the base of the citta, then wherever one looks at or focuses on the citta, everything appears to be empty. But it is not empty of itself. When the time comes for the citta to finish its work, then it has to come back and investigate itself until it becomes totally empty. Before, wherever one looks, one sees everything as empty, but oneself is not empty. One is still carrying the burden. One is still carrying the full load of avijjā and taṇhā. Speaking of this taṇhā, it is not the coarser kind of taṇhā. This taṇhā or desire that we are speaking of refers to the affection for, the intimacy with, and the attachment to the brightness and luminosity of the citta.

One must now investigate at this point. When all this luminosity has broken up, then it truly becomes empty. There are three kinds of emptiness: the emptiness of samādhi, the emptiness of the base of the citta, and this ultimate emptiness in which everything is empty. Everything external is empty and the base of the citta is empty and the citta itself is also empty. All problems have disappeared. Then there is nothing else to investigate, and one knows this within oneself. One has no doubt or questions about what sandiṭṭhiko is. That is, knowing within oneself and experiencing this within oneself. Though one might never have known or experienced this before, now one knows and there is no doubt about it. There is no more problem or work to be done, and one can see this very clearly. What is there to do any more, and what is the object of this work? Now there is nothing to come and be involved with the citta. The citta now is just merely the citta. There is no self, animal, people, I or they. They have all disappeared. All forms of sammuti, and the sammuti citta, are no longer apparent. What else is there to do?

One has experienced all the hardship in one's exertion from the beginning to the end. The exertion for the development of samādhi is very hard work. It is really hard on the body because one has to abstain from food and sleep or sit for a very long time in samādhi. This is really dukkha. It was very hard in the development of samādhi, and when the citta had established some foundation, it became very hard on the citta, and the more developed the citta became, the more subtle everything got, and the harder the work was. But one is no more concerned about this hardship and difficulty than about the work for the realisation for the truth and Dhamma, and everything that became involved with the citta. But this hardship was no problem, and when one had fully exerted to one's utmost ability, one would eventually come to conquer the citta and accomplish one's work. And one's satipaṇṇā that has been revolving like a Dhamma Cakka, a wheel of Dhamma, will also lose its purpose. They all fall into place naturally. One's diligent effort in the application of satipaṇṇā that has been so intensified, turning around relentlessly and incessantly, eventually and naturally stops, because there is nothing else to do. There is no more problem to solve. There is nothing to be corrected.

Paññā is used for correcting and clearing away the kilesas, but is there now a single type of kilesa found within the citta? If one is certain that there is none, then what is there to fight? What is there to cope with, or to struggle with or encounter? Can you battle or fight with empty wind? There is an end to the work of Dhamma, but as far as the work of the world is concerned, there can never be an end to it. From the first day of one's birth, there is work to do continuously until the last day of one's life, and even then one has still not finished one's work. People die having worry and concern for their work, their friends, and their relatives. There isn't a single citta that can pass away with sugato, going to a happy state, without having any worry, or anālayo, without having any desire left. There are only cittas that die with worry and confusion and entanglement with all sorts of things. So how can there be any happiness when one goes carrying a burden with oneself? The work that one did before one passed away was not completed, and when one passes away,

someone else will have to take over one's job. This just continues on and on. There isn't a single person in the world who can accomplish his task, because as soon as he finishes one job, there is a new one coming up, all the time. People keep on doing it, but are we going to be bold enough to take up this task as well?

Is it possible that we can get into the mundane work and accomplish it before we die? Can you be really certain that you can finish this work? If you are not certain of this, why don't you take up the work that is certain, like the work that the Lord Buddha promised? He said that if you take this work of a recluse, and then attain the *vusitaṃ brahma cariyāṃ*, that is, the end of the holy life, then you will really complete and accomplish your task. There won't be a single kilesa that could be revived so that it can come and fight with us any more. Once it is totally got rid of 100%, then it is totally got rid of forever. From that moment on, one will never have to be in doubt, for instance by thinking 'Could this kilesa arise again, now that I have destroyed all of them?' It will not happen for they have now all been destroyed. It has all disappeared. They have all been truly got rid of, and from there onward there is only happiness, ease and comfort. As far as all the anxiety and worry and confusion is concerned, and all the kilesas, *taṇhā*, and *āsava* that used to afflict one's heart like an erupting volcano are concerned, they have all disappeared. This volcano has been extinguished by the water of the Dhamma and the truth. Extinguished are all the fires of *rāga*, *dosa*, and *moha*. They have been quenched by the water of the *Majjhimā Paṭipadā*, the Middle Way of Practice.

Once the water has been splashed over this fire that has been afflicting the heart, and has totally extinguished it, then all that is left is just coolness that will last for ever. This is *akālika* - timeless. The Lord Buddha said that this is, 'Akālika citta, akālika Dhamma' - the timeless citta and timeless Dhamma. They are both one and the same thing. Once one has arrived at this stage, both the citta and Dhamma are one and the same thing. One can either call it the citta or the Dhamma, for there wouldn't be any contradiction. All that is necessary is for the kilesas, that are notorious for their contradiction, to disappear from the heart. There will not be any contradiction - nothing to go and contravene anything else. One cannot find anything to contradict one because the kilesas of contradiction have all disappeared. That is, the kilesas that contradict Dhamma. Once the kilesas have been wiped out, there is nothing left to contravene, and nothing left to serve as a contradiction. One will then be at ease and peaceful. You see, the work of a bhikkhu does have an end. You must really get into it. Don't be lackadaisical or vacillating, or grope in the dark like blind men. Don't be unearnest and uncommitted, for this is like groping for something when you don't know whether it is an eel or a snake. Then there will only be uncertainty and doubt.



Dukkha

August 4th, 1979

As a practitioner, one must be truly committed to Dhamma. One's heart must always be turning towards Dhamma. One must not allow the flow of the world, which is the kilesas, to come into one's heart, to trample on and afflict it, for this is the flow of the kilesas, and they must not be allowed to incite and disturb the heart, which we are taking care of with our utmost effort, to the extent where we are willing to put our lives at stake for it, solely for the sake of Dhamma. We must constantly be on the look out for harm and perils. We must not be insensitive to those things which are harmful to us. We must always set up this understanding, and then we can be considered as people who practise Dhamma with mindfulness. This mindfulness is the constant awareness of things that are harmful and beneficial to oneself. One must be constantly aware of those things which are beneficial or harmful to oneself. One must always be careful and cautious, and one must get rid of the things that should be got rid of. One should also develop, nurture, and take care of the things that one should be taking care of, and this is our own heart.

This heart is the property of two possessors. However, it is the kilesas that have been ruling over it for a very long time. We ourselves cannot make an account of all of the forms of birth that we have gone through, and the process of birth, ageing, illness, and death, that we have undergone right on up to the present day. This is the work of the kilesas, *taṇhā*, and *āsava* that lead us to be born and die and experience dukkha and hardship. All of them are harmful to us. Every form of existence that we take up is filled with dukkha. Dukkha is inherent in every form of birth because when one takes up birth, one must also take up death. Both birth and death are a pair or a duality. Therefore, whenever there is birth, there is also dukkha. The Lord Buddha said that the one whom dukkha does not fall on is the one who does not take up birth, for this is the only way to totally wipe out dukkha. If one doesn't take up birth, then one doesn't have to experience any dukkha. If such is the way, then, what is the cause of dukkha? Due to birth, dukkha arises; so what is the cause or origin of birth? The origin of birth is *Avijjā*, the King of Delusion that is deeply embedded within the *citta*, to the extent where it is not easy to differentiate or tell them apart. It is, therefore, necessary for us to commit our total effort, to the extent where we will even give up our lives if we have to.

When it is the time to intensify one's effort, one must then intensify it. When it is time to make a hard drive, one must make a hard drive. When it is time to fight, one must really fight. When it is time for one to be moderate, one will know that for oneself when the time arises. However, one should not take it upon oneself to decide when it is the time to be moderate or to take it easy or relax, when in reality the time is not right to be so. Concerning this, one can sometimes be misled. The practitioner himself will know the right time to take a rest, to relax, to enjoy ease and comfort while breaking away from his strenuous exertion. The way to rest the *citta* is to enter it into the state of calm and cool-heartedness. There can be such a time. But when one enters into battle against one's opposition with the means of *satipaṇṇā*, then one must totally commit oneself to it. One must consider the dukkha as the *Sacca Dhamma*, the truth, and one should not consider dukkha as oneself, for this is the principle of truth and Dhamma. This is the correct principle which is right and proper.

The dukkha that arises within the body is important. It is something that one can see very clearly and distinctively. The dukkha in the *citta* can arise as a consequence of the dukkha of the body. This is one aspect of dukkha. The dukkha that arises in the *citta*, even at the time when the body is not afflicted with any pain or illness, is the dukkha that is entirely created by the kilesas. The dukkha that arises in the body due to illness or from sitting in the same position for a very long time can cause the kilesas to arise. The *citta* will be restless and agitated and will be concocting various ideas. This is caused by the kilesas of attachment. The *citta* will become confused, and will concoct the idea that the dukkha within the body belongs to oneself, and that the entire body is oneself. If we see that the body and our self are one and the same thing, then when there is dukkha within the body, we will feel that we ourselves are experiencing dukkha. So when we see that we are experiencing dukkha, then we will become concerned with ourselves. We will not want to experience dukkha and this desire not to want to experience dukkha is *vibhava-taṇhā*.

Then we will not be able to look for the truth because we will not be able to find a way to reach the truth or follow the truth principle that says that dukkha is an aspect of truth. This is the principle of the *Sacca Dhamma*, the truth. A practitioner who has clearly seen dukkha within his heart as an aspect of truth, will then not be overwhelmed by dukkha, no matter how severe this dukkha might be. This dukkha will not be able to trample on and afflict him or cause him to waver. I have experienced this myself and I am not speak-

ing without anything to back me up. I have clearly experienced this and that is why I dare to relate this to you, without being concerned with whether I am showing off or not. I speak from the truth principle, and what I teach is following the truth principle, aiming only for your benefit and befitting the effort that you have made in coming to me for instruction. I instruct you to the utmost - to the fullest. Dukkha-vedanā, painful feeling can arise from many causes. It can arise from illness. But please keep in mind that it is the same old dukkha-vedanā that we call the Sacca Dhamma, the truth. The dukkha that arises in the various parts of the body, or the dukkha that arises from sitting for a long time, are all the Sacca Dhamma. We must take that dukkha as the target for the investigation. We must investigate back and forth between the heart and the body where it has permeated. Look and see in which part of the body this dukkha has arisen.

For instance, the pain in the legs or in the various organs of the body - one should take the point where the dukkha or pain is most profound, and then take that as the point where one establishes one's mindfulness, and investigate with paññā, analysing, differentiating and isolating the dukkha so that you can see its nature very clearly. We must observe the dukkha to see that it has no other characteristics apart from its being dukkha itself. It is unlike the body which has various characteristics since it is made up of the different parts. We must compare and examine all the different parts, and then we must turn inwards towards the citta. These three things are terribly important. We must not wish for dukkha to go away because the desire for this dukkha to disappear is tanhā or craving. This will just increase the dukkha and one will never have one's wish fulfilled. Instead of this being magga, the way for the eradication of dukkha from the heart, or curbing the dukkha within the body, it merely increases or intensifies the dukkha of both the body and the heart. This is the way if one wants or desires dukkha to go away. One must neither make any wish nor have any desire. When dukkha arises, it arises whether we have the wish for it to arise or not.

We should investigate dukkha to see it as it actually is, by differentiating and setting apart those things which are involved with dukkha. Find out which part of the body is being afflicted with dukkha and take a good look at it. The citta must be revolving constantly. This revolving of the citta is actually the turning around of paññā. Paññā probes and examines for the cause of this dukkha. When dukkha intensifies, then the citta cannot get away from that particular spot. It must be turning around very rapidly - this is the way of investigating the Sacca Dhamma, and the way to contend with one's enemy. One must differentiate the body, look at it, and examine it. One must also differentiate and set apart dukkha-vedanā and examine that. This vedanā is merely dukkha, but in itself it doesn't know that it is dukkha.

And the body - although it might be afflicted with dukkha - in itself does not know that it is so afflicted. Who is the one who says that this body is afflicted with dukkha, and that the dukkha-vedanā that appears is dukkha? Who says that this is so? If it doesn't come out of our saññā-ārammaṇa or memory, where else can it come from? So in the end we cannot help but look into the citta itself. Now if the citta itself really suffers from dukkha, then let us really look into it closely for ourselves. We must look or see it with paññā, see it with discrimination, and see it with discernment. Don't just look simply because we only want to look at it. If we look just because we want to get to know (without doing any investigation), this is not the way of looking for the truth. The point is that we should not have any desire, but merely to probe and examine into the truth itself. This will be the natural way of investigation, the majjhimā way. If we have any desire, then this will be samudaya, and the cause of dukkha will arise.

Therefore, even if the dukkha afflicts the body to the extent where it will break apart, then let it break apart. As far as the disintegration and integration of the body is concerned, they are just a pair or a duality. It is natural for them: if they can be formed together, they can also break apart. The main point here is to expose the truth about these three things that are interrelated or combined. See it clearly with paññā. One must get to see the pain in the body clearly. One must see it clearly with paññā until one can see that the skin is merely the skin, and the flesh is merely the flesh. It is the same way with the sinews and bones and the rest of the parts of the body - they are merely as they are. They themselves don't know that they are experiencing dukkha, even though the dukkha is like a scorching flame. They themselves don't know that they are undergoing dukkha, and the dukkha itself doesn't know that it is dukkha either. This dukkha doesn't know that it is making others suffer, so who then is the one who forms up the presumption and assumption about these things? One must turn around and look inside the citta. When looking at the citta, one should look the same way one looks at the body and at dukkha-vedanā. One must look with continuous attention and mindfulness. One must look with the intention of finding out the truth. When one gets to find out the truth, then the citta will be merely knowing. Can this knowing be one and the same thing with vedanā? And if this knowing, and vedanā, and the body, are one and the same thing, when dukkha-vedanā disappears, how is it that the citta still remains?

The citta has always been here from the day of our birth. But this dukkha-vedanā only arises now. If they are one and the same thing, how is it that this vedanā doesn't appear at the moment of birth? And how is it

that it can disappear? It should not disappear if the citta has not also disappeared, so truly they are not one and the same thing. This investigation must be constantly turning around. As far as the desire is concerned - that is the desire for dukkha to disappear - one should never bring it into the investigation, if one doesn't want to enhance dukkha and accumulate more kilesas which is samudaya, the cause of dukkha. Then one would be knocked down and one would not be able to make it through. When one is about to pass away, one will be helpless. One who sets his heart to investigate and observe the Sacca Dhamma is the one who will gain victory, and the one who will be able to withstand to the end. Although he might not have got rid of all the kilesas, he would be able to stand on his own with mindfulness and wisdom, sati and paññā. Sati and paññā are absolutely vital for taking care of the citta, and when the citta has attained deliverance, then there is nothing else to talk about. What is there to talk about?

In training and disciplining oneself, one must be bold and courageous, firm and resolute. One must not be feeble or weak. One must not see anything in this world as more worthwhile than Dhamma, or than the knowledge and insight that will deliver us from the kilesas and āsava that are entangled within our hearts, for we can gradually emancipate ourselves from these things until we are totally free from them. The supreme treasure is the citta that has attained deliverance or the citta that has developed the various stages of virtue. They are similar to the treasure or possessions that we have accumulated. The more we accumulate them, the more valuable they become - that is, their worth and value increases - until we arrive at the state of contentment. We must develop the citta to this state of contentment. We must not be shaken by the loka Dhamma, the worldly influences, for they have been as they are since time immemorial. This world is full of birth, ageing, illness, and death, confusion and trouble that afflicts all people and every kind of animal. There is no true peace and happiness in this world. Where are we going to find happiness in this world? We will never find it because there is only dukkha. There is the physical dukkha when one has to strive and struggle to make a living. When we have desire or craving for possessions, this is also a form of dukkha. Whatever form of supposition we set up, we always get attached to it, like a piece of paper which we suppose is a banknote and can be used as currency. We know it very well within our hearts that this is just a piece of paper but we are still deluded with it. Our greed for it is just immeasurable.

Lobha and dosa, greed and hatred, are so severe that they shake the whole world. Is there any happiness in them? Lobha, or greed, is one form of fire. When our body is normal - that is when it is not afflicted with any disease, it is quite comfortable and at ease, but when there is any illness then the body is afflicted and disturbed. It is the same with the citta. When it is not afflicted with the diseases of the heart, lobha or greed; for instance, it will remain in quite a calm and peaceful state. But as soon as this disease of greed happens to strike the heart, then the heart will turn into fire and become troubled and annoyed. Can't we see its harmfulness? Dosa, or hatred, is like a shadow that follows lobha. When we cannot acquire the things that we want according to our desires, then we become angry. The world has these things as the masters of the heart. So if this is the case, then who in this world can have any happiness because the nature of these things is fiery. Wherever they are, they must always scorch and burn, and totally consume that place. Neither happiness nor comfort can come out of them. Even when one dies, if these things are still full within one's heart, one will never be able to find any happiness. One will never be able to find any basis to hang onto. One will die worried, concerned, and possessive of everything. One will pass away in confusion and worry. One will be consumed and burned through to the next birth. One will never come across the real essence at the time of one's passing away.

This is because one is deluded with sammuti, conventional truth. One thinks that sammuti is the real truth, which it is not, while on the other hand Dhamma and virtue which are the real truth and the treasures that can provide us with cool-heartedness, trust, and confidence, are never accumulated by us. So how are we going to come up with any confidence? Therefore, the building up of virtue inside the heart is terribly important for wise people, especially for us who are the bhikkhus, the practitioners. We must be really serious, really earnest. The Majjhimā Paṭipadā, the Middle Way of practice, is always suitable for lifting us out of dukkha. We should, therefore, depend on and take on the majjhimā paṭipadā as our path of practice and as the tool for the eradication of the kilesas. No matter how many kilesas there are, they must all arise from the heart. All that is necessary is to develop and produce enough sati and paññā to counter the kilesas. When the kilesas are subdued, then happiness will arise. We will then come to see the harmfulness of the kilesas. Whenever the kilesas appear within one's awareness, then one will become afflicted and feel uncomfortable. One will feel ill at ease immediately when the kilesas appear. The more the kilesas appear, the more affliction we will have to endure.

We must curb them with samādhi, paññā, saddhā, and viriya - diligent effort. When we manage to curb and restrain them, then we will feel at ease, comfortable, and happy, for this is the quality of one who practises Dhamma. At the same time, we will realise the harm of confusion and trouble that is caused by the

kilesas oppressing the heart. We only have one undertaking or work to do. For a bhikkhu, there is no other work that is really genuine or of any worth other than the work of correcting and uprooting the kilesas. This is the work of extracting the thorn of the kilesas from the heart with our ability. This is in accordance with Dhamma, and follows the example of the Lord Buddha. When we become weak and discouraged, then we should reflect on the Lord Buddha and the *sāvakas*, noble disciples of the past. We should think of them when we take up our refuge; they are our *Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*, and *Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*. But we must not merely reflect upon them; we should think about them and try to follow their example. We have to ask ourselves ‘Are these *sāvakas* ordinary human beings, or are they *devatās*, celestial beings?’ They are just people like us.

Some of them even came from the very delicate and high classes, like those of Kings, for instance. They had never had to endure the physical hardship of the body, and they had plenty of possessions and wealth. But they gave them all up, by seeing them as things of little value and significance. Some of them were high officials of the court, and some were merchants, rich and wealthy men. All of them were fully possessed with great wealth, honour, and dignity. So why did they give up all of these things, take up the practice of Dhamma, and finally attain Dhamma and become famous? They attained the supreme state, and at the same time they also could see the insignificance of those things that they left behind. They were not the ‘real things’ and were not as worthy as Dhamma, and that is why these people were able to attain Dhamma. Whatever class or family they came from, once they had gone forth in the Buddha *Sāsana*, they then devoted themselves to the practice of Dhamma with diligent effort. Even those who were Kings were willing to give up their Kingships and take up the lives of recluses or bhikkhus, just like any other bhikkhu. Look at the degree to which they were able to adapt themselves! For this reason they were able to attain the status of great Sages, to whom we pay respect and esteem.

We have to take up their example. During the time of the Lord Buddha, this was the only kind of undertaking, or the only work, that the bhikkhus were doing. This is the work of walking meditation or *caṅkama*, sitting in *samādhi*, and the work of *bhāvanā*, mental development. This is the work of a bhikkhu. When they had conversation, they did not talk about politics or about business, or about any other social activities. Nor did they talk about men or women. They did not bother about these things because these things are the affairs of the world which they had left behind, due to the perception that these things are harmful. That is why they got away from these things, and made sure that these things did not come in and bother and disturb them. They only took up the Dhamma as their support after they had left those things behind. All the work that they had done in the world they had entirely let go of. The only work that they did now was the work of a bhikkhu, which is the *samaṇa* Dhamma or meditation, which slowly leads to peace, happiness, and tranquillity. Wherever they were, they all disciplined and trained themselves with Dhamma, and they all consistently attained the result. They all attained the *magga*, *phala*, and *nibbāna*, in the various places like the forests, mountains, and caves. This was because they constantly exerted themselves, so how could the Fruit not become apparent?

When they carried on a dialogue, they carried on a dialogue on the *Sallekha-dhamma*, topics of effacing the defilements. These *Sallekha-dhamma* were the topics of their conversation, and when they talked about these Dhamma, they were called *Sallekha kathā*, which means the conversation about the way of deliverance or the cleansing or the uprooting of the kilesas. *Sallekha* means to cleanse or uproot. And what does this consist of? What did those people during the Lord Buddha’s time talk about? The basis of conversation for a *samaṇa* has bounds and limits. I will elaborate the first of these topics of conversation, although I have elaborated this many times before. But there are newcomers that may not have heard it before, so I will say it again. Please listen very carefully.

The first topic is *Appicchatā*, which means one who is content with little. The Lord Buddha did not teach us to be content with many material things that are offered by the laypeople. However much or little one might receive, one is only happy with just a little. This is the best way of practice.

The second topic is *Santuṭṭi* or *Santosa* - be content with whatever is available with regards to the requisites. One mustn’t bother or make solicitations to the laypeople concerning these things. One just uses whatever is available. This practice ranks second in moderation to the first practice of *appicchatā*, being content with little. One has to be really firm and resolute if one practises in this manner.

The third topic is *Vivekatā*: delighting in seclusion. One has seclusion for one’s dwelling place, and one guards the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body that have contact with the forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects. And one also guards the heart, befitting the nature of the *samaṇa* Dhamma, contemplative life. One cultivates the quietude or seclusion of the heart. If the heart is not able to find quiet, one will not be able to find any happiness. That is why it is vital that we curb and restrain the flow of the *citta* with our

diligent effort. If we can find peace and seclusion, then it is possible for the citta to calm down. Then happiness will arise, and this is what is meant by vivekatā, the delighting in seclusion.

The fourth topic is Viriyārambhā, continuous and consistent exertion in all four postures of standing, sitting, walking, and lying down. One is constantly directing one's exertion with mindfulness. With mindfulness it is then possible to exert oneself, and this is viriyārambhā, the topic of conversation on the application of diligent effort.

The fifth topic, Asaṅsakkanikā, means not mingling or socialising. One doesn't socialise with one's fellow bhikkhus or the laypeople.

The sixth topic is Sīla, morality. One strives to keep one's sīla pure, and to make sure that one's sīla doesn't have any blemishes and lapses. One must protect and cherish one's sīla the same way one protects and cherishes one's heart. Sīla and the Dhamma are one and the same thing. The coarser kind of Dhamma is called sīla, because it has to restrain and curb the actions of body and speech, with the heart responsible for their actions.

The seventh topic is Samādhi, calm and stability of the heart. One relates to another about the various techniques of practice, regardless of what type of samādhi. One should talk about them, because each one will be able to learn and gain some benefits from this talk. When one talks about samādhi, one can discuss and relate the various characteristics of samādhi. This is because there are many different ways of disciplining the citta, following the different characters and personalities of people.

The eighth topic is Paññā. One talks about the depth and profundity of the discernment, and the various techniques of paññā. One should discuss them so that one can share this information with one's fellow practitioners, so that others might benefit from it.

The ninth topic is Vimutti, the state of deliverance. This is the most desirable subject of conversation, and the most desirable state. It is the consequence that arises from appicchatā, wanting little, and all the way up to paññā.

The tenth topic is Vimutti Ñānadassana, the knowledge and insight that one has attained vimutti.

These are the ten Sallekha-dhammas that the practitioners and the bhikkhus during the time of the Lord Buddha talked about. They only talked about the truth and Dhamma, and this accords with the Dhamma that says Kālena dhamma sākacchā, the timely talk on Dhamma. This talk is timely and appropriate to the time, and they are Etam mangalam uttamam, the highest blessing for those who are involved in the conversation. And this is what they talked about during the time of the Lord Buddha - the Sallekha-dhamma. They did not talk about politics, or business, or about gain or loss. They were not involved with the confusing affairs of saṃsāra, like the way bhikkhus are today. In these Bhikkhus' hearts and mouths, there is nothing of any substance, but just the affairs of the world that they give vent to. They are not worth listening to. Can this be in accordance or in conformity with the time of the Lord Buddha? So if this is the way, then all that is left is just the name or the label of one who has gone forth. Talking about the maintenance of his sīla, one wonders just how much sīla has he got? This is because when he talks, he does not restrain or have any reservations. One really wonders whether his sīla has gone down the drain. So how can one come up with any samādhi, because not a word of samādhi has been said, not to mention the practice and development of samādhi and citta bhāvanā, mental development? So how can the result come forth? One just gets into trouble and confusion with the things that bear no benefit.

Because we don't tread the way that the Lord Buddha showed us to tread, we don't want to do the work that he wanted us to do. We only do the work that is inimical or opposed to Dhamma. We do this constantly, so how can there be any worth or virtue which is the important quality, so that we can be proud of it, if our practice just becomes wayward or tramples on and destroys the Dhamma without ourselves being aware of it? There cannot be any result that will come forth, and we can only be proud of our state of going forth. But what is the use of that? What is the use of being proud of our position of one who has sīla? What is the use of this if we cannot be proud of the results that we can gain from our exertion? For this result, or the fruits of our exertion, would be our own possession or treasure, be it the samādhi treasure, or the paññā treasure, or the vimutti treasure. These are the treasures that we can be truly proud of: those which arise from our diligent effort.

These all start with appicchatā, the practice of wanting little, which is opposing or antagonistic to the practice of wanting a lot. And this is the way the Lord Buddha taught us to correct the kilesas because the kilesas like to oppose and go against Dhamma. For instance, these ten Dhammas that we have mentioned earlier: in one of them the Lord Buddha says 'appicchatā', take a little bit. But the kilesas say 'Take a lot, take a lot'. When you die you can use these possessions as the fuel to burn yourself with - the kilesas really

like this. There is no need to look for any firewood, because you can pile up your possessions, your wealth, and then set fire to them to burn your body with. The kilesas like it this way, and this is the way the kilesas go against Dhamma. The kilesas will always go against Dhamma. They will always go contradictory to Dhamma. They will always oppose Dhamma. Whenever the citta begins to like something, then please understand that the citta is already on the side of the kilesas, and it has already been led away by them. The kilesas will then put it on the chopping board, and cut it up into pieces.

It is only when the citta has attained the realm of Dhamma and the realm of truth, to the extent where one becomes confident of oneself, that one now understands the truth and Dhamma, good and bad within the citta. That becomes a different story. When the citta has attained that level, then the citta will be only inclined towards Dhamma. It will like to acquire Dhamma and the desire for this Dhamma is called Magga, the Path. These desires are not kilesas like the other worldly or mundane desires. For example, vivekatā. The Lord Buddha taught us to be inclined towards seclusion but the kilesas like us to mingle and socialise in noisy and maddening crowds. They are the place where the kilesas want to go, and this is how they go against Dhamma. Vivekatā or the delight in seclusion, is on the side of Dhamma. The delight in noise and madness is on the side of the kilesas. The Lord Buddha taught us viriyārambhā, the application of diligent effort. The kilesas say that we should apply our effort in the wrong way. If we go in the wrong way, then this is contrary to the viriyārambhā. The kilesas will always go against Dhamma, all the way to vimutti. This is the nature of the kilesas. They will always oppose Dhamma. So one must always observe oneself well. No matter how the inclination might arise, one must use satipaññā to investigate to see whether it is in accordance with Dhamma or not.

If it is not, then one has to realise that it must be in accordance with the kilesas. Then one must immediately resist that inclination and let go of it, even though one might be really attached to it and really want to have it. For this kind of desire or attachment is really the affair of the kilesas, but letting go of these attachments and desires is the affair of Dhamma. If we are going to follow the way of the Lord Buddha, then we must let go of them. We must resist our heart. How can we not resist? If we are not resisting, then we cannot say that we are fighting, combating, and struggling. If we keep on following our heart's desires, then we cannot be called practitioners. We cannot be considered as one who resists the kilesas, fights the kilesas, subdues and eradicates the kilesas, and one who conquers the kilesas, for one will always be losing to the kilesas. This is not the principle of Dhamma which exhorts us to oppose and to fight. We must always be constantly aware of ourselves. We only hear about the story of the sāvakas. Some of them attained the level of sotāpanna, some of them the level of sakadāgāmī, some of them the level of anāgāmī, and some of them the level of arahant, in various places. These were the results that they attained, and what about the story of their exertion? What was it like? The story of their exertion and the story of the results that they acquired were in harmony with each other.

Therefore, we must look both at the cause and the result. Look at the means and the consequences. If we want the Fruit or the result, then we must develop the cause or the means for this result to arise. It is like when we look at a certain plant. We observe and investigate to find out what sort of nourishment is good for this plant so that this plant can bear the fruits for us. If we only look for the result without paying any attention to the cause that can make this result appear, then it is useless for us. We must look at the cause. That is, we must find out what kind of nourishment and fertiliser this plant needs, and we must take good care of it, protecting this plant from other things that can come and destroy it.

It is the same way with our hearts. When we want the results to appear within our hearts, then we have to observe the heart to find out what it needs in order to be able to produce such a result. We have to eradicate whatever is antagonistic or harmful to the heart. Insects are very harmful because they constantly bite; rāga also bites; and dosa also bites; and it is the same with moha. Laziness and weakness also bite. Discouragement also bites. Thinking that one doesn't have the ability is another form of bite. Thinking that the magga, phala, and nibbāna is now out of reach or out of time - this is also another bite. These are all the bites of these insects, the kilesa insects. Discouragement and weakness - they bite. When one tries to meditate, it is as if someone is taking one to the gallows. This is another form of bite. They constantly bite us. When we lie down and our head touches the pillow, we don't want to get up. This is also another form of bite.

Please note that these insects are in the heart. They hide inside and permeate the heart. They are constantly whispering and infiltrating the heart. We must get rid of them with the various techniques, so that we can see and experience the supreme Dhamma within our hearts. This will happen due to our diligent effort and our contention with them. In the beginning stages of practice, it is difficult and hard. Even though it is difficult, one will not retreat, but is willing to face it. One accepts the fact that it is difficult and that it is dukkha. But then every form of work is difficult because when one has to work, one has to exert. In our practice, we must also exert ourselves. It can be difficult, but we must exert to the utmost so that we can

come to the result that we can be contented with. The citta can be trained and developed, or else the Lord Buddha would not have taught us to do it. The citta that has no Dhamma is like a demon. In such a citta there is no Dhamma or truth, or any principle of reason. The only thing it has is the wish to acquire things according to its desire, and this is entirely the business of the kilesas. As a result, one will never be able to find any happiness either for oneself or for others.

People tend to disturb one another due to the power of the kilesas. Human beings are social animals. They have to live together. They cannot live alone by themselves. So they always tend to disturb and hurt one another, and this is due to the harmful things inside the heart that have been vented. When one has constantly trained and developed oneself, then this wildness and recklessness inside the heart will steadily diminish due to the power of one's exertion. The citta that has never attained calm will now attain calm. This is because we are now taking care of the citta. We can have calm and cool-heartedness because of this care and nourishment arising from our exertion. We have to coerce and control the citta constantly, so that it doesn't think out beyond the way of Dhamma. We must not allow this citta to think about the various things. We must direct it to only think in the way of Dhamma. The kilesas will gradually decrease, and the heart will then become calmer and more tranquil. Then we will begin to see the merit and value of the heart. We must then intensify our effort because the benefit that arises from being calm is not the only benefit. There are other benefits that are higher and better than this.



Two Kinds of Knowledge

August 9th, 1979

No matter how sophisticated and advanced the world's knowledge may be, it can't eliminate the world's suffering and hardship in the same way the knowledge of Dhamma can, because Dhamma always imparts peace and coolness. A world without Dhamma is a world of dukkha. Regardless of how much you may have studied, this mundane knowledge will never get rid of the dukkha inside your heart because it's not intended for the removal of dukkha. Only the knowledge of Dhamma taught by all the Buddhas can do this. If you study and practise the Dhamma, you'll definitely achieve the results of Dhamma. Although worldly knowledge and Dhamma knowledge are both considered knowledges, they are different just like males and females, although both human beings, are different. You can always tell them apart by merely looking at them.

It's the same with worldly knowledge and Dhamma knowledge: they have different features and purposes. You can tell them apart if you study and practise Dhamma. On the other hand, if you haven't studied and practised Dhamma you won't be able to tell them apart. How could you? You'll only know about the world and will think it's the greatest place to live, to excel in fame, fortune, honour, influence and power, although your heart is actually empty of them and is always hot and burning. No matter how high and mighty you may proclaim yourself to be, it won't make you truly happy. You mustn't, therefore, think that you'll find true happiness by only learning worldly knowledge. In whichever time and place, and in whatever class or society of people this Dhamma is established, it'll always impart happiness to them, corresponding to the intensity of the Dhamma that has been developed in them. The Dhamma is, therefore, indispensable for the world. Dhamma should always accompany every undertaking if you want to benefit from it, whether it's for yourself, your family, your society, or your country. Without the Dhamma, you'll end up with suffering and stress. The reason why there isn't any true happiness in this world is because there isn't any Dhamma.

Looking inside your heart, you'll see, whenever you think about all the troubling events happening in the world, your heart will be consumed by them. The more you think, the more troubled your heart will become. You can gauge your dukkha by your thoughts. When you don't think about troubling events, your citta will be calm and peaceful. When your citta experiences the samatha or tranquil Dhamma, even at the beginning stage, you'll be awestruck. Samatha means tranquillity that arises from your Dhamma practice and produces true happiness. The ārammaṇa or feelings generated by thinking about Dhamma and thinking about the world differ greatly from one another. Thinking about the world produces dukkha and stress, whilst thinking about Dhamma eliminates the kilesas, taṇhā, āsavas and dukkha from your heart. If you're a Dhamma practitioner and truly believe in the law of kamma taught by the Lord Buddha, you should closely watch those thoughts that are propelled by the kilesas, taṇhā and āsava because they will give rise to dukkha. Those thoughts and dukkha are inseparable. If you want to think, you should think about Dhamma, refrain from thinking about the world at all times, you should always oppose and eliminate those thoughts. No matter how hard it might be, you've got to do it because it's your job. The Lord Buddha said this is the way he and his noble disciples or sāvakas eliminated the kilesas. They all had to endure dukkha and hardship before they could destroy all the kilesas.

When you go into battle, it's normal for you to run into dukkha like boxers fighting in the ring do. Even the winner has to go through a lot of dukkha, not just the loser. This kind of winning, however, will never put an end to your conflicts. But the Dhamma's triumph over your kilesas will. It's normal for you to run into dukkha when you have to oppose and destroy the kilesas by developing mindfulness and insight. The Lord Buddha was the first one to experience this dukkha when he collapsed from his exertion. It's the same with the sāvakas or noble disciples. If these dukkha experiences were normal in the past, how can you expect otherwise? How can you become enlightened without going through this dukkha that the Lord Buddha and the sāvakas went through? It's unavoidable! You've got to run into dukkha as you follow the footsteps of the Lord Buddha and the sāvakas. They had to experience dukkha, so must you. They were fighters, so must you be. It can then be said that you're following the great teacher, the Lord Buddha. You mustn't be deceived by your thoughts and feelings that are created by the kilesas, and mustn't obey them, but must always defy them.

Dhamma is the weapon that will identify and destroy all the kilesas. Sati or mindfulness is the Dhamma that will protect and support you. The kilesas will appear in various guises when visual objects, sounds, tastes, smells, and tactile objects come into contact with your heart, where you'll always notice them and

oppose them, if your sati is ever-present and you're really determined to fight them. Sati is the indispensable Dhamma that will always take care of you. You shouldn't be idle and unmindful. You might think you're relaxing, but actually you're being complacent and waiting for the kilesas to do you in. This is not good for you. What's really good for you is when you're killing the kilesas, which is your most important mission and duty because this is your goal and the reason you take up the robe. You've experienced the worldly life before you took up the robe and know that it's mixed with poisons. You can't trust the taste of worldly life to always give you happiness, but you can wholeheartedly trust the taste of Dhamma. You're now putting your trust in and relying on your Dhamma practice to always provide you with happiness. The four requisites of living - food, clothing, shelter, and medicines - have all been abundantly provided by the lay supporters. They willingly offer their supports out of their saddhā or faith and respect, so you don't have to worry about them and be distracted from your exertion which is your only task -- the task of eliminating all the kilesas -- using the various means and techniques devised by your own common sense and ability. None of the other tasks are important or vital for a samaṇa, one who has gone forth and follows the Lord Buddha.

You shouldn't deceive yourself into doing any other tasks because you think they're attractive or worthwhile. Developing worldly things isn't as important as developing your heart so that it will give you contentment. Although you may be living in a small hut with the roof leaking, you'll find it comfortable and free from worries. When you leave the hut, you won't worry if anything should happen to it. You're not seeking for fame or fortune because that isn't worthwhile even if it's fashionable. It's just a fad, not the real thing. The real thing is the Lord Buddha's teaching. If you faithfully follow his teaching, you'll always find security and fulfilment even if you're living in a shack. Sati is indispensable in the battle between the kilesas and Dhamma. Most of the time it's the kilesas that destroy the Dhamma due to the lack of sati. You must, therefore, be very mindful. This is your task. I'm telling you from the bottom of my heart and from my profound appreciation for the Dhamma that I realised from my practice. I've always faithfully followed the Dhamma teaching, like the one that says, rukkhamūla senāsanam, living in the forest, which is an ideal cultivating ground for someone who aims for freedom from dukkha, by continually investigating kesā, lomā, nakhā, dantā, taco, or head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth and skin.

This is taca pañcaka kammaṭṭhāna, literally translated as a list of the five body parts with the skin as the fifth part. What it actually means is the skin that wraps around the body and obscures the heart from perceiving the body's true nature. Even though it's very thin, it can completely cover up the truth. The Lord Buddha taught us to investigate the five kammaṭṭhānas in both forward and reverse order. When you get to the skin, you must then dissect the skin and look at the flesh and the innards to see what they look like. You've already seen the external body parts; now you want to see the internal parts. If you only look at the external parts; you'll always be deceived. Looking under the skin will give you insight to the true nature of the body. You should repeatedly investigate these body parts, back and forth, like the farmers who rake and plough their fields, back and forth, again and again, until the soil is ready for planting. You shouldn't use the number of times you have investigated to measure your result of the magga, phala and nibbāna, but you should use your ability to skilfully and repeatedly investigate until truly seeing and letting go of the body as a measurement of your success. When you've truly seen with paññā, the body's true nature, you'll naturally sever your attachment to the body. This is sandiṭṭhiko, seeing the truth by practice. This is the bhikkhu's occupation, your occupation. You should always keep this in mind.

Don't waste your time working like people in the world do, such as building temples, monks' living quarters or kuṭīs, assembly halls or sālās, and then forget to do your Dhamma practice that will keep your heart calm, peaceful and cool. When you don't practise, you'll feel bored and restless, and be driven to do some other kind of work, like building shrines and pagodas that don't promote peace and calm, but disarray and trouble, inside and outside the temple. Inside the temple, it troubles the monks and novices. Outside the temple, it troubles the lay supporters. It'll strain the relationship between the laity and the bhikkhus who are puñña khettaṃ lokassa, the best people to make merits with. Instead of cooperating, they will oppose each other. The saṅgha or the community of monks now turns into vampires instead of being the best people to make merit with. So how can this lead to peace and tranquillity? Think about it! It's because the bhikkhus aren't sticking to their occupation which is to develop morality and the citta to perfection. You need satipaññā to constantly look after your citta, and you should never be without it, if you want your citta to become worthy of adoration and reverence. It isn't beyond the disciplining ability of satipaññā. The Lord Buddha prescribed the forty meditation subjects or themes or kammaṭṭhānas for each practitioner to choose from, depending on his or her character and disposition. They are the basis of your mental development and your most important undertaking.

To see the body's true nature, you must use the five kammaṭṭhānas, that is, head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth and skin, or the entire thirty two body parts as your objects of investigation, whichever you prefer.

These body parts are with you all the time, so why can't you see them? How was it that the Lord Buddha and the *sāvakas* were able to see them? Their eyes were similar to your eyes, their hearts were similar to your heart, and their *satipaṇṇā* were similar to your *satipaṇṇā*. The reason is that they correctly used their *satipaṇṇā* in their investigation for the truth. By following faithfully the Dhamma teaching, they were able to remove their delusions and became enlightened. Their mission was to eliminate the *kilesas*, *taṇhā* and *āsavas* which is the same mission for all *bhikkhus* because it's their real mission. You should resolve to complete this mission by tirelessly investigating with your *satipaṇṇā* and shouldn't see other undertakings to be more important because they will lead you away from peace and contentment or the *samaṇa* Dhamma and the Lord Buddha's teaching. You already have adequate living requisites to meet your needs, so you shouldn't be concerned with them, because it will just needlessly disturb you. You should instead concentrate all your efforts on your meditation practice, no matter how hard and difficult it might be, because you're now on the battlefield.

If you're having difficulty fighting the *kilesas*, you should ask yourself why. 'Why can't the *citta* calm down? What causes the *citta* to be restless and agitated? What kind of thoughts is the *citta* being obsessed with?' You should then use your thoughts as the object of your investigation to see their true nature. This will then lead you to the *citta* that's being deceived by your thoughts which keep generating ideas and concepts to entangle and bind the *citta* to your thoughts. This is the way of doing the investigation. But, first of all, you should calm your *citta* with *satipaṇṇā*. The *citta* will eventually calm down because it can't resist the power of *satipaṇṇā*. It's the same way with all types of *kilesas*. They can't oppose the power of *satipaṇṇā*. Dhamma is always a superior opponent. It's the tool for training and disciplining the *citta* and the tool for the eradication of all types of *kilesas*. But when you apply Dhamma in your practice, it's the *kilesas* that are knocking you down. Why? It's because you haven't developed enough Dhamma yet to be able to catch up with the *kilesas*. Therefore, you shouldn't remain idle. You should use your *satipaṇṇā* to devise different methods of investigation to gain insight into the *kilesas*' nature and attain to the various Dhamma levels that are the consequences of your investigation and contemplation on the various Dhamma themes. This can be any part of your body, or other people's bodies that come into contact with you. You must investigate to see them as repulsive or *asubha*. Both your body and other people's bodies can be used to develop the *magga*, the path to the cessation of *dukkha*. It's these *saṅkhāras* or thoughts that can generate either *magga*, or *samudaya*, the creator of *dukkha*. But normally these *saṅkhāras* are manipulated by the *kilesas* and become the creator of *samudaya*, and this has always been so. There's no question about this. In order to make these *saṅkhāras* the *magga*'s weapon and deliver you to freedom, you have to train these *saṅkhāras* to work for Dhamma.

If the *citta* doesn't calm down, how can you, a *bhikkhu*, find any happiness? If your *citta* is being burned with the *kilesas*' fire of lust, hatred and delusion, what then is this world, this body and this existence is good for? If you're always depressed and despairing, how can you make your life meaningful and worthwhile? You have to rely on the meaningful and valuable Dhamma to eliminate the worthless *kilesas*, which are the main culprits that make your life worthless. When the *kilesas* are destroyed, calm will appear. In the beginning stages of practice, calm is very essential. If the *citta* isn't calm, you'll never be happy because you'll be smouldering with the fire of lust, hatred and delusion. You are not noble because you put on the yellow robe. What's noble about this yellow robe? There are plenty of them in the shops. It's only a symbol of your noble life and lofty goal. What's a *bhikkhu*'s goal? It's the removal of the *kilesas*, and not the accumulation of the *kilesas*. It's not his goal to remain idle in the midst of the fire of lust, hatred and delusion. His initial goal is to be always calm and cool. Then he must investigate the body to see that it's made up of the four elements, it's *aniccaṃ*, *dukkhaṃ* and *anattā*, it's repulsive or *asubha* and it's filthy or *paṭikkūla*. This body is full of *aniccaṃ*, *dukkhaṃ* and *anattā*. You must concentrate your *satipaṇṇā* to investigate the body to see clearly its true nature.

You shouldn't presume that you'll always be living and studying with your teacher because you're living in the world of impermanence or *aniccaṃ*. So whilst you're still living and studying with him, you should concentrate all your efforts in getting rid of all the *kilesas*. When you have any questions, you can ask your teacher. I'm always ready to answer your questions and to advise you on your meditation practice. Besides instructing you, I'm also waiting to hear about the results of your practice that you've got to see and experience yourself. When you do, it's unavoidable that there will be questions, especially when you're developing *pañṇā*. Some of these questions or problems you'll be able to solve yourself, but with some others you'll need your teacher's assistance, as you steadily advance in your practice. For this reason, the Lord Buddha called his students *sāvaka*, which means 'one who listens'. You've got to listen to his teaching in order to know how to practise. Only the Lord Buddha is a *sabbaññū*, a self-enlightened one. The *sāvakas* have to listen first before they can become enlightened. You're a *sāvaka*, one who listens, so you must listen to his teaching and have it deeply embedded within your heart. You mustn't just merely listen, for this is

like splashing water on a dog. No matter how much water you might splash on it, it'll shake it all off. It's the same with the Dhamma teaching that is being splashed into your heart, you can shake it all off with the kilesas' power. If you listen unmindfully, it'll be impossible for you to retain any Dhamma in your heart and acquire the satipaṇṇā to free yourself. This is not the way for a serious practitioner who aims for freedom from dukkha to listen. If you do, you'll be like pork on the chopping board.

I have great concern for you, and that's why I have to constantly give you these instructions. I don't see anything in this monastery as valuable as my students who are studying and living with me. I think of the benefits that they'll acquire after they've developed themselves to perfection, and then help propagating the Lord Buddha's teaching, which will happen naturally and inevitably. But now you should only be concerned with developing and training yourself to establish a foundation in Dhamma and to have complete confidence in yourself. The benefit for others will follow, just as in the way of the Lord Buddha. He first concentrated all of his efforts in developing himself and paid no attention to anything else. After he had become enlightened and completely freed from dukkha, he then took up the duty of a teacher, teaching Dhamma with love and compassion until he finally passed away. By his example, the Dhamma teaching has been preserved and passed on right down to the present. The benefits for yourself and others are, therefore, inseparable. All the noble disciples or sāvakas have followed the example of the Lord Buddha to their utmost ability. They benefited others as much as they could. If you aren't enlightened yet, how could you teach others to become enlightened? It's not possible. If you blindly teach, how can your students see the truth? Your students won't benefit from your teaching. If you only know the theoretical Dhamma and not the practical Dhamma, your teaching won't enlighten your students but will only provide them with speculations that will lead them away from the right path.

This is in great contrast to an enlightened practitioner who can teach with complete confidence, because he teaches what he has experienced and realised within his heart. So how can he blindly teach, when the truth is clearly manifested within himself? His students will be able to listen with complete confidence. That's how the Dhamma was propagated during the Lord Buddha's time. Therefore, the transmission of the practical Dhamma is different from the theoretical Dhamma that can only describe the kilesas inside the heart, but can't destroy them. This is useless! You've got to see the truth, because it's distinctly different from the theory. The description of the kilesas, taṇhā, āsavas, the magga, phala and nibbāna, is very different from the actual thing. The description can't terminate the kilesas, but the actual experience can. When you've clearly seen the kilesas' true nature, they will all disappear. Be sincere and earnest. The Lord Buddha's Dhamma can be clearly realised within your heart. Don't relent in your exertion, but intensify it. If there's dukkha, you must endure it. Every living being has to experience dukkha. Don't be deterred or weakened by the dukkha that arises from fighting the kilesas, because it won't kill you, but will make you victorious. This dukkha will help you eliminate the dukkha created by the kilesas and remove all the dukkha from your heart. So how can this dukkha be unbearable, discouraging or cause defeat? If you can't face the dukkha arising from your practice, how will you face the dukkha created by the kilesas? As a practitioner, you have to think rationally. You can't make food out of satipaṇṇā because it's only good for eliminating the kilesas, taṇhā and āsavas.

Listening to a desanā or Dhamma talk given by an enlightened teacher is considered by those who practise mental development to be the first priority. If you're developing calm, your citta will calm down very easily whilst listening to a desanā even if you never had any calm before. If you're continually mindful of the sound of Dhamma flowing into your citta, the citta doesn't think about other things. Normally, it's the citta's habit to think aimlessly. Even when you're meditating, you can still think aimlessly because your thoughts are more powerful than your sati, which, in the beginning stages of development, won't be able to stop your thoughts. When you listen to a desanā, you should focus your attention at the sound of Dhamma flowing into your citta. This will prevent you from thinking aimlessly and consequently your citta will calm down. You'll see that it's a lot easier to develop calm by listening to a Dhamma talk than meditating by yourself. If you've already established a calm foundation, you'll swiftly and easily enter into calm. Sometimes, when you've entered into calm, you'll let go of the sound of Dhamma and your citta will remain still without the need of a controller like sati. This can also happen.

If you're developing paṇṇā, when you listen to a discourse, the citta won't remain still, but will actively follow the discourse because it's paṇṇā's nature to be always investigating even when you're alone. When you listen to your teacher's desanā, paṇṇā will follow it closely as if your teacher is clearing the path ahead of you. When he comes to the topic of your investigation, you'll attentively listen to the explanation that he will give you without any hesitation because he has already understood it. After you've heard his explanation you'll also understand it. That's why I truly believe that it's possible to become enlightened whilst listening to the Lord Buddha giving a discourse. How can I not believe this when I have experienced it

myself? Who can teach better than the Lord Buddha, who is considered to be the greatest teacher? Next to him were his noble disciples or *sāvakas*, who were also enlightened. Everything they taught was all true and came from their practical experiences. If you listen to a Dhamma talk given by an enlightened person, you can become enlightened. If it's given by an unenlightened person, it'll be filled entirely with speculation and you won't gain any benefit. The discourse or *desanā* given by a theorist is different from that of a practitioner. A theorist doesn't know the real Dhamma. What Dhamma he knows is all fake.

The *citta* is where you'll have to eliminate your troubles. You shouldn't look elsewhere because the main culprit is the *citta* that's constantly creating troubles for you by ceaselessly thinking about the past and the future, about visual objects, sounds, smells, tastes and tactile objects, about good and bad, right and wrong. No matter how long ago things might have happened, it'll keep thinking about them and become happy, sad or disturbed. You're deceived by the *kilesas*' trickery, by their manipulation of the five *khandhas*, their long-time servants. You've got to make the *khandhas* the Dhamma's servants by eliminating all the *kilesas* from your heart. After you've achieved this, the five *khandhas* will become the Dhamma's exclusive servants. But they will remain active because it's their nature. This is especially so with *saṅkhāra* and *saññā*. *Saññā* is much more subtle than *saṅkhāra* because it permeates quietly, like ink over absorbent paper. *Saṅkhāra* has to stir before it can think. *Saññā* just quietly spreads out to form a mental picture for *saṅkhāra* to conceptualise with. It's natural for *saññā* and *saṅkhāra* to remain active even without the *kilesas* to manipulate them except when the *citta* rests in *samādhi*. However, whatever they do will have no effect because there's nobody to be affected by them. But if they're manipulated by the *kilesas*, they'll become a problem. If they're not, they will keep on creating mental images and thoughts until the dissolution of the body where they'll come to a complete cessation.

These five *khandhas* will continue to function after they're free from the *kilesas*, like a lizard's tail which has been cut off that still goes on wriggling as if it's still alive, when in fact there's no life in it. These five *khandhas* will continue on because the *citta* still possesses them, although the *citta* isn't attached to or deluded by them. When you hear a sound, you'll be aware of it because the ears and the sense awareness or *viññāṇa* still function. As soon as you hear the sound, it'll disappear if you don't grab it and become attached to it. It'll appear and disappear. These *khandhas* will only become still and quiet when the *citta* rests in *samādhi*. When they temporarily stop functioning, all that remains is just the knowingness that seems to pervade the whole universe, like a sound that spreads in all directions. This is due to its greatness and grandeur. Nothing can penetrate it or influence it. It can't be created through your imagination. It's so subtle that it can't really be compared with anything. Even though you might know what it's like, you just won't be able to describe it. It's as if the world and the universe have all disappeared. All that remains is this knowingness, striking and imposing. You can't pinpoint where this knowingness is, and neither do you care to. What for? When you know you can't locate this knowingness, you just accept that fact. This knowingness has no other characteristics except this undeniable knowing, which is its true nature. It has no desires, no cravings. To it, nothing is too much or too little. Everything is just right. This knowingness is so vast; it seems to be embracing the whole universe. It's also so empty; it seems devoid of the whole universe, because it doesn't have anything to do with it. After you've emerged from this *samādhi*, all the mental phenomena or *nāma khandhas* like feelings, perceptions, thoughts and sense awareness will reappear. They'll appear and immediately disappear, and won't become a long chain, because there are no *kilesas* to connect them. There are no *samudayas* to create *dukkha* for the *citta*. You can use these mental phenomena anyway you like while they're still active.

You've got to see this for yourself. What I'm telling you may sound incredible to you. When you've seen what I've seen, you'll see what I mean. This is what the genuine truth is like. The *citta* has now become constant or unchanged. You can't say 'How come the *citta* is like this today? How come the *citta* was like that yesterday?' This won't happen. You'll clearly see that it's the *kilesas* that cause the *citta* to change, to become this and that. These changes, whether they're coarse or subtle, are the *kilesas*' conjuring tricks. After you've completely eliminated them, there's nothing left to deceive you. The *citta* remains the same, day in and day out. As far as the years, months, and days are concerned, they're just conventional reality or relative truths that have no impact on the *citta*. The *citta* sees them as merely a passage of time and events, from day to night, from sunrise to sunset. What's there to be deluded about? The earth that you walk on is just the earth element. In your stomach, there's plenty of the water element. Your body keeps breathing the air element in and out. The fire element keeps your body warm. They're just elements. Why be deluded with the concept of I and mine, human beings and animals? Why create these concepts to contradict the Dhamma? To defy the Dhamma is like walking on thorns. You must see in accordance with the Dhamma. If they are just elements, you should see them as just elements. If you see according to the truth that the Lord Buddha taught, all your problems will be solved.

Be really earnest and sincere. You must destroy all the kilesas because they are harmful to the citta. Your thoughts and imagination are also harmful because they are instigated by the kilesas. It's the same with your presumptions and suppositions. But after you've completely eliminated the kilesas, you can think anyway you want to. It won't do any harm because you can control your thinking; you can prompt it or restrain it. These khandhas become like tools that you put in the proper place after you have finished using them. When you want to go to sleep, you just shut them off. When you want to enter into samādhi, you just restrain all your thoughts and feelings and enter into the state of knowingness where you can rest in peace and bliss. And that's all there is to it. When the time comes for their dissolution, you're ready for it because you've thoroughly investigated them. You won't get excited because you know that death is just the disintegration of the four elements. You won't feel like wanting to die or wanting to live. Both the aversion to death and the attraction to life are one and the same thing. Why go on living when it's time to pass away? Why try to resist it?

This reminds me of the Lord Buddha, our wise and great teacher, during the time when the Venerable Sāriputta came to bid him farewell as Venerable Sariputta was about to pass away. Had the Lord Buddha requested the Venerable Sāriputta not to pass away yet, but to live a little bit longer to help him teach the Dhamma, then this would be encouraging him to remain longer in the vaṭṭa cakka or cycle of birth, death and rebirth. If the Lord Buddha didn't want him to pass away yet when death was imminent, it would be resisting death. Had he said go ahead, then it would be encouraging death. The Lord Buddha advised that when the time was right for Sāriputta to die, he should let it happen. This was the most appropriate advice. When he said 'when the time is right', he meant Sāriputta should let death happen naturally following the law of nature that Sāriputta had already investigated. In this way he wouldn't be resisting the truth. He could have said go ahead, pass away, but when it's not yet the time, why pass away? That's why he said when the time is right for you to go, go. When it's not yet the time, stay. But before you leave, you should give a Dhamma discourse. The Lord Buddha said this to the Venerable Sāriputta, and the Venerable Sāriputta understood that the Lord Buddha had given him the permission to display his teaching prowess and supernatural powers. After he finished, he then took his leave. The Lord Buddha then gave permission to about five hundred bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras, monks and novices to accompany the Venerable Sāriputta to his birthplace for his passing away. The point here is that the Lord Buddha didn't request the Venerable Sāriputta to live longer, because it would promote the vaṭṭa cakka existence and would defy the law of nature. But if the Lord Buddha had said go ahead, it would be another extreme, and would be contradictory to the truth. That's why the Lord Buddha told him he should let the khandhas break up naturally.

It was the same way with the Venerable Mogallāna when he came to bid farewell to the Lord Buddha, which was seven days after the Venerable Sāriputta, if my memory doesn't fail me. The Lord Buddha gave the Venerable Mogallāna the same advice and the permission for him to demonstrate his teaching prowess and supernatural powers. First, he gave a Dhamma talk; then he flew up to the sky and back down to earth to give another Dhamma talk and repeated this feat several times. The Lord Buddha also gave the bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras permission to accompany the Venerable Mogallāna as he left for his passing away.

During the Lord Buddha's time, the magga, phala and nibbāna were plentiful amongst the practitioners. There were many who were imbued with the magga and phala, the path and fruit. But when it comes down to our time there are only people possessed with fake Dhamma. There are only the names of the kilesas and of Dhamma, but the real Dhamma, be it samādhi or paññā or vimutti, is not there. Who's going to bring back to life the real Dhamma of the Lord Buddha? Who's going to apply the majjhimā, the middle way of practice that is suitable for achieving the magga, phala and nibbāna, and eliminating all the kilesas which oppose the magga, phala and nibbāna? It must be you, the practitioner. You should only be concerned for and look after yourself. Always remind yourself to practise. Don't remain idle if you don't want to remain ignorant. You should devise various methods and techniques of paññā to fight the kilesas and gain insight. First, you have to nurture your paññā until it can investigate on its own without being prompted and will relentlessly investigate to the point where you'll have to restrain it.

Concerning uddhacca, one of the higher saṃyojana or fetters as described in the texts, I wonder what was in the mind of the person who recorded this. This is not trying to find fault with him but the text reveals his state of mind. That is, was he free of the kilesas or was he still possessed with the kilesas, for describing uddhacca as a mundane state of restlessness and agitation as classified in the five mental hindrances that can occur in any mundane or worldly person? Because this uddhacca is an obsession with the investigation where paññā has gone to an extreme. That's why it's categorised as one of the higher fetters or saṃyojana that also includes māna (conceit) and avijjā, that imposing and resplendent state of knowing inside the heart. This citta is not really in a mundane state of agitation and restlessness but it's restless and agitated from being obsessed with the investigation.

This is at the level of arahatta-magga, the path to arahantship. This is when the arahatta-magga is in progress. As soon as this arahatta-magga becomes fully mature, then the arahatta-phala will appear immediately, the instant when the citta completely cuts off birth and existence. Everything is totally shattered the instant the path merges with the fruit or the arahatta-magga merges with the arahatta-phala. But at this stage, it cannot be considered the complete or perfect Dhamma or the complete work of mental development. Like when you're stepping up from the stairway to the floor of the building, one of your feet is on the stairway and the other is on the floor of the building. This is the instant when the path merges with the fruit. As soon as your other foot is lifted off the stairway and placed on the floor of the building, at that instant you'll have attained the complete or the perfect Dhamma which is nibbāna. When you're lifting your other foot, you're still working. But as soon as you've placed your other foot on the floor of the building, you have completed your work or achieved the total cessation of dukkha and realised the perfect Dhamma. You have achieved the ultimate result.

When you're still lifting your other foot, this is the magga approaching the phala. But when both feet touch the floor, it's described by some commentators only as the arahatta-phala, the fruit of arahantship. In fact, this is also nibbāna because the Lord Buddha had also mentioned this. Had he not done so, then the sāvakas, noble disciples, would have questioned why he didn't mention this nibbāna that immediately follows arahantship. Therefore, with the wisdom of a great Teacher, the Lord Buddha elucidated the four paths, four fruits, and one nibbāna. The magga and the phala, the path and the fruit, are pairs like the arahattamagga and the arahatta-phala. Passing beyond this pair, you can say it's the arahatta-phala, the fruit of arahantship. You can also say it's nibbāna. There is no contradiction here, especially with the one who has attained to this state. Anyone can say anything about it, but he doesn't see any contradiction because he has already realised the ultimate truth. The bhikkhus during the Lord Buddha's time were possessed with the magga and phala. So how can you be possessed with weakness and laziness?



A Lifetime Endeavour

August 15th, 1979

In one of the monastic rules of conduct, monks are forbidden from calling out loudly when they want to get other monks' attention. They should instead signal with their hands because the Lord Buddha wanted them to have a quiet environment to meditate. During Lord Buddha's time, the monks took up meditation as their lifetime endeavour. But nowadays, most of the monks and the laity don't. The Lord Buddha and the noble disciples or *sāvakas* taught only the practice of walking and sitting meditation, the places that were suitable for the meditation practices and the methods used to eliminate the *kilesas*, *taṇhā* and *āsavas*. The main topics of conversation that the monks had during the Lord Buddha's time were the *sallekha-dhamma*, which means cleansing or purifying. It's the cleansing of the *kilesas* from their conduct, speech and thought. They should only be talking about cleansing and eliminating the *kilesas*, because they took up the robe for this purpose and not to accumulate the *kilesas*.

Right now you only have the appearance of one who has gone forth. Originally, going forth was for the purpose of destroying all the *kilesas*, *taṇhā* and *āsavas*. If you believe in this ideal, but are not doing any practice, you'll instead accumulate more *kilesas* and defy the Dhamma-vinaya. As a practitioner, you must strictly adhere to the Dhamma teaching that has been recorded in the scriptures and use it as your guide. The purpose of recording and preserving the Lord Buddha's teaching is to serve as a guiding light for those who are interested in the practice of mental development. Had it not been recorded, you wouldn't know how the Lord Buddha and the noble disciples practised and became enlightened. Nowadays, you only study the scriptures and do not do any practice. All that you have learned are the descriptions of the *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna*. If your goal in studying the scriptures and practising mental development is to become a famous guru, you'll unknowingly accumulate more *kilesas* and reject the goal set for you by the Lord Buddha. You should seriously think about this.

You shouldn't rely solely on your teacher's instruction because it's not enough to make you wise. How do you become wise? You have to do a lot of investigation, analysis and reflection and be always mindful of the sense objects that come into contact with your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and heart. If you don't use your *sati* and *paññā*, you'll never gain any wisdom. The Lord Buddha and the *sāvakas* gained wisdom through their *sati*, *paññā*, *saddhā* and *virīya*. They didn't become wise by being idle and hopeless. When doing walking meditation, they didn't let their mind think aimlessly like the way you're doing, which is no different from people who don't practise walking meditation. *Sati* and *paññā* connect to form a formidable weapon to free your heart from the *kilesas*' oppression. *Saddhā* is the belief in the *magga* and *phala*, and the belief that having faithfully followed the Lord Buddha's teaching, you'll become enlightened. You should always practise with diligent effort or *virīya* to develop your *sati* or mindfulness and investigate with *paññā*. If you always maintain your diligent effort, you'll never get tired of fighting the *kilesas* or be discouraged from developing your *sati* and *paññā*.

The *citta* is the real thing. The body is merely a phenomenon. When you practise meditation whilst walking back and forth without any mindfulness, you're like people who go for a stroll, not like someone who practises meditation. But you're worse than them if you practise walking meditation without any mindfulness. You mustn't walk like that. The Lord Buddha's teaching, which has been recorded in the scriptures, can be very useful for your practice if you reflect on it with your *sati* and *paññā*. However, usually you don't reflect on it but merely chant it like a parrot chirping: 'Precious stone, precious stone...' When you give a parrot a precious stone, it doesn't know what to do with it because it only knows about fruits such as bananas. You're like a parrot because you don't know the perils inherent in the *kilesas*, *taṇhā* and *āsavas* that you're passionately obsessed with and never seem to have enough of. You also don't know the worth of Dhamma which is like a precious stone. That's why you never want to have anything to do with the Dhamma, like applying your diligent effort.

When you do walking meditation, your knees become weak and when you do sitting meditation it seems as if your bones and your body are bursting apart. When you develop *sati* and investigate with *paññā* to remove the harmful *kilesas*, you become weak and discouraged and let the *kilesas* trample all over you and knock you out. All you can think is 'This is hopeless. I have been striving so hard but I can never enter into calm'. So while you're doing walking or sitting meditation, your practice just turns in the *kilesas*' favour because it's being driven by the *kilesas*, not by the Dhamma. So how can you ever become enlightened? This is the way you should reflect if you want to gauge your success or failure. If you think with *paññā*,

you'll know how far you've progressed in your practice. You should think 'Today I have walked and sat in meditation. How were my citta and satipaṇṇā? Did I merely walk like people going for a stroll or sit casually? When people sit casually, it's not as bad as when I sit hopelessly and unmindfully. When I meditate, I should be striving for freedom from dukkha and should always remind myself of this goal'. You mustn't be complacent because there's no reason in this world for you to be so.

The Lord Buddha had always taught you to refrain from acquiring worldly possessions and pleasures because they are like fire. He said that they are all aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā, and are all unreliable, so you mustn't be attached to them. If you cling to them, it'll be like clinging to fire. The correct way to deal with them is to always reflect on their aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā nature. If you're attached to them you'll always be afflicted with dukkha. The intensity of dukkha varies with the intensity of your attachment. There is no other endeavour for you but the practice of sitting and walking meditation. You should always watch your heart with satipaṇṇā if you want to catch the kilesas' tricks and deceptions because satipaṇṇā is an indispensable tool for catching them. With satipaṇṇā you'll always detect the kilesas in whatever form they might appear in the heart, be it rāga or dosa, lust or anger, because the heart is the one who knows and satipaṇṇā is the one who analyses. You have to focus your attention at the heart in order to see the cause and the effect of dukkha. But you mustn't merely wish them to disappear, for this is taṇhā or craving. If you want dukkha to vanish, you'll have to find and remove the cause of dukkha. Otherwise, dukkha will not disappear, but will intensify to the point where you won't be able to endure it. For this reason, it's absolutely vital for you to watch your heart.

I've tried my best to provide you with the opportunity to practise. I'm very protective of you and really care for you. I truly cherish the reclusive life and the meditation practice which I've devoted my entire life to. The results are really satisfying because it released me from dukkha after I eliminated all of the kilesas from my heart with my satipaṇṇā, something not beyond your own ability. I'd really like to see you realise all levels of Dhamma attainments, beginning with samādhi. What is samādhi really like? What kind of calm and coolness? If satipaṇṇā is constantly focused at the citta and observing it, then the citta won't have time to produce any harmful thoughts to hurt you and will eventually enter into calm. When the citta becomes reckless and stubborn, then you must use the various techniques of satipaṇṇā to restrain it because satipaṇṇā is superior to the kilesas. This is paṇṇā develops samādhi. When the kilesas are extremely wild, you must put all of your effort into taming the citta. It's a life and death situation. You must subdue the kilesas with your satipaṇṇā until the citta withdraws inside and calms down.

I can confidently relate to you the experience realised from my meditation practice. When the citta became very reckless with lust or rāga, I had to subdue it with my satipaṇṇā until I was in tears before I could see its harmfulness. When I sat for a long time until the pain became very excruciating, I had to use satipaṇṇā to investigate the body. If I was using a mantra or being mindful of my breathing I had to stop doing it when the dukkha-vedanā attacked with its full force. I had to continually investigate dukkha-vedanā with my satipaṇṇā like two boxers punching each other. You can't afford to be off-guard because when you are, you'll be vulnerable. It's the same way with your investigation. You must probe and analyse until you find and eliminate the cause of dukkha. After you've achieved this, how can the citta's spectacular nature not appear? There is nothing in this world that could be more spectacular than a developed citta. On the other hand, there is nothing in this world that could be worse than an undeveloped citta. The citta is very important because it's the indispensable container for all the different levels of Dhamma, especially the magga, phala and nibbāna. You must, therefore, strive to develop the citta.

When you fast, you should really concentrate on your meditation practice. Your exertion should be more strenuous than it would normally be. Fasting or reducing your food intake is a means of developing your mindfulness, or sati. If fasting suits you, it'll make your practice easier and more fruitful than when you eat normally. If it doesn't suit you, it won't help your practice, because you'll be thinking about food all the time rather than about your practice. When you fast your body will become light, your citta nimble and alert, your mindfulness ever-present, and you will experience no sleepiness. You'll see that your sleepiness comes from eating a lot of food. After fasting for two or three days, there'll be no drowsiness left. You'll sit erect like a post, and your citta will enter into calm very easily. There is nothing to bother your citta. When you develop paṇṇā, it will flow very easily, spinning round and round. Regardless of the Dhamma level you're in, the methods of practice like fasting will always promote your progress, if they suit your temperament. If they don't, they will become a hindrance.

You shouldn't speculate about things that you haven't yet experienced in your heart, like imagining what khaṇika samādhi is like, what upacāra samādhi is like, what appanā samādhi is like, or what the citta's convergence into complete concentration is like. This is just imagination that will lead you away from the heart who is the one to experience and develop them, be it any kind of samādhi. The point is never to speculate

what *khanika samādhi*, *upacāra samādhi*, or *appanā samādhi* are like, other than experiencing the truth of these *samādhis* yourself because this is the correct way to do it. It's like describing what a particular dish of food is like. Whether it's sweet or not really doesn't matter. Even a child who hasn't had any schooling about culinary matters will know if the food is delicious or not when he eats it. It's the same with *samādhi*. You have to experience it by developing it yourself. It doesn't depend on your speculation; that is useless and wastes your time. Be it any kind of *samādhi*, you'll get to know it yourself. You'll know what kind of *samādhi* suits you when you've developed it with your mindfulness and strenuous effort. After you've entered into calm, you'll know what it's like and how to achieve it.

Normally the *citta* likes to think a lot because it's always restless and agitated like a monkey. But when you've developed *sati* to control your *citta*, like when you've continually concentrated on your mantra or any other meditation object, then the *citta* won't have the chance to think aimlessly and will calm down. Whatever kind of calm it may be, you'll know it, as well as the happiness, ease and comfort that accompany it, be it *khanika*, *upacāra* or *appanā*. The important point is never to speculate about them, because it's a waste of time and a hindrance to your meditation practice, especially when you're investigating for the truth. What you've studied from the scriptures or heard from your teacher, are all speculation. If you apply it in your investigation, you'll ruin it and never become enlightened. The *citta* will unknowingly think that it's the truth. Therefore, you mustn't let your speculation interfere with your investigation. If you want to become enlightened, you must always attentively watch your *citta*. You're practising *citta bhāvanā* or mental development. You're not practising for the development of mental delusion. If you constantly study the *citta*, you'll clearly see that the *citta* is the knowingness or the 'one who knows'.

The Lord Buddha had to give about 84,000 different discourses to suit the needs of thousands of his devotees, who are like patients afflicted with different kinds of diseases. Is it practical for a doctor to use only one kind of medicine to treat all of his patients? Of course not. He must have many kinds of medicines to treat his patients. It's the same with the Lord Buddha, who couldn't give just one discourse to all of his devotees. The important point is never to speculate about the *citta*, but to know it from your practice. In order to be firm and stable, you have to be firm in your development of *samādhi* and mindfulness. Your diligent effort is crucial for achieving your *samādhi*, or mental stability, which is vital for the investigation for insight or *vipassanā*. With a calm *citta*, your investigation with *paññā* will be easy because the *citta* won't be distracted with cravings. *Samādhi* is the *citta*'s nourishment that will keep it calm, cool and contented. When you investigate, your *satipaññā* will perform at full capacity and you'll become enlightened. You can take my word for it because I've already experienced it myself.

There are many levels of *paññā*, but you shouldn't speculate about them. *Paññā* will become skilful, quick, alert, sharp and penetrating if it's being continually developed. You must develop *paññā* to eradicate the *kilesas* if you want to achieve the goal of your going forth. You mustn't be unmindful when you do sitting or walking meditation. If you do, you'll unknowingly prostrate yourself to the *kilesas*. All of your thoughts will be manipulated by the *kilesas*. Instead of eliminating the *kilesas*, you'll accumulate more of them. So you must never surrender because you're a fighter. You have to be serious and earnest in your practice. There's nothing more important than the activities of the *citta*. It's here where you'll have to focus your observation.

The two mental components that are constantly active are *saṅkhāra* or mental concoctions, and *saññā* or memory. *Saññā* is much more subtle than *saṅkhāra* because it doesn't have to concoct; it just recollects. It's similar to water that permeates through the ground. *Saññā* will subtly recall knowledges and mental images. Both *saññā* and *saṅkhāra* are *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. If you don't know their true nature and what they are up to, they'll be used by the *kilesas* to deceive you.

You have to be resolute and earnest with your practice. I would really love to see you experience *samādhi* and *paññā* because they are what you've devoted your effort for. The experiences that you've heard from your teachers and fellow practitioners are not your own yet. They are like merchandise in the market that you haven't yet bought because you haven't got any money. All that you can do is look at them. It's the same with the Lord Buddha's experiences like *samādhi*, *paññā*, *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* that you can only admire. Although you might have studied the scriptures a lot, and you're very proud of it, just what have you achieved? All that you've accomplished was to commit the scriptural knowledge into your memory without a single *kilesa* being eliminated from your heart. If you don't practise, you'll never experience *samādhi*, *paññā*, *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* which you've memorised. Please understand this and get into your practice. If you develop *paññā*, you'll get *paññā*.

You mustn't let other tasks distract you from your practice because 99% of them are *kilesas*. When you're not serious and earnest with your practice, then it'll be 99% *kilesas*. If the *kilesas* have 99 weapons,

and Dhamma has only one weapon, you won't be able to fight them. So you must develop lots of Dhamma weapons by practising seriously and earnestly. When you investigate the body, you shouldn't investigate perfunctorily, but investigate for true knowledge and insight. How many times you've investigated doesn't matter. You have to compel the citta to keep on investigating and not allow it to do anything else until you've achieved your goal. This is the way to make the kilesas surrender. When you fight them by putting your life at stake in your investigation for the truth, the kilesas will have to give up because your satipaṇṇā is more powerful than the kilesas. You'll see this very clearly. How can the kilesas be stronger than the satipaṇṇā taught by the Lord Buddha?

When the kilesas are forceful, your satipaṇṇā or the magga, which is the suitable weapon for defeating the kilesas, must also be equally forceful. When the kilesas are less forceful, then the magga will also be equally less forceful. This happens in the early stages of practice, when the citta is restless and agitated. It's like taming a buffalo which will eventually have to surrender to the tamer. It's the same with the kilesas, which will eventually have to yield to your satipaṇṇā and diligent effort. It will become weaker, whilst satipaṇṇā becomes stronger. The citta can then establish peace and coolness as its support. There won't be any restlessness and agitation that are like smouldering fire left inside the heart, like the fire that smoulders the rice husks. You have to extinguish this fire with your diligent effort. When the citta has attained to calm, it will have coolness as its support. This happened to me. The important thing is not to be idle. You must keep on practising. When you sit meditating for calm and samādhi or when you investigate with paṇṇā, you have to do it earnestly.

If you're mindful in your investigation, you'll gradually discover the ways and techniques of removing your delusion and achieving insight. Investigating with mindfulness is crucial for realising knowledge and insight. Whatever you do, you should always investigate and analyse. This is the way of developing paṇṇā. In the beginning stages of developing samādhi, it's very hard. But you mustn't give up. If you do, you won't succeed. If you persist, you'll eventually achieve calm. When you investigate with paṇṇā, you should first investigate the body, your body and other people's bodies, to see that they are living cemeteries. Do you want to live with these living cemeteries? Our bodies are living cemeteries. Are they beautiful? Are they of any real essence? Of course they're not! When you investigate on asubha (loathsomeness) and paṭikkūla (filthiness), you'll find that these bodies are loathsome and filthy. When you investigate on death or aniccaṃ, and suffering, dukkhaṃ, you'll see that these bodies will age, get sick and die. This world is the world of the dead. You're just waiting for your death, like animals waiting in queue to be slaughtered.

Once you're born, you're targeted by death. Death has already laid claim on you, whether you're a man or a woman, young or old. Some will die today, some tomorrow and so on. You have to investigate until you see this truth if you want to develop paṇṇā to impact your heart. You've already been branded by death, but you don't know this, because you're too preoccupied with your pursuit of happiness. You're like the cows and buffaloes that have been branded for slaughter. Aniccaṃ, or impermanence, is constantly putting its brand on you. The sound that arises from this branding can be heard across the universe. That's how loud this branding is if it can be compared to a sound. If you listen, it will break your ears and burst your brain because the effect of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā can shake the whole world. Every part of your body is continually branded with the mark of dukkhaṃ, aniccaṃ and anattā, even when you're sleeping. They never stop. They do it when you think: 'Oh, this food is delicious!' Do you know this? You have to investigate until you're truly impressed by this truth.

Aniccaṃ is impermanence. It's the truth or the law of the vaṭṭa cakka, the cycle of birth, death and re-birth. You must investigate until you can see this clearly. You must take control of your heart because it's your only real possession. Don't pickle it with the brine of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. You must free it from your delusion that makes you cling and crave for the non-essentials that are immersed in the mire of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. What good can you find from things immersed in the mire? Even a solid bar of gold, once immersed in the mire will not look good. The heart is much more precious than a bar of gold. When it's immersed in the mire of greed, hatred and delusion, how can it become precious? You should, therefore, free your heart from the mire of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā that constantly oppresses your heart. When you've seen the truth of anattā, you'll see that there are no people, animals, I or they to cling to.

You should earnestly investigate to see the truth clearly inside your heart and should not oppose the Dhamma teaching because it is the truth. The kilesas and Dhamma will always oppose one another. The kilesas will make your views and understanding differ from the Dhamma teaching and will destroy the Dhamma teaching without you being aware of it. When you have clearly seen the truth, your citta will defeat the kilesas. It will be firm and resolute like a warrior. Your exertion will be very intense; your satipaṇṇā will probe relentlessly until you see all the truth. When paṇṇā starts to investigate, it will first probe the entire world to see without any doubt that everything is all made up of the four physical elements of earth,

water, wind and fire. When you have seen this truth you'll let go of them. After that the scope of your investigation will become narrower because the kilesas and your delusions are fewer.

Satipaṇṇā will now focus on the five khandhas, separating and identifying them. Its goal is to see the rūpa khandha or body as merely a body, the vedanā khandha or feelings as merely the three kinds of feelings of sukha (good), dukkha (bad) and neutral, saṅkhāra as merely saṅkhāra, saṅkhāra as merely saṅkhāra, and viññāṇa as merely viññāṇa. The four mental aggregates or nāma khandha have a similar nature. When you investigate one of them and see its true nature, you'll also see the true nature of the other three. Once you've clearly seen their true nature, how can you not let go of them? You'll let go of them because the reason you've been clinging to them is simply because you didn't know their true nature. The goal of your meditation practice is enlightenment, insight into your true nature, and insight into the nature of the delusion that causes you to cling to aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā.

When you have clearly seen the truth of the five khandas, satipaṇṇā will then probe inside the citta, because there is nothing outside to investigate any more. The scope of the investigation and the kilesas will converge into the citta where the kilesas will be completely eliminated. When they are completely removed, what is left? Gone is aniccaṃ, gone is dukkhaṃ and gone is anattā. Everything is let go of and left as it is. These three characteristics inherent in all conditioned phenomena -- aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā -- are the path to nibbāna. When you've arrived at nibbāna, these three characteristics will lose their usefulness, like when you travel on the road and arrive at your destination, the road that led you to your destination will become superfluous. It's the same with the citta when it travels on the path of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā until arriving at its destination; then these aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā will serve no useful purpose. Your investigation that was spinning like a Dhamma Wheel will stop, because all the kilesas have been destroyed.

This was the endeavour of the Dhamma practitioners during the Lord Buddha's time. They attained the magga, phala and nibbāna in the forests and on the mountains because they practised for the elimination of the kilesas. They knew that wealth and status were lures that would lead them to insanity and knew that the kilesas were the ones that enticed them with wealth and status. What can be more precious than the Dhamma? You should fight the kilesas until you become enlightened. You'll then let go of everything. Wealth and status are kids' stuff, like children's toys. After you've become enlightened, you'll relinquish everything because they are all sammuti or supposition. Enlightenment is the most satisfying result. It's the fruit of your uphill struggle from start to finish, and the fruit of training, disciplining, developing, protecting and nourishing yourself with the Dhamma that you should value more than anything else.

You must consider the practice of mental development to be your most important endeavour and must not do other work or activities just to alleviate your annoyance, as this will only serve to increase your frustration. When the citta has achieved the ultimate goal, it'll be blissful and all problems will come to an end. The practice of mental development will also come to an end. It's not like the worldly undertakings that have no end. You'll do them until you die and carry with you to your next life all of your worries, confusion and misery. You'll never find any lasting happiness, ease and comfort. But if you've accomplished the practice of mental development, you'll lose all your worries. This is anālayo, totally free of worries, because you've left all things as they are, even your body; whatever should happen to it, you'll let it happen. You've already learned the nature of your body and know that it's aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā, just like vedanā, citta and Dhamma.

The Lord Buddha said that you must let go of all Dhammas at the final stage of practice. When you haven't yet arrived at your destination, don't let go of the path yet. But after you've arrived at your destination, you must let go of the path. You must not cling to it. 'All Dhammas' refers here to all the sammuti Dhammas or relative truths. When you've reached the final stage of practice, you'll let go of the path. At this stage, the citta will become very subtle and it'll be totally immersed in the investigation. But when it realises that all Dhammas are anattā, the citta will completely let go of them. After you've passed beyond aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā, what is this state? This isn't sammuti, and you won't describe it because you know it's indescribable. This is the ultimate truth. You can't describe it but you know what it is. You know this is the Great Sage although it doesn't say it is so.



Genuine Progress

August 21st, 1979

Without Dhamma, there can be no genuine progress in the world or in Buddhism. When there is Dhamma, there will be peace and happiness, because Dhamma is selflessness. With Dhamma, you'll see that all human beings are the same, and you'll have loving-kindness, compassion and unselfish concern for the welfare of others. Without Dhamma, you'll put yourself above others. Although you're bad, you'll be deluded into thinking that you're good. That's why Dhamma is indispensable. When a person, a society or a country has Dhamma, there'll be peace. When there is no Dhamma, there'll be strife. When your heart is ruled by the kilesas, it will be engulfed by fire. The Lord Buddha and all the sages of the present and the past never praised the kilesas, *taṇhā*, *āsavas* -- greed, hatred, and delusion -- because they agitate and torment the heart. Who can be wiser than a Buddha? All Buddhas propagate the same teaching. They praise the things that are worthy of praise and censure the things that are worthy of censure. They teach you to let go of the things that you should let go of and to develop the things that you should develop for the sake of establishing peace and happiness within your heart and living a peaceful existence.

If you can let go of some of these things, you'll be more peaceful and have fewer kilesas. If you can totally let go of everything, you'll be completely free from the kilesas and become a noble and superior being. What can afflict the heart if not the kilesas that have *avijjā* as their root? Any behaviour directed by the kilesas can only produce trouble and affliction. The kilesas are troublesome, whilst Dhamma is cool, peaceful and pleasing to the eyes and ears. Dhamma is, therefore, absolutely vital for your well-being. You can always trust Dhamma because it's the truth that has existed since time immemorial and can't be wiped out. There are fewer wise people than there are foolish people born into this world. That is why Dhamma can only appear once in a long, long time. The appearance of the Dhamma, of Buddhism and of the Lord Buddha are the results that follow the enlightenment of a super human being who calls himself Buddha, who through his own efforts and wisdom discovers the Dhamma, the basic principles of the cosmos, which he then presents to the world. After his death, his teaching gradually fades away, due to the powerful influence of the kilesas, *taṇhā* and *āsavas* that encompass the hearts of sentient beings. Eventually they totally forget the Dhamma and let the kilesas do anything they please to deny them real happiness and only bring them sorrow and pain. Such is the way of the world. Now let's talk about yourself.

When you're peaceful, calm and discerning, regardless of where you are, you'll always be cool, because you're protected by the Dhamma. When you're sidetracked from your meditation practice, like being involved with building a new hut, you can become restless and agitated. The Lord Buddha prohibits monks from engaging in any activity that will undermine their meditation practice. For a beginning practitioner who hasn't established any *samādhi* yet, he should avoid a monastery that is under construction or renovation. Don't be inclined to build this and build that. Don't live in a place where people mingle and socialise. You should always seek seclusion and consider your meditation practice as your main undertaking, your lifetime endeavour. You should always practise. This is what the Lord Buddha teaches the monks. For this reason, many monks during the Lord Buddha's time could realise the *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna*. After they heard the Lord Buddha's teaching, they seriously believed it, took up the practice and became enlightened.

It is the heart that earnestly believes and practises that becomes happy. It is also the heart that doesn't believe and doesn't practise that becomes miserable. As a practitioner, you should concentrate all your efforts into your meditation practice. You must not be weak or lazy because you're in the battlefield. Who and where are your enemies? They are the kilesas inside your heart. You have to fully develop *sati*, *paññā*, *saddhā* and *virīya* to oppose and eliminate them. The Lord Buddha said: '*Attā have cittaṃ seyyo*' - it's noble to conquer yourself. To conquer yourself, you have to vanquish the kilesas. Where do you achieve victory, if not inside your heart? This is where your enemies are found. This is where you'll lose or win. But you'll not lose because you'll concentrate all of your efforts into the fight. It doesn't matter if you should die fighting. You'll fight until you win. The place to learn about the cycle of birth, death and rebirth is inside your heart. This is where you'll find out whether your heart will be reborn again or not.

The numbers of births that you've taken up are beyond counting. It is *avijjā* and *kamma* that cause your *citta* to take up birth. You can't choose your birth because it was selected by your *kamma* that was driven by *avijjā*. Neither can you choose to be happy or sad because they are the consequences of your good and bad *kamma*. If you can't control your *kamma*, you can't choose your birth. What is the difference between being imprisoned by the law of *kamma* and the law of your country? There really is no difference. You have

to use this comparison to see the truth of the costs and benefits of your kamma in order to spur you on to meditate. Birth and death are in your citta where you'll have to probe, meditate and become enlightened. Your citta is the creator of your ceaseless cycle of birth and death although you might not know it. But the testimony that attests to this fact is found right in your citta, which you'll eventually realise through your Dhamma practice. The more you meditate and probe, the more subtle your citta will become, and the more you'll see clearly the perpetrator of your birth.

After the Lord Buddha became enlightened, he was able to see and reveal to others the truth of saṃsāra, the cycle of birth, death and rebirth that all sentient beings have to go through. For this reason his Dhamma teaching is known as the svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo - the well-taught Dhamma, because not a single word of his teaching ever deviates from the truth. You're the one who takes up birth, disease, ageing and death. Why don't you know this? Because there are blinding influences within your heart that totally block and obscure this truth. You have to reveal them through your meditation practice. You have to catch the chief culprit in your citta that leads you to be born and to die again and again. This is paticca sammuppāda or dependent origination - avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇam, etc. Avijjā is the principal driving force that propels you to take up birth in the various realms of existence and to experience the fruits of your kamma. The Lord Buddha said that it is the kilesas that drive you to do good and bad kamma. After you have committed these kamma, the fruits of these kamma will then follow you.

When I say kilesas, I mean avijjā, the master of all the kilesas, who drives all sentient beings to do kamma and to experience the fruits of their kamma by going through the cycle of birth, death and rebirth called vaṭṭa cakka. This is similar to an ant that runs around the edge of a basket - it just keeps running round and round, similar to your running round and round the edge of the vaṭṭa cakka. You'll never know this if you don't practise mental development. Even if you study the entire Tipiṭaka, the Buddhist Canon, you'll still be in the dark. The Lord Buddha and his noble disciples became enlightened by practising mental development, not by studying and memorising the Buddhist Canon. The truth and what you commit to memory are two different worlds. Your memories will always fool you. For instance, if you talk about England, if you have never been there before, you can only imagine what it's like. But after you've been there, your imagination will be replaced by what you actually see. This is what is meant by seeing the truth. When you see the truth, your imagination will disappear because your imagination is fake. What you have studied is also fake. When you come across the truth in your practice, the fake will disappear. This is the way of learning about the citta.

There are no limits to the citta's involvements. The oceans and rivers have shores and banks. But the citta is all over the universe and saṃsāra. Therefore, you have to reign in your citta with sīla, samādhi, paññā, saddhā and viriya, in order to see the citta's true nature. You have to diligently eliminate from your heart all the kilesas, tanhā and āsava that thrust you to be born and die. Then your citta will be more obvious, the knowingness will be more distinct, and you will clearly see the cause of your wandering around the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. You will see how much of this cause still remains in your citta. Though it might not propel you to take up birth in the lower realms of existence, you know you will still have to take up birth. You will know this as this cause becomes more subtle and as you advance in your practice. Eventually you will completely eliminate this cause from your citta, which will then be detached from everything including the five khandhas of rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa, which the citta has been responsible for. They will no longer affect the citta. The citta will just be the citta, 'the one who knows' will just be 'the one who knows', and the khandhas will just be the khandhas. The rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa will just be sammuti or conventional reality.

When you've investigated with paññā, you'll sever everything from your citta. You'll cut off rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa and all physical and mental objects. You'll sever the body, which is merely the element aggregate, a composition of the four elements of earth, water, air and fire that you see as human, animal, man and woman, and are totally immersed in this delusion and confusion. A very thin membrane of skin can totally blind and obscure your eyes. Paññā must penetrate this skin so that you can see the true nature of the body: that it is paṭikkūla or filthy, and merely a composition of the four elements. How can you have attachment, affection and aversion for the elements? When you see this clearly, you'll let go of the body. Concerning vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa, they are merely conditions that arise out of the citta, but they are not the citta. With paññā, you'll be able to restrain them and detach them from your citta. This is the way to cut off births and existences. When you have totally severed the five khandhas and destroyed avijjā from your citta, the cause of birth will be completely eliminated. Your citta will be like cooked rice that will not grow any more. It's only good for eating. Your citta will now be only suited for experiencing the bliss of freedom or the vimutti sukha, and the state of purity. It's no longer suited for taking up any more birth. You'll know this within your heart. In the Āditta-paryāya Sutta or the Fire Discourse,

the Anatta-lakkhaṇa Sutta or the Not-Self Discourse, and the Dhamma-cakkappavattana Sutta or the First Discourse, the Lord Buddha proclaims thus: 'From this moment onward, there is no more birth for me, for this is my last birth'. He also proclaims in the Not-Self Discourse: *vusitaṃ brahma cariyaṃ*, the work of totally eradicating the kilesas has now come to an end. This is the most noble quest that requires your total effort, your *satipaṇṇā* and your life. This endeavour has now come to an end. You've now destroyed all of the kilesas. *Kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ*, the task of letting go of all things and the task of mental development has been accomplished. *Nāparaṃ itthattāyāti*, there is no further work to do. *Pajānāti*, you have now become enlightened. *Vimuttassamim vimuttamiti ñaṇaṃ hoti*, as soon as you've achieved freedom, the realisation that you've achieved freedom will also appear simultaneously.

This is the bhikkhu's endeavour. This is how the practitioners during the Lord Buddha's time accomplished their task. Their mission was to develop their *citta* and investigate the *kammaṭṭhāna*, starting with the first five parts of the body: *kesā*, *lomā*, *nakhā*, *dantā*, *taco* and then to all the other parts. These are the objects that you'll have to investigate. How do you do it? First, you should develop *samādhi* or calm with a mantra like *Buddho* or any other object of concentration. Then you should investigate the thirty-two body parts to see their true nature. Are they clean or filthy? You have to keep on probing, especially the skin that wraps around the bones. You can't see the bones. All you can see is the skin with which you are obsessed and which deludes you. You have to look through this skin to see its content. This is how you should investigate after you've established calm with a mantra, which is like chopping up a piece of meat when you repeat *Buddho*, *Buddho*, *Buddho*, or *kesā*, *kesā*, *kesā*, or *nakhā*, *nakhā*, *nakhā*, or *dantā*, *dantā*, *dantā* or *taco*, *taco*, *taco*. This is the way to concentrate the *citta*'s strength. When the *citta* is distracted, it has no strength.

It's like grass, when tied together into a bunch, is more difficult to break apart. If you want to cut it, you'll have to chop it several times. On the other hand, you can easily break apart a single blade of grass. It's the same with the *citta*. When it is scattered, it doesn't have any strength. It has to be concentrated with a mantra. When the *citta* has acquired strength, it will be calm and cool and ready for you to investigate with *pañṇā* for true knowledge and insight. Starting from *kesā*, *lomā*, *nakhā*, *dantā* and *taco*, you'll proceed to the rest of the thirty-two body parts. You'll go over these parts thoroughly until you see the body's true nature, both of yourself and others. You'll see that they are all the same. This is the bhikkhu's task. This is the way the Lord Buddha taught you to develop *pañṇā*.

When you investigate *vedanā*, *sañṇā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*, your *satipaṇṇā* has to be sharper in order to see their true nature and let go of them. You'll also have to investigate the kilesas that have gathered inside the *citta* and let go of them. After you've let go of all of them, there will be nothing else to let go of, because all the kilesas have been destroyed. There is nothing else for you to do. All the kilesas will by then have been totally eliminated. First, you've to destroy the kilesas that cling through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. Then you must destroy the kilesas that are attached to your body, *vedanā*, *sañṇā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*. Finally, you'll have to eliminate the kilesa that is embedded in the *citta*, which is the main culprit. After you've achieved this, then it is *vusitaṃ brahma cariyaṃ*, the end of your endeavour. This is the bhikkhu's endeavour. Please listen and take it seriously.

Don't be sidetracked and led astray to do other tasks because you won't get rid of the kilesas that way. The only way to do it is the practice of mental development, the way that I have described to you here. There is no other task that is more noble than the practice of mental development. Though it is the most difficult task, it yields the loftiest benefits. Please set up your determination to concentrate on your investigation. Don't relent wherever you are. As far as staying with your teacher is concerned, this is not certain, because you live in the world of *aniccaṃ* or impermanence. There is no certainty in the world of *aniccaṃ*, because sooner or later there will definitely be separation from one another. What you have learned from your teacher and deeply embedded in your heart, you must not lose or deviate from. Wherever you go, you must strictly adhere to the *Dhamma-vinaya*, the teaching and the discipline. You have to be earnest and serious, not apathetic and indecisive or lacking in principles. No matter how difficult your task might be, you must shoulder it.

You have to muster your faith in the enlightenment of the Lord Buddha, and in your ability to become enlightened and free from *dukkha* by your diligent effort, in order for you to become strong and powerful, persistent and forbearing. Then your *samādhi* and *pañṇā* will steadily grow, because they can't do otherwise. Don't ever dismiss from your mind this undertaking if you want to see for yourself the attainment to arahantship, something that you've heard happen to the practitioners during the Lord Buddha's time. No matter how much you might remember these stories, they can't do anything to the kilesas. The kilesas are not affected by what you can remember, but they are by your practice. For example, the study of *kesā*, *lomā*, *nakhā*, *dantā* and *taco* that your *upajjhāya* (preceptor) taught you at your ordination is *pariyatti*, the

theoretical understanding of Dhamma obtained through reading, study and learning only, but they must now be investigated in your practice to have any result.

After you've thoroughly investigated them, you'll gain insight into their true nature. This is *paṭivedha*, the direct, first-hand realisation of the Dhamma. It can't be otherwise. Nothing can prevent the *citta* that has strictly adhered to the Dhamma teaching from realising the *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna*. The only things that obstruct the *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* are *dukkha* and *samudaya*. Neither time nor place can obstruct them. Only the *kilesas*, *dukkha* and *samudaya* can. For this reason, you have to develop *sati*, *paññā*, *saddhā* and *virīya* to remove the *kilesas* that obstruct the *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna*. Then your attainment to the *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* will not be anywhere else but right within your *citta*. It is your *citta* that will become enlightened, let go of everything, vanquish the *kilesas*, *taṇhā* and *āśava* and become supreme, exalted and transcending the world. All you have to do is accomplish your mission.



Mental Development

August 28th, 1979

The Buddhist religion was founded by the Lord Buddha, who was renowned for his extraordinary energy, forbearance, attainment, wisdom, moral excellence and teaching prowess. His Dhamma teachings are perfect, truthful, worthy of respect and of following in our practice, in every respect without exception, because they are all essential for the development of moral excellence and are crucial for the gradual and total elimination of all the harms and poisons created by the kilesas. It is like clean water washing away filth. Your citta has been dirty since time immemorial but you don't know what makes your citta dirty and how long it has been dirty. The filth that makes your citta dirty is thoroughly blended with your citta like an arrowhead that is completely embedded in the flesh. These impurities and the citta become one and the same thing and it's not possible for you to differentiate them through ordinary reflection. The only way to find out is through the practice of citta bhāvanā or mental development.

The Lord Buddha became enlightened and purified his citta with Dhamma practice and became the world's object of respect and admiration. It was the same way with the sāvakas or noble disciples. When the Lord Buddha expounded his Dhamma teaching to the first group of sāvakas, the five ascetics, he taught them how to remove all the filth that was embedded in their cittas. The sāvakas listened for true knowledge and insight. They listened with mindfulness and contemplation as they were all advanced practitioners. They were ugghaṭitaññu, capable of becoming enlightened very quickly, because they had all developed satipaṇṇā to contemplate on the Dhamma teaching and they had already established a very high degree of samādhi or calm within their cittas to the point that made them think that they had already attained nibbāna. This is because this state of calm and coolness is totally devoid of the world.

But these five ascetics couldn't see the subtle kilesas that were still embedded within their cittas. When the Lord Buddha taught them the Four Noble Truths, they could then see the true nature of all the sabhāvadhammas or phenomena both inside and outside the citta. When the Venerable Añña Koṇḍañña had achieved the first level of enlightenment, he uttered the following: 'Yaṃ kiñci samudaya dhammaṃ sabbantaṃ nirodha dhammaṃ' – 'Whatever comes into being, must cease to exist'. The Venerable Añña Koṇḍañña was profoundly moved by this insight. The Lord Buddha responded by saying: 'Aññāsi vata bho Koṇḍañño!' - 'The Venerable Añña Koṇḍañña has now understood!', 'Añña Koṇḍañño tveva nāmaṃ ahoṣīti' – 'From now on you shall be called Añña Koṇḍañña'. Listening to the Dhamma teaching is a prerequisite to practice and enlightenment which is why the Lord Buddha had to teach the Dhamma to the five ascetics.

When the Lord Buddha practised he did it with his utmost ability, to the point where he passed unconscious before he could become enlightened. When he taught the Dhamma to the five ascetics, he told them how he himself had practised because Dhamma practice was indispensable for their own enlightenment and this became the hallmark of his teaching. He didn't become enlightened by only studying the scriptures like today's Buddhists who think they can become enlightened by studying alone. While listening to the Lord Buddha's discourse the five ascetics also pondered on what he was elucidating and became enlightened right there and then. This is the way of studying, practising and becoming enlightened at the same time.

Earlier on, I was talking about the citta being contaminated with all sorts of filth and impurities because it hasn't been purified yet. It's so polluted that it's not possible to make out what the citta really is. For this reason you have to practise, because by practising you'll wash away all the impurities from your citta. Starting from the practice of sīla or morality, you'll gradually move up to samādhi, which is essential for getting inside the citta before you can develop paṇṇā. Samādhi will gather all the kilesas in one place to temporarily stop them from contacting the visible objects, sounds, aromas, flavours and tactile sensations and consequently stop them from bothering the citta, which will then become calm and cool. Paṇṇā will then purify the citta by investigating the various phenomena that the citta becomes entangled with.

What visual object is the citta obsessed with? Is it the image of a man, a woman or another visual object? Paṇṇā will have to investigate the image the citta is attached to. Why must the citta be obsessed with a beautiful body that causes it to become restless and agitated? Because this body has an alluring power and the citta's perception is delusional. Paṇṇā has to investigate and analyse this body. Why must the citta cling to it? Before, when the citta hadn't seen this body, it didn't have any affection for it. But after having seen it, the citta becomes agitated and restless. This body now sticks with the citta all the time. What is the reason for this? Such is the way of enquiry. In order to free the citta from this obsession, you have to disas-

semble this body, starting from the hair of the head, to the skin, the flesh, the sinews, the bones and all the internal organs.

You have to investigate thoroughly with paññā, repeatedly, many many times, over and over again. Then you must see its demise, becoming a bloated corpse. Even when it's still alive, this body is full of filth. As far as beauty is concerned, this is the fabrication of the kilesas, the masters of deception that deceives the citta to see ugliness as beauty and become obsessed with it. This is how the deception works. Therefore, paññā has to correct this illusion. What is the cause of this deception, this perception of beauty? You must probe and examine in order to see the truth. Beauty isn't the truth, neither is loveliness or attractiveness. You shouldn't be obsessed with them. They are not the truth. They are the kilesas' deceptions. The Dhamma is the truth that can be used to correct this illusion right there and then. You'll see that these bodies aren't really pretty or good-looking. It's just a very thin sheet of skin that wraps up this body that we call man and woman. It's not even as thick as a sheet of paper and yet the kilesas deceive you to see it as good-looking. The deeper you investigate, the more filth you'll see. This is the truth. Where is the beauty that the kilesas create? There is no such thing! The kilesas just fool you. You have to see it this way because this is paññā.

You have trusted the kilesas and suffered for too long already. There are many kinds of kilesas. There are those that fool you to see things as beautiful and have affection for them. There are those that mislead you to have incorrect perceptions that arouse your sexual desire which burn your heart. The kilesas are fiery and deceptive. It is, therefore, necessary to eliminate them with Dhamma, which is the truth. Concerning beauty - where is beauty? Take a good look. You must look at the truth which is the Dhamma. Your perceptions must not go against the truth if you don't want to be led by the kilesas, which oppose the Dhamma and yourself. You have to thoroughly and repeatedly investigate your body with satipaññā, starting from the skin and going inwards. You'll see filth and impurity inside your body. You won't find any beauty or find a man or a woman in this body to love, because there is no such thing. It's only an illusion to deceive you. It's not the truth.

This is what the body looks like when you're alive. Now let's see what it looks like when it gets old and dies. Even the body of a young man or woman, when it dies, it's full of filth and stinks. There's no worse filth than that of a dead body that becomes bloated and decomposes. This is the ultimate stage of paṭikkūla or filthiness and the ultimate Dhamma that will absolutely eliminate the perception of beauty. You have to investigate to see this filthiness with paññā, which is the Dhamma weapon that will totally destroy all of your wrong perceptions, which are the kilesas' creation. You have to clearly see this truth. How then will the citta not withdraw itself from this incorrect perception? It can't do otherwise. This is the technique of paññā.

Concerning sound, this is just the sound of wind coming from the mouth, both the good and the bad sounds that you hear, like when you're criticised or praised. If you don't interpret them, they'll be just the sounds of wind that flow in and out of your ears. When you hear good music, it is good only because your kilesas interpret it to be so and you enjoy it. This is an illusion created by the kilesas when in fact it is just the sounds of wind, like the sounds of wind blustering the leaves. They come and go.

When you investigate the nature of visible objects, sounds, aromas, flavours and tactile sensations, you only have to investigate one of them, choose the one that you like. When you see its nature, you'll see the nature of all the others as well. You also have to investigate the nature of your own body so that you can compare it with other bodies. You'll find that they are all the same. They are full of paṭikkūla or filth and are just body parts. The body is not I or mine, not worth clinging to. If you cling to the body because you think it's your body, then you'll be nurturing the kilesas to become stronger and hurt you more. This is the way to contemplate with paññā. What has been briefly discussed here is the way of developing paññā and the way of purifying the citta.

Whatever object the citta becomes entangled with, you must sever it by investigating its true nature. You have to ignore the kilesas' commands. Following the kilesas' orders is deceiving yourself. Opposing the kilesas' biddings blow for blow is Dhamma. Investigating relentlessly and consistently an object's true nature is paññā. By alternately investigating and resting in samādhi, you'll make the citta calm, firm, peaceful, cool, courageous, sublime and magnificent. You must relentlessly investigate, because it's absolutely vital for achieving freedom from dukkha. You must not speculate about the magga, phala and nibbāna. The practitioners during the Lord Buddha's time realised the magga, phala and nibbāna in the mountains and forests. How did they practise? They practised the same way that I have just told you, by strictly following the Dhamma teaching without the slightest deviation, because the Dhamma teaching hasn't deviated from the truth which would make it impossible for you to eradicate the kilesas with it.

This Dhamma teaching is suitable for the elimination of all the kilesas and the purification of the citta, because it is the majjhimā paṭipadā, the middle way of practice, which is suitable at all times - past, present and future. Apart from this Dhamma teaching, nothing else can do the job. There isn't a single kilesa which is superior to this Dhamma teaching. During the Lord Buddha's time, every practitioner used the majjhimā paṭipadā as the means of destroying the kilesas, all of them, from the Lord Buddha down to all the sāvakas or noble disciples. The kilesas were the same kind: greed, hatred and delusion. You have them in your citta and you must apply the Dhamma in your investigation. You have to depend on the Dhamma weapon, satipaṇṇā, to fight your opponent like in the Lord Buddha's time. The kilesas will definitely disappear from your citta just like they did in the past.

It's definitely not the time and place that will eliminate the kilesas. The kilesas will only disappear from one place, which is the citta, at the time when satipaṇṇā has been developed to maturity. It's in the citta that the kilesas will be eliminated. You have to earnestly put in your effort. You, who have taken up the robe, have to be tough, forbearing and persevering like the Lord Buddha, your teacher and the founder of Buddhism. The Lord Buddha was well accomplished. To whom did the Lord Buddha pass on his accomplishment and diligent effort? He passed it on to you. Diligent effort is viriya. Chanda is delight. What do you take delight in? If you take delight in the magga, phala and nibbāna, then you must take delight in your diligent effort. Chanda is to take delight in the task that will free you from dukkha, which is your goal. Viriya is the application of your energy into the practice. As the Lord Buddha's follower, you have to develop the four iddhipāda or factors of accomplishment: chanda or delight, viriya or diligent effort, citta or concentration and vimamsā or reflection. You need these four factors of accomplishment to become enlightened. If you, a Buddhist monk, can't develop diligent effort, then who in the world can?

Buddhism is most vital. It's your duty as a Buddhist monk to develop Dhamma in your citta with the aid of your sati, paṇṇā, saddhā and viriya. How can you not do this? Is this really possible? You have to be earnest and serious in your struggle with the kilesas. You have to really fight them. You mustn't be frivolous because that wasn't the way the Lord Buddha and the noble disciples fought to free themselves from dukkha. You mustn't be weak, lazy, careless or cut corners. You have to be genuine, earnest and mindful with whatever task you do. Then when you meditate, your citta will be also genuine, earnest and mindful because you have trained yourself this way. This is the way to do it if you want to acquire the magga, phala and nibbāna, because they are in your citta that is now surrounded by the kilesas. When you have totally eliminated the kilesas from your citta, you won't have to ask where nibbāna is because nibbāna is just a name.

The term 'kilesas' refers to the defilements in the citta. Paṇṇā is wisdom or ingenuity, the indispensable instrument for the elimination of the kilesas which are extremely cunning. But they can't be smarter than satipaṇṇā, saddhā and viriya which are the most vital Dhammas. You have to be mindful, firm and resolute with your practice, by always concentrating your citta on the present, the here and now. Don't speculate about the past, the future, where to get rid of the kilesas, or where to attain the magga, phala and nibbāna, which can't be found anywhere else but in the citta. The kilesas themselves never speculate. That's why they manage to dominate the hearts of all sentient beings. When you practise to eliminate the kilesas, why do you have to look for the time and place? This will only amuse the kilesas. You have to probe right here. Let's do it even if it's hard and painful. If you're not dead then when you exert yourself, you'll have to experience some dukkha, whether doing a mundane or spiritual task. Every task demands effort. You know this very well because you've worked before. You must not obstruct your practice by thinking that it's too difficult. You should think that to be free from dukkha is the most satisfying outcome. This is the practitioner's crucial way of thinking. You must be firm and resolute.

If you haven't developed any samādhi yet, you must develop it now. When the citta goes outside, satipaṇṇā must pull it inside. The citta can be controlled. If satipaṇṇā can't control the citta, nothing in this world can. Satipaṇṇā is stronger than the kilesas and the citta. The citta only knows. It doesn't know good or bad, coarse or subtle, superficial or profound. It doesn't think. It just knows. It's like an insane person who does whatever he likes or whatever the kilesas tell him to do, because he doesn't have any satipaṇṇā to look after himself and be responsible for his actions. All that he has is just the knowingness that is surrounded and controlled by the kilesas that make him behave in such a pathetic manner. An insane person doesn't have any sati or mindfulness and paṇṇā or common sense. But you are not without any satipaṇṇā. You have satipaṇṇā just like other ordinary people. You are normal. But you want to develop your satipaṇṇā beyond the ordinary level for the purpose of eliminating the kilesas. You want to develop it up to the level of mahāsati and mahāpaṇṇā that will perform automatically, quickly, efficiently, skilfully and smoothly. This is the result that will follow if you keep on practising.

In the beginning stages of practice, it'll be an uphill struggle. Eventually, your satipañña will become skilful, as a result of your persistent practice. This satipañña will eliminate every kind of kilesa that is found within the citta. Neither the time nor the place can prevent the Dhamma practitioner from attaining freedom from dukkha. Sandiṭṭhiko or enlightenment here and now is not reserved only for the Lord Buddha. It is for everyone who practises the Dhamma correctly. This is true in the past, in the present and in the future, because the Dhamma teaching that I have instructed you is for the purpose of eliminating the kilesas, and for achieving the magga, phala and nibbāna. The Dhamma is never outdated. It is the kilesas that are outdated because they obstruct all sentient beings from gaining true happiness. As soon as the Dhamma enters the citta, it will immediately make the citta calm and cool because it is not outdated! With the Dhamma, you will never be outdated, especially the Dhamma of satipañña that is ever present and capable of destroying all the kilesas.

Please understand that every aspect of the Dhamma teaching is designed for the removal of the kilesas. So you must not take your practice lightly because this is not the way to practise. It will slow your progress or destroy you due to your wrong understanding of the Dhamma. You should earnestly practise. Don't be distracted by or have any interest for anything in this world because they are all aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. You have experienced them through your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind long enough to know that they are aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, anattā and shouldn't have any interest in or curiosity for them left in your mind. You haven't experienced any Dhamma yet. So you should now develop an interest for the Dhamma practice and experience its results. You'll then see which is better, the Dhamma or the world.

If you don't know an object's true nature, how can you let go of it? You have to know first before you can let go. If you know a little, you'll let go a little. When you have experienced the results from your practice, you'll see that they are a lot more valuable than the things that you're attached to. When you have experienced the ultimate result, you'll let go of everything. Nothing in the three realms of existence is as valuable as a purified citta that's absolutely freed from dukkha. When you've discovered the Dhamma to be a lot more superior to the things that you're attached to, you'll gradually let go of them. When you've reached the ultimate Dhamma, you'll let go of everything. You'll also let go of the citta. How do you get there? By persistent practice. When you take up the robe, you have a goal. You should practise to achieve that goal. You mustn't be weak in willpower, courage or vitality. Sati is absolutely indispensable. You mustn't forget this. I have always told you this. You need pañña occasionally, but you need sati all the time. The only exception is when you fall asleep. If you can develop your sati to be ever-present, your practice will rapidly advance.



The Dhamma Teaching

September 5th, 1979

The Dhamma teaching is the most perfect, flawless and ideal teaching, unequalled by any other teaching in both the means and the end results. This is because the teacher is the Lord Buddha who is the supreme embodiment of excellence that all sentient beings can take up as their role model and follow with their utmost ability. His diligence, endurance, resourcefulness and the ability to discipline himself and his noble disciples rank above all other human beings. In striving, he kept on exerting himself until he accomplished his task. In enduring, he sometimes fell unconscious. But he never relented in his endeavouring but excelled in every task until he became enlightened. His enlightenment made it possible for others to become enlightened as well. All they have to do is follow his Dhamma teaching which is suitable for the four distinct groups of his followers: bhikkhus or monks, bhikkhunīs or nuns, sāmaṇeras or novices, upāsakas or laymen and upāsikās or laywomen.

The term *sāsadā* means supreme teacher, who is wise in the way of teaching. He knows what kind of Dhamma is suitable for what type of person. He doesn't teach anything which is beyond the ability of his students to practise and achieve. Teaching monks differs from teaching laypeople and the general public. However, he taught the laypeople who practised like the monks the same way he taught the monks, with Dhamma geared specifically to suit each individual practitioner's ability and attainment. He would explain until his students were fully satisfied and had their doubts cleared away. Apart from teaching human beings, he also taught the devatās or spiritual beings. Have you seen any devatā? Or is it a matter of choosing what you want to believe based on your opinions which are contaminated with the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsava?

There are internal and external phenomena, coarse and subtle. The phenomena that the Lord Buddha taught ranged from coarse to very subtle. There are coarse phenomena such as visual objects, and there are very subtle phenomena like the spiritual beings that we have heard and read about from the scriptures. The three divisions of the Pāli Canon, the Suttas or discourses, the Vinaya or the monastic discipline, and the Abhidhamma or higher Dhamma, are all true. There isn't a single chapter or verse in the Pāli Canon that is not true. Thus, it can't be said that some of the teachings of the supreme teacher are true and some are false. This is because the Lord Buddha teaches only the truth. If you're going to trust someone, you can completely trust the Lord Buddha.

When the Lord Buddha taught the devatās, he also instructed them in the Dhamma suitable to their abilities and attainments, just like the way he taught human beings because Dhamma is universal. Whether it's the citta of a brahma - an inhabitant of the non-sensual heavens of form or formlessness, a devatā, or a human being, they are just the citta with varying degrees of subtlety or coarseness. It's the citta that takes up these various forms of existence. Some life forms are less morally developed than others, such as animals. The Lord Buddha, therefore, couldn't teach the animals because they couldn't distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, heaven from hell, or the kilesas, taṇhā and āsava. Although they are committing these deeds daily, they don't know the morals of their actions. But with human beings, they can distinguish and learn the various aspects of Dhamma from the Pāli Canon. Although not everyone is capable of doing this, there are some who can study and practise the Dhamma from the three divisions of the Pāli Canon which contain the complete and faithful collection of the Lord Buddha's teaching. Everything in the Suttas, the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma is true.

It's the citta that will study, practise and experience the Dhamma. Whilst some cittas can perceive various paranormal phenomena due to their ability of extrasensory perception, some cittas can only perceive phenomena through the senses. For this reason, the Lord Buddha has to select the appropriate Dhamma to teach each citta based on its ability and attainment. The Dhamma teaching is, therefore, an ideal teaching for the world to follow in every aspect, such as the application of diligent effort, endurance, perseverance, austerity, thrift, mindfulness, resolve, discipline, and wisdom for mental development and mental stability. It is suitable for both the monks and the laity because Dhamma is a universal teaching that benefits everyone.

As a monk you should diligently practise for the elimination of the kilesas, taṇhā and āsava, with the support of your endurance and perseverance. You should concentrate your satipaṇṇā to search for the kilesas which are deeply embedded within your citta, so that they can be totally eliminated. This task can be accomplished with persistent satipaṇṇā and diligent effort which a layman also can apply in his daily activity. It will make him calm, peaceful, and stable, not drifting or making a mess. There is no other teaching

as perfect and ideal as the Lord Buddha's teaching that will benefit the monks and the laity - especially the Dhamma practitioners who follow it faithfully. What did the Lord Buddha teach? What is a monk's duty? What is the purpose of going forth? These are the primary questions that you should ask.

During Lord Buddha's time, people went forth for the purpose of eliminating the kilesas which are harmful to the citta and cause it to take up birth in the various realms of existence. It's in the citta where you'll find good and evil, right and wrong, happiness and suffering. That's why the Lord Buddha taught you to dig deeply into your citta which is the most important object. When the body dies, it decomposes, but the citta doesn't decompose. The citta doesn't die but you don't and won't know this unless you practise. That is why the Lord Buddha exhorted you to practise. What is the purpose of taking up the robe? It's for eliminating the kilesas with the Dhamma practice. What is the duty of a monk? During Lord Buddha's time, a monk's duty was to practise walking and sitting meditation.

If you're resolute in destroying the kilesas due to your perception of the harm of the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, you have to develop sati, paññā, saddhā, and viriya to full potential. They must be developed concurrently. If the citta is constantly nourished, how can it not develop? It will definitely grow and excel. The citta of the Lord Buddha and his noble disciples were also immersed in the kilesas for a long time like your citta. Their kilesas and your kilesas are the same kilesas. How did they manage to get rid of their kilesas and achieve freedom from dukkha and become the world's refuge? The term *Buddham saraṇam gacchāmi* – I take refuge in the Buddha - doesn't refer to just the Buddha of our era. It refers to all the Buddhas who became enlightened and taught Dhamma to the world.

The term *Dhammam saraṇam gacchāmi* – I take refuge in the Dhamma - refers to the absolute truth discovered by all the Buddhas. Dhamma is the natural principle that has always existed since time immemorial. The term *Saṅgham saraṇam gacchāmi* - I take Refuge in the Saṅgha - refers not only to the noble disciples of our era, but to all the noble disciples of all eras who have risen from the cesspool of the kilesas, taṇhā and āsava. How did they manage to cleanse themselves to become noble ones and refuges for all sentient beings? It was due to their diligent effort.

There are four essential mental faculties that the Lord Buddha exhorted you to develop. The first is chanda, which is delight or taking pleasure in your duty of eliminating the kilesas. Viriya is persistence or diligence. Whether it is a physical or mental task, there must always be diligent effort and perseverance. Citta is attentiveness, being observant of your task. If you pay close attention to your task, it will flow smoothly and flawlessly. Vimamsā is extremely important because it is paññā. You must be thorough and circumspect with your task, physical or mental, and especially with the practice of mental development. You have to develop paññā to its fullest potential by always contemplating the three characteristics of all phenomena, which are aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. You must see them in this light in order to release your attachments or upādāna, which are deeply embedded within your citta and liberate your citta from dukkha. Therefore, these four mental faculties are absolutely vital.

You must not be heedless, but must always be vigilant and mindful. You should never think that the kilesas and you will ever be good friends. They are like fire. Can you get intimate with fire? If you really investigate, you'll see that they are like fire. That is why the Lord Buddha called them rāgagginā, dosagginā, and mohagginā or the fire of lust, hatred and delusion. If they are not harmful, why would he call them fire? The Lord Buddha never lied nor exaggerated. He only spoke the truth. The problem with you is that you never look at the truth, but always deny the truth unknowingly. This is the work of the kilesas, which is similar to fire. When you touch the fire, knowingly or not, it will burn you. That is why you have to be very careful and must not expose yourself to the kilesas, because they are your enemy and they are like fire.

Wherever you are, whether you're standing, sitting, walking, or lying down, you must always meditate and establish mindfulness because it's your duty. You have to take the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha as your refuge. Ultimately, you have to put your life at stake for the freedom from all dukkha. This is your undertaking. You are abundantly provided with the requisites of living by the lay devotees who have faith in your endeavour and hope to make merit by supporting you. You are not lacking any of these requisites. What is lacking is your resolve and commitment to fight and eliminate the kilesas, taṇhā and āsava. After you've accomplished your mission, you can then teach others. This is the most important point. If you can't teach yourself, how can you teach others? When you are not yet enlightened, your teaching won't be comprehensive and true. You should only teach after you've become enlightened. Then every aspect of your teaching will be true and your students will really benefit.

This is the way of Dhamma which has never done anybody any harm. It's the kilesas that harm everybody. That's why you have to concentrate all your efforts to destroy them. Whether you're standing, sitting, walking, or lying down, you should always establish mindfulness. Be vigilant and mindful! Sati or mindful-

ness is crucial for your Dhamma practice. You need sati to direct your investigation with paññā. Sati and paññā must always work together as a team.

The greatness of the Lord Buddha is due to his ability to reveal to others the supreme Dhamma. So when he teaches this Dhamma to the world, the world finds it to be priceless. However, when this Dhamma is heard by immoral listeners, it will appear worthless. You must, therefore, prepare yourself to be a proper vessel to receive the Lord Buddha's Dhamma, by developing sīla (morality), samādhi (mental stability) and paññā (wisdom) until achieving enlightenment and vimutti - freedom from dukkha. You'll then become truly great without the need to have someone to vouch for you. How can you not become truly great after you have acquired this supreme Dhamma?

How can your citta which is always agitated, restless and confused find any peace and happiness? It's because the kilesas keep manipulating it to see only trials and tribulations rather than peace and harmony. To you, the world appears gloomy and bleak when in fact it's not so. This is due to your delusion, and that is why it is necessary for you to develop your sati and paññā, so that you can become wise and intelligent. You should establish samādhi which is your citta's foundation, and should earnestly and mindfully develop samādhi with the method that is most effective for you. The Dhamma is a serious teaching. The Lord Buddha took the Dhamma very seriously. So why are you fooling around? Is this the way to follow the Lord Buddha? The Lord Buddha seriously practised and became enlightened. If you playfully practise, you'll become foolish. You'll never become enlightened. All that you will acquire are more delusions and deceptions.

If you earnestly practise, you'll definitely achieve results. Samādhi isn't beyond your ability. It's the kilesas that agitate your citta by manipulating and inciting it. Therefore, it is necessary to concentrate your sati, paññā, saddhā, and viriya right at the citta and practise relentlessly. How then can your citta become agitated? Sati must force the citta to totally concentrate on the task at hand and forget about everything else, such as life, death and time. You should only be aware of what you're doing, like repeating a mantra or watching your breath. Don't let your citta think about other things that will agitate it, which will happen if you're absent-minded. You should pretend that at this moment the world doesn't exist, although it actually does exist, by not thinking about it. Let there be only the citta and the meditation object. Then the citta will stay put and will definitely become calm. I have experienced this before. I'm not bragging. I have never seen any undertaking to be as difficult as the practice of mental development.

From the start when I tried to establish some calm and tranquillity, I found the citta to be a lot more restless and agitated than a monkey due to the influence of the kilesas over the citta. I had to replace the kilesas with the Dhamma so that the Dhamma could become the citta's master and had to concentrate all my efforts into the practice, sometimes putting my life at stake. If I was going to die, so be it! Having been born, I am destined to die. It's the same with everybody whether he or she practises or not. Nobody is exempted from the cemetery. Who can live forever in this world? If I had to die fighting the kilesas, I was ready. It was either I die or become enlightened. When my practice started to home in on the kilesas, I was able to subdue the kilesas and establish calm, as well as making the citta bright and cool. It was an incredibly amazing and wonderful experience that enormously enhanced my faith in the Dhamma teaching as well as my diligence, forbearance and perseverance to fight and completely vanquish the kilesas.

This is how it will be when you really exert yourself. When it is the time to make the citta go into samādhi, you must solely concentrate on developing samādhi. Don't develop paññā at this time. When you want to establish calm, you must do only that. You can do this by investigating the body. This is called going on a kammaṭṭhāna sight-seeing trip. The term kammaṭṭhāna means the basis of action or task. The most suitable objects for this task are the thirty-two parts of the body. If you investigate the body, going from top to bottom, having sati or mindfulness directing your investigation, the citta will eventually become still. This is one way to develop samādhi.

Now let me tell you how to develop paññā. When the citta has gained enough calm, it will be contented, not hankering for anything. You have to direct this calm citta to investigate the various aspects of Dhamma, like the thirty-two parts of the body. You should investigate your body as well as other people's bodies. You should look for paṭikkūla, filthiness, or aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā, because they are the truth. We all know how filthy the body is. The Lord Buddha did not lie to us. But the kilesas prevent us from seeing the body's filthiness. They are the masters of deception. Is there a person in this body? Look carefully. You have to look the way the Lord Buddha instructs you to look. Is there beauty in this body? It's actually full of filth, inside and outside. It's also full of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā.

But this isn't the picture the kilesas have drawn up, which portrays the body to be beautiful, good-looking, and to be I and mine, which contradicts the Dhamma teaching. The kilesas always contradict the

Dhamma teaching. If your thinking and understanding are like this, then you're contradicting the Dhamma. You must turn around your understanding to conform with the Dhamma, by seeing the body as filthy or paṭikkūla. You must investigate until you see the truth of this filthiness. Then it can be said that you are seeing the truth. You should also investigate the body to see it as aniccaṃ (impermanence), dukkhaṃ (suffering) and anattā (the negation of an entity, self, or person in this body, which is just made up of the four elements of earth, water, air and fire). For truly, there is no such thing as a self, an animal or a human being. This is the truth.

When you see this truth, the kilesas will disappear from your citta. Your delusion will gradually disappear as the truth gradually appears. First, you'll see the truth of paṭikkūla. Then you'll see the truth of the four elements. When the body is just elements, how can you be attached to it? If the body isn't good-looking, how can you be attached to it? It's like excrement along the roadside. Who would dare step on a pile of excrement? This is how you should see the body in order to free your citta from this delusion. The citta will stay clear from the body like you stay clear from a pile of excrement. These are the means of removing the kilesas which are like thorns that irritate and annoy your citta and prevent you from having any peace and happiness. Although you may think that you're practising mental development or bhāvanā, actually, most of the time you're making yourself restless and agitated by doing something else.

The time when you have any sati or mindfulness is only brief, but the time when you don't have any mindfulness and are being dragged away by the kilesas to do something else must be at least 95% of the time. So how are you going to find any tranquillity, happiness and coolness, when 95% of the time belongs to the kilesas and only 5% belongs to the Dhamma? Is this enough to oppose the kilesas? You must, therefore, develop sati and paññā to a very high level. You have to be really earnest with your investigation of the body so that you can see its true nature with your own method of investigation. You must not be lazy when it's time for you to develop paññā and just wait for your teacher's advice or expect him to show you all the details of practice. The teacher will only point out the major points. You have to come up with the details using your own sati and paññā. Whatever methods of investigation you've devised will be your genuine possession.

When you investigate, you will truly see the body's true nature and will eliminate your delusion. The more you truly see, the more your delusion will disappear. When you have completely seen the body's true nature, your attachment to and delusion of the body will be uprooted. The citta will then come inside. This is the investigation of the body. You have to investigate it so that you can see its true nature very clearly. You can investigate your own body or someone else's body. They are the same as long as you investigate for the purpose of uprooting your delusion and for insight. It will always be correct, because it's magga, the path. But when you incorrectly investigate your own body or someone else's body, it will be harmful to you. The purpose of your investigation is really crucial.

Sammādiṭṭhi, right view and sammāsaṅkappo, right thought are the components of paññā, which is the Lord Buddha's teaching that is designed for eliminating the kilesas, attachments and delusions. When you are skilful in your investigation with paññā of both your own body and other people's bodies, you'll not be deluded by them. So how can the citta become attached to them? The reason why the citta is attached to them is because it is deluded. It doesn't see the body's true nature. Even after you've listened to your teacher, it will be merely imagination. Your citta hasn't yet seen the truth, in other words the truth hasn't yet penetrated the citta. The only way to experience the truth is to practise mental development. The results that appear will be true knowledge and true insight that will enable the citta to let go. Whatever object you're attached to, for example your body, after you've seen its true nature, you'll let go of it.

After you've realised the truth of your body and are clearly impressed by the truth of the elements, the truth of paṭikkūla and the truth of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā, your citta will definitely let go of the attachment to your body. You'll clearly see this without having to ask anybody about it. You'll see the harm of your attachment, and how oppressive and burdensome this attachment has been for you. How then can your citta not relinquish your body? It will definitely let go. Your attachment to your body is now neutralised by your paññā and investigation. Your citta will now come inside because it has relinquished your body. You're now liberated from your attachment to your body.

Your next targets of investigation are vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa, the four nāma khandhas or the four mental aggregates. There are three kinds of vedanā or feelings: good, bad and neutral feelings - sukha, dukkha and upekkhāvedanā - which are in the body and the citta. Saññā is memory or recognition. Saṅkhāra is thinking about all sorts of things, past, future and present. Viññāṇa receives or acknowledges the sense data, like when the visual objects come into contact with the eyes and the sounds come into contact with the ears. When these sense objects disappear, the acknowledgement also disappears. This is

viññāṇa. They are merely mental phenomena. There is no self or essence in them. Vedanā is just vedanā, sukha is just sukha, dukkha is just dukkha and neutral feeling is just neutral feeling. There is really no essence in them. They are just phenomena.

When you've investigated up to this point, how can your citta not see the truth? It's your deluded citta that keeps thinking that dukkha-vedanā is harmful because it's used to thinking in this manner and make itself miserable. When you've investigated with paññā these three vedanās - sukha, dukkha and neutral - you'll see that they are aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. It's the same with saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa. You'll relinquish them just like you did the body. You'll no longer have any attachment for any body or any feeling - good, bad or neutral - with the exception of those feelings in the citta, that you haven't yet relinquished, which are also good, bad and neutral feelings.

Saññā is memory or recognition. Saṅkhāra is thinking which continually arises and ceases, like flashes of lightning. Viññāṇa also arises and ceases. It arises just so that it can cease. It doesn't arise for any other purpose and not for any entity, self, people or animals. It just arises and ceases. What essence is there in any of them? When you've seen their true nature, you'll relinquish them. You'll let go of vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa, which are merely mental phenomena and are not the citta. Although they might appear in the citta, they aren't the same thing, like men and women who live together yet you can tell them apart. You'll know beyond any doubt that vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa, are not the citta. This is the knowledge that arises from practice. But you have to investigate in the manner that has been discussed here. When you've let go of them, there won't be any attachment left.

Destroyed are the paths used by the kilesas, which are the chief culprits that are deeply embedded in the citta. There is now no way for the kilesas to come out of the citta, because they can no longer use vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa as their paths. Neither can they use visual objects, sounds, smells, tastes and touch, for they all have been destroyed by paññā. Now you can see very clearly that within the citta there is just the citta and the kilesas. The kilesas are no longer attached to rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra or viññāṇa. They used to hide behind these five khandhas, claiming them as I and mine. When sati and paññā have finally rounded up the kilesas into the citta, the citta must now be the investigation target for sati and paññā. You no longer have anything to do with rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa. However, you still have to use the arising and ceasing of saṅkhāra as the means of getting to the genuine kilesa, which is avijjā.

At this point the knowingness will stand out prominently from the khandhas. You'll see this very clearly. This is the time when you'll really get to know the citta. Although avijjā is in the citta, you won't know it, because avijjā is very subtle, smart and clever. When you first get to this stage, you won't know that this is avijjā, if you don't have an enlightened teacher to point avijjā out for you. You'll think it's a genuine gold bar, when in fact it is not. You'll now become enamoured with this citta, which has converged to become extremely bright and magnificent. After you've let go of everything else, you now become attached to the citta and think that the citta is all alone by itself, not knowing that there is a tiger lurking inside it. This tiger is avijjā. Even the automatic sati and paññā or mahāsati and mahāpaññā can still be deceived by avijjā's charms because avijjā is the king of the three realms of existence.

There isn't a single kind of kilesa that can be more subtle and clever than avijjā. The coarser manifestations of avijjā are the kilesas of lobha, dosa, and moha - greed, hatred and delusion. Even with these coarser kinds of kilesas, you can be deceived by them. If you were not deceived by them, how could you become so greedy, so hateful and so deluded? This is because you think they are valuable and a natural part of you. For this reason, they are all over the world of saṃsāra. If you know how dangerous and harmful they are to you, then what is the use of being greedy, hateful and deluded? It's the same with the citta that is being deceived by itself. This deception is on the most subtle level. It is, therefore, necessary to use paññā to investigate this phenomenon, in the same way that you investigated rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa to see its true nature. You have to observe its activity or movement. If it is sammuti, even at the most subtle level, there'll still be activity. This activity will expose the very subtle characteristics of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā of this very subtle phenomenon.

You have to keep on investigating with sati and paññā until you fully and clearly see its true nature. When you do, this phenomenon will be completely destroyed. There will be nothing left behind including the citta's magnificent brightness, bravery, obsession and attachment. All that remains is the natural knowingness which is different from the knowingness tainted by avijjā. They are as different from one another as the sky is from the earth or stones from diamonds. This will be the final result of your practice. This is the ultimate freedom and the total destruction of the kilesas, the cause of suffering, birth, ageing, illness and death in the various realms of existences. But it's kamma that causes you to be born in a higher or a lower realm, and to have happiness or sadness. Avijjā is the primary cause, and kamma is the secondary one.

Avijjā incites you to make kamma. Once you have done kamma, you'll have to bear the results of kamma called kamma vipāka. These are the causes of ceaseless rounds of birth, death, rebirth and suffering.

Like the Lord Buddha and all the sāvakas, you have to probe and analyse the citta, because it's the one that takes up birth, ageing, illness and death. Why do you have to wait for them to reveal this truth and teach it to you? Why are you not capable of learning it yourself? If you don't believe in them, who else can you believe in? If you only believe in yourself, you'll remain sinking in the pool of dukkha. When will you ever transcend this pool of dukkha that is influenced by birth, ageing, illness and death? If you don't believe the Lord Buddha, who else can you believe? You have to believe in him by doing the investigation. You will then see clearly the citta's involvement with the past and the future, and with all the things that cause you to take up birth, ageing, illness and death in the various realms of existence. Even if you take up birth in the higher realms of existence, it's still an existence, it's still sammuti or relative truth that has dukkha embedded within it. The intensity of this dukkha corresponds to the realm of existence.

You have to eradicate avijjā, the real creator of existence, from the citta with the power of sati and paññā. You have to completely eliminate it. Then you'll see for yourself whether you'll have to take up birth and die again or not. You'll know this. How did the Lord Buddha get to know it? He got to know it by practising mental development, not by memorising the scriptures. He became enlightened by practice. You have to practise until you truly see and know avijjā. Then it will be permanently destroyed. How then can there be any more birth or existence when the principal cause of birth has been totally destroyed, as you can see it very clearly with paññā? There is nothing more left behind. All that is left is the purified citta. You will also know that you haven't disappeared. How can you disappear when you know? This is the natural principle. This purified citta is the absolute truth. How can you annihilate the purified citta? This is merely speculation. You have to see this absolute truth yourself.

The Lord Buddha could teach this absolute truth because he had discovered it. It's not beyond the ability of your citta to also discover this absolute truth. You have to probe and search until you find it. When you do, all of your trials and tribulations will completely vanish. The questions concerning your future: what kind of birth you'll take up, good or bad - will all disappear. As for the present: you know at all times what it is like. You know there isn't any attachment left because all the kilesas have been entirely eliminated. The purified citta is not attached to itself, because there are no kilesas left in it. If the citta still has kilesas, it will still have attachment. The intensity of attachment corresponds to the intensity of the kilesas which will always create attachment. If they are still in the citta, they'll cause the citta to attach to itself. When you have completely eliminated them from the citta, there'll be no attachment left. What is left is the purified citta which is permanently freed from all forms of attachment.

This is sandiṭṭhiko, or visible here and now, that is constantly challenging you to experience it from the day of the Lord Buddha's enlightenment to the present. The Dhamma is never outdated. It is the majjhimā paṭipadā, the Middle Way or the right path to enlightenment, beginning with sammādiṭṭhi and ending with sammāsamādhī. It is sandiṭṭhiko or self-evident. You'll see it yourself because it's inside your citta and the way to achieve this has already been taught by the Lord Buddha and his noble disciples. This is the core of the Dhamma teaching, the core of practice. You have to practise following this Dhamma teaching, which the Lord Buddha called the magga, the path to enlightenment, the tool to permanently eliminate dukkha and the kilesas.

You must really exert yourself in your practice and must not relent or be lazy like a pig. The Lord Buddha didn't teach the pigs and the Dhamma teaching is not pig's feed. The Lord Buddha had to go through fire and hell to become enlightened. He taught the Dhamma so that others could also become enlightened. You should, therefore, faithfully follow the Dhamma teaching and totally commit yourself to the practice to see if it's true or not. That's all that you have to do. The kilesas are sharp and clever. Nothing in this world can be sharper and more clever than the kilesas, but when they dominate you, they make you foolish. That is why they are the world's rulers. It's the kilesas that rule the vaṭṭa cakka or the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Don't ever think that it's something else. If you want to see this clearly, you have to dig into your citta in the way that I have just told you. You'll see it in your citta. After the kilesas have been eliminated from your citta, who'll be the ruler? There'll be no ruler because you've realised absolute freedom. Please be resolute and earnest with your practice.



Watching Your Thoughts

September 10th, 1979

You mustn't think the practice for the total removal of the kilesas from your citta to be too hard for you, because that would be contrary to the Lord Buddha's Dhamma teaching that teaches you to exert yourself, endure and persevere. This kind of thinking is the work of the kilesas which have been opposing the Dhamma teachings from time immemorial. When you start to exert yourself in your practice, they will oppose the Dhamma and make you weak and discouraged. They will come up with various tricks to make your citta weak and irresolute in order to keep you under their control. You, as a Dhamma practitioner, must be constantly mindful of your thoughts to see if they're opposing or following the Dhamma teaching. This is the crucial aspect of your practice. You have to always be rational and always watch your thoughts or sañkhāra.

There are two kinds of sañkhāra. The sañkhāra that opposes the Dhamma teaching will destroy you, the truth, and the Dhamma. They are samudaya, the origin of stress or suffering. The sañkhāra that follows the Dhamma teaching will destroy the kilesas. They are magga, the path of practice leading to the disbanding of stress or suffering. You have to always watch your thoughts that your citta constantly generates. It is similar to a football that is being kicked back and forth. How can your citta remain still? It's constantly being surrounded by the kilesas, which are like football players that keep kicking your citta to constantly think. It is, therefore, necessary to apply the Dhamma teaching with your strenuous exertion, endurance and perseverance to correct the harm done by the kilesas. If you can't persevere and endure, then you're not totally committed to your task. If you don't strive, then you're not following the Lord Buddha, your teacher.

To be a good human being, you have to strive with your diligent effort to faithfully follow the Dhamma teaching, because this is the right kind of endeavouring. If you have to endure pain to achieve it, you must willingly put up with it. You're born in a world that is full of pain and you're in the midst of it. It's not possible to separate yourself from this pain, especially the emotional or mental pain which is a lot more painful than the physical pain. Your mental pleasure and pain are more profound than your physical pleasure and pain. In fact, the body never generates any pleasure. It only generates pain, when it becomes ill. When it's not sick, it doesn't produce any pleasure. It only generates pain when it becomes sick, and the pain can be extremely excruciating. If you haven't practised any mental development before, you'll be consumed by this pain. There'll be two kinds of pain happening at the same time: the physical and the mental pain.

Mental pleasure and pain are very obvious and profound. When you experience emotional pleasure, it will make you joyful and happy, whether it's mundane or spiritual. I can't really say that the body produces any pleasure. To me, it only generates pain. When the body is normal and healthy, it doesn't produce any pleasure at all. But when the bodily pain appears, it really shows itself. The intensity of pain corresponds to the intensity of the illness. The citta then loses its mindfulness and clings to the body due to its own delusion. This is like trying to lift a mountain and roll it over. How can this be possible? The true nature of the body, which is aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā, is all over the body. It's a lot greater than a mountain. How can you defy it? You should instead investigate to see the body's true nature. The citta will then be able to free itself from its attachment to the body and free itself from the physical and mental pains.

As a practitioner, you have to constantly investigate and analyse and always watch your citta, which will become your most valuable possession after it has been trained and developed. If it hasn't yet exhibited any worthwhile or exceptional capability, it's because it's being covered with the defilements of greed, hatred and delusion. For this reason, it's necessary to practise mental development with your utmost ability and energy to cleanse them away. The citta is the one that takes up birth, ageing, illness and death, the one that ceaselessly wanders in the saṃsāra vatta, and the one that experiences pleasure and pain. It's this citta that will excel after it's been purified to become the absolute truth and be completely free from all worries. The past will converge into the present. The future will also be clearly seen in the present. This purified citta will be complete, perfect, contented, most sublime and will have no craving for the past or the future. Therefore, the citta should be relentlessly and diligently trained, developed, cleansed and purified until it becomes a pure citta.

Sati or mindfulness is absolutely vital. I have said this many times before. In all of the Dhamma talks that I have given, I have always emphasised sati, because it's indispensable for your practice. Whatever you do, if you have no sati, you will fail, especially in your practice. Sati is absolutely necessary. You have to be vigilant, careful and cautious, constantly maintaining your sati until it becomes sampajañña. Sati means mindfulness. When you continually establish mindfulness, it becomes sampajañña. This is the second level

of sati. The third level is the automatic or always-on sati. When you get to this level, you don't have to establish it, because it's ever present. From the time you wake up to the time you go to sleep, you will never be absent-minded and leave your citta exposed to the kilesas to attack it. That's why it's called automatic sati, or during the time of the Lord Buddha, mahāsati.

mahāsati and mahāpaññā are inseparable. You'll see this in your practice. As soon as sati appears, paññā will follow immediately behind. Both of them will be tracking the saṅkhāra that thinks and conceptualises, not to mention the visual objects, sounds, aromas, flavours and tactile sensations that come into contact with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, which are coarser phenomena. The citta's thinking won't be able to slip away from this automatic sati that will become aware as soon as the citta starts to think. Automatic paññā will follow right behind, curbing and restraining it right away, except when the citta is investigating for insight and detachment. Paññā will let the citta continue investigating.

At this stage, whatever appears in the citta will immediately disappear. As soon as a thought appears, it will immediately disappear, just like the visual objects, sounds, aromas, flavours and tactile sensations that come into contact with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. You can't eliminate them, all you have to do is to know their true nature and be detached from them. It's the same with the five khandhas. Eventually, sati and paññā will learn the true nature of saṅkhāra, which is very subtle, and saññā, which is even more subtle. They're extremely subtle because they are mental phenomena or nāma-dhamma. As soon as they arise, sati and paññā will know right away as a result of the continual development of sati and investigating with paññā, which will gradually become more skilful without any doubt.

This is the path traversed by the Lord Buddha and his noble disciples in freeing themselves from dukkha. This was the way they practised. They never became discouraged or relented in their exertion. Therefore, you, who are the Lord Buddha's followers, who practise mental development, who have taken up the robe and who are striving for freedom from dukkha, must faithfully follow this path. You must not be discouraged or relent. You must face up to any kind of dukkha as you strive to gradually eliminate the kilesas from your citta. We are all subjected to dukkha, because this is the world of dukkha, the world of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. Wherever you are, you can never escape from experiencing the aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā of the body or the citta. You are not shielded from the aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā, so how can you not experience dukkha? Even when you're not exerting effort in your practice, you'll still have to undergo dukkha. So it's better to experience dukkha while you're exerting effort than to suffer while you're doing nothing, which doesn't do you any good. As a practitioner of mental development, you must really exert and commit yourself to the practice.

The magga, phala and nibbāna are in your citta. You mustn't think that they are somewhere else. The dukkha in your citta is much more excruciating than the dukkha in your body. What is samudaya? It is craving for sensuality, craving for becoming and craving for not-becoming. Where does it appear? It appears in the citta. Its source is in the citta. It uses the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind as its tools. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the physical and mental phenomena that the citta is attached to. Find out why the citta is obsessed with them. If you're attached to the body, then you must analyse the body until you see clearly its true nature, lose your obsession for it and detach from it. What are the bodies of men and women really like? You have to look at the hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones and the other internal organs, starting from the outside and then going inside. You have to look at the truth.

You must constantly and relentlessly investigate with your sati and paññā these thirty-two body parts until their true nature is seen. You must not blindly investigate, because this is not the way the Lord Buddha and the sages investigated. After you have seen the body's true nature, your delusion and attachment to the body will be eliminated. What's the use of clinging to them with your delusion? This is the way to investigate. I'm demonstrating this method of investigating the body as an example. You have to adapt it to suit your preference. You can either investigate your body or someone else's body. This will not be wrong, because it's magga, the path to the cessation of dukkha. When you're attached to someone else's body, you will love or hate it; this is samudaya, the origin of dukkha.

The most important part of your practice is the application of your diligent effort. You must not speculate about the magga, phala and nibbāna or about the time and place that you will become enlightened. When the kilesas spring into action, they pay no attention to the time and place. They are in your citta, where you have to focus your attention. The kilesas are like fire that must be extinguished whenever they appear. Don't be concerned with the time and place. Stress and the origin of stress are in your citta. Stress is a mental condition while the pain in your body is a physical condition. Samudaya, the origin of stress is a mental condition. It is kāma-taṇhā, craving for sensuality, bhava-taṇhā, craving for becoming and vibhava-taṇhā, craving for not-becoming. Having been born, you don't want to die. How is that possible? This is vibhava-taṇhā, craving for not-becoming or craving for that which does not exist. These three kinds of cravings are in your citta.

Nirodha, the cessation of stress, is the product of magga. This cessation of dukkha is a gradual one, corresponding to the strength of the magga, the eightfold path consisting of sati, paññā and the other path factors that will gradually eliminate the kilesas. Nirodha, the cessation of stress that is created by the kilesas, will gradually appear. When the magga becomes stronger, more kilesas will be eliminated. You'll see the kilesas being eradicated from the citta as you do sitting or walking meditation. Satipaññā will constantly and relentlessly keep on eliminating the kilesas, except when you take a rest, or when you go into samādhi. This is the only time when satipaññā of this level will not be working. But as soon as you stop resting, satipaññā will continue on working, constantly attacking the kilesas, taṇhā and āsavas until they're entirely removed from the citta.

Therefore, you should diligently keep on developing satipaññā to gradually eliminate the kilesas from your citta until you get to the point where you'll have to search for them. These are the very subtle kilesas. When satipaññā becomes very powerful, the kilesas will cower and go into hiding. But wherever they hide, they will be discovered by satipaññā that is constantly searching for them. Eventually, they will all be destroyed. The kilesas are very overwhelming in the beginning stages of practice. Look at all the visual objects and sounds for example. They are all over the world. You're attached to them because you're affected by them. You're affected by the good and the bad sounds, the sounds of praise and criticism. You're also attached to the aromas, flavours and tactile sensations. For this reason, the kilesas are said to be all over the universe.

But when you investigate, you'll see that it's the flow of your thoughts that is attached to these sense objects by your mistaken or unfounded opinions or ideas. After you've investigated and seen their true nature, the flow of your thoughts will withdraw into the citta. The scope of your investigation that encompasses the entire world will become narrower. It was the kilesas that expanded the scope of your investigation. You have to round up the kilesas into the five khandhas, by letting go of all the sense objects with your satipaññā. After you've done this, you won't have to investigate the visual objects, sounds, aromas, flavours and tactile sensations any more, because you've seen their true nature and let go of your attachment. Why do any more investigation when you already know what they really are and are no longer attached to them or have any mistaken opinion about them? The one who has attachment and unfounded ideas about them is the citta, which has now disengaged from them and let go of them. So what is the use of investigating them any more?

The investigation will now turn to the body, which is one of the five khandhas. You have to investigate to see its true nature. You can investigate any part of the body that you like until you see the three characteristics of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. You can investigate any one of these three characteristics, because it will be like investigating all three of them, since they are all interrelated. When you have seen with paññā the true nature of any individual part of the body, you will have seen the rest of the body. Then how can you be attached to this body? What is the use of being attached to the bones, skin and flesh? Is it really an animal or a human being? Is it really I or mine? The flesh is just flesh. The bones are just bones. The sinews are just sinews. The skin is just skin. This body will eventually become bloated and decomposed. So how can this rotting and bloating body be you? How can it be I or mine? It will eventually disintegrate into the four elements of earth, water, air and fire. How can it be I? If it's made up of the earth, water, air and fire elements, why do you take it as yourself? You have to investigate until you see it very clearly with your citta. The Lord Buddha called this kind of seeing true paññā.

It's the same way with pain. To investigate dukkha-vedanā or bodily pain, you have to be fearless and daring. Wherever it arises, that's where you have to continuously and mindfully probe. If you have to die, let it happen. This world is a cemetery, a world of birth and death. If you should die whilst sitting in meditation, let it happen! There is no need to have the other monks chant the Kusalā Dhamma or wholesome Dhamma for you, because you are right now developing the Kusalā Dhamma yourself. So why bother the other monks to do it for you when you can do it yourself? You must investigate the nature of pain. Don't be afraid. No matter how severe the pain might be, you must not wish it to go away. You must really investigate to see the truth. You have to clearly see the face of pain, see it as it really is. You have to see pain as just pain, because it's nothing more than that. You'll then see the citta that is being entangled with this pain.

You must investigate until you see the citta is just the citta, pain is just pain and the body is just the body. They're just as they are, separated from one another. When there are no mistaken or unfounded opinions or ideas about the body, the pain and the citta, you'll see their true nature. When you see them just as they are, then the citta won't be troubled or shaken. No matter how severe the pain might be, you won't have any qualms, because you've already understood it with paññā. You'll see more clearly the nature of feeling as paññā moves deeper into the citta. Notice, for instance, sukha-vedanā or bliss. When the citta becomes

very subtle, there'll mostly be bliss, which will stand out very distinctly. You must see the true nature of this bliss.

You mustn't think that pain is the only form of stress, because if you are attached to bliss, this is *samudaya*, the cause of stress. You have to analyse until seeing this clearly. You probably have never heard before that attachment to bliss is a cause of stress. The *kilesas* that create this stress are called *samudaya*. When the *citta* becomes attached to this mental bliss, this is *samudaya*. You have to investigate with your inexhaustible *paññā* to see this clearly. *Paññā* knows this subtle kind of bliss and also knows this subtle kind of stress.

The investigation of the four mental phenomena or *nāma-khandas* - *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* - can be done with any one of the four phenomena, because they all have a similar nature. It isn't necessary to investigate all four. But the phenomenon that you're investigating must be live, happening now. When you're investigating *vedanā*, you'll also be investigating *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*. After you've repeatedly investigated, you'll be able to detach from them, just like you've detached from the body. You have to investigate all three feelings, good, bad and neutral until you stop clinging to them. You'll then also stop clinging to *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*, which perpetually arise and cease. How can you consider them to be a self, a human being or an animal? They're just phenomena that arise and cease in the *citta*. This is seeing with *paññā*.

You have to keep on investigating until the *kilesas* run out of places to hide. When their hiding places, which are the visual objects, sounds, aromas, flavours and tactile sensations, have all been destroyed, they will then hide behind the five *khandhas*. So you have to search for them in the five *khandhas*, and destroy them with the *tapa dhamma*, the fire of *Dhamma*, beginning with the body. When you have investigated until seeing the body's true nature, you'll realise that its nature is like the sense objects, and see that it's made up of the four elements. How then can you become attached to it, when it's just a phenomenon? When you see this with *paññā*, you'll immediately let go of it.

Saññā, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* are just phenomena that continuously appear and disappear. That's the way they are, and they don't know what they are. It's you who incorrectly define them and become attached to them. When *paññā* has investigated until their true nature is clearly seen, you'll let go of them. You'll let go of *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*. What you haven't let go of yet is the *citta*. The *kilesas* now only have the *citta* under their control. They can't go outside because all the exits have been blocked. They can no longer exit through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, because they've been blocked by *paññā*. They can no longer exit through the *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*, by assuming them to be I or mine, because they have also been blocked by *paññā*. The *paññā* of this level is the automatic *paññā*.

When the *kilesas* have no other place to go, they go back to their nest from where they rule the *vaṭṭa cakka*, the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, or the *vaṭṭa citta* which still revolves around the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Do you understand? The *kilesa* inside this *vaṭṭa citta* is *avijjā*. All the rest of the *kilesas* have been neutralised. All their exits have been blocked. All that is left to them is the *citta*, where you'll have to probe. This is where the king of the *kilesas* resides. *Paññā* must now concentrate all of its investigating prowess at the *citta* to reveal the *aniccam*, *dukkham* and *anattā* hidden in the *citta*, just like the way it investigated all the other phenomena or *sabhāva dhammas*. The only difference is that this one is more subtle than all the other *sabhāva dhammas*.

You must not cling to the *citta*. Should it be destroyed, let it happen. You must now treat the *citta* like a football and kick it very hard. Should the *citta* be crushed by your investigation, let it happen. Don't cherish it. You must kick it hard. Whatever is *sammuti* or conjured into being by the *citta* is *aniccam*, *dukkham* and *anattā* and will naturally disappear. The purified *citta* will not be tainted with *aniccam*, *dukkham* and *anattā*. It will be separated from everything. This *citta* has attained to freedom. It's right here. The *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* are realised right here. You don't realise them at that place or at that time, which is mere speculation and a waste of time. You must now concentrate your investigation right here. The first Noble Truth, *dukkha sacca* and the second noble truth, *samudaya sacca* that shroud the *citta* are in the *citta*. The fourth Noble Truth, the *magga*, the tool that eliminates the *dukkha* and *samudaya* is also right here. It's *sati*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. *Nirodha*, the cessation of *dukkha*, is the outcome of *magga*. When you've eliminated *samudaya*, *dukkha* will cease. The cessation of *dukkha* is called *nirodha*.

When the time comes for total elimination, you mustn't leave behind any trace of *sammuti* or anything conjured into being by the *citta*. If the *citta* should be destroyed because it can't withstand your scrutiny, let it be. But the *citta* won't be destroyed. It is *avijjā* or *sammuti* or *aniccam*, *dukkham* and *anattā* that will be eliminated. The Lord Buddha said: You have to let go of good and evil. You have to do it right here in the *citta*. It was here where the Lord Buddha became enlightened, terminated rebirth, eliminated the *kilesas*, *taṇhā* and *āsavas*, and became noble and the world's greatest teacher. It was the same way with all the noble

disciples. They became enlightened by following the Dhamma teaching, which is the only thing that the kilesas are afraid of.

That's why when you practise, the kilesas will always oppose you, resist you and hypnotise you to make you weak. If the kilesas are doing this to my students, it will be a cause for concern. There are many of them here and they are increasing every day. I really am worried about their practice. When there are too many students the quality of practice will be diluted. When there are very few, it'll be highly concentrated. You must not relent in your practice. If you want to eliminate the kilesas and want freedom and nibbāna, you must always look at the kilesas as your enemy. You also have to closely watch your citta. If you do this, you won't be disappointed. Your citta has always been the right location to do your practice, because the kilesas are in your citta and are all harmful. Only the Dhamma teaching can neutralise the kilesas. Nothing else can, because the kilesas are not afraid of anything else. That's why you have to strive in your practice, be vigilant and mindful of the kilesas that will resist the Dhamma teaching and destroy your practice.



The Four Requisites

September 18th, 1979

If you are a genuine Buddhist monk, your goal should be enlightenment. This was true for nine out of ten monks during the Lord Buddha's time. In the Pali Canon, there are many stories about the enlightened disciples who left their home and their possessions to become monks, because they saw nothing more important than enlightenment. They came from every social status: kings, princes, aristocrats, wealthy men, merchants, commoners, paupers and outcasts. The Lord Buddha didn't care which class his followers came from because he was full of compassion for all beings. It's also true with his enlightened disciples. They weren't conceited or arrogant, which is the nature of the kilesas. All the disciples had their hearts set on enlightenment and faithfully followed the Dhamma teaching.

Some of them were kings and princes with lavish lifestyles. Their four requisites of living - food, shelter, clothing and medication - were of the highest quality. When they became monks, they didn't take with them their old lifestyles. This was true with the Lord Buddha and his relatives. All they had were the four requisites of a monk, which depended on the generosity of donors. Sometimes there were plenty, sometimes very few, sometimes sophisticated and sometimes simple. It was all up to the donors. But they were happy with whatever they received, because they were faithful to the Dhamma teaching, even before they became enlightened. For the commoners and merchants who were used to a hard life, it was no problem for them. Those who were used to living in luxury and easy circumstances and had to abandon them were not deterred by the hardship. They willingly took up the monk's lifestyle. This is how a real monk should be.

When you go to live in the forests and hills, there aren't many amenities you can take with you. You just have to make do with what you can find. I used to wander in the hills and forests myself, so I know what it is like. You get from the donors what they have, what they use and what they eat. There is a huge difference between living in the town and living in the forest regarding the living requisites. So I can imagine what it was like for the Lord Buddha and his disciples, who usually lived in the forests, on a hill, or in a cave, and at least one kilometre away from a village or town. How could they find any comfort from these places? Their hearts, however, were faithfully following the Dhamma before they became enlightened. They were striving for enlightenment with diligent effort and pure motives. This was how they practised before they could become our refuge or *Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*.

As a Dhamma practitioner, you should take only the Lord Buddha, his enlightened disciples and the Dhamma teaching as your refuge or role model. If you do, you won't be disappointed. When you're going through a lot of hardship from your practice, you should look to the Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples for inspiration. They went through a lot of hardship. They didn't cop out. You have to think like this to make you tough and strong like them. In crossing the *vaṭṭa saṃsāra*, the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, which is a boundless space of *dukkha*, you'll have to go through a lot of adversity, just like the Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples did. For the upper class, their hardships were much more severe than the merchants and the commoners who were used to a life of hardship before becoming monks. It's difficult to adapt to a new lifestyle. But they were not deterred because of their unshakeable faith in the Lord Buddha and his teaching. They used the four requisites of living to sustain their lives so that they could diligently practise for enlightenment. Besides the requisites they were only interested in enlightenment.

You should follow their example because they're your role models. You shouldn't take anybody else as your role model, because nobody is wiser than the Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples. You should be prepared to face the hardships that come from fighting the kilesas, which have ruled over your *citta* for a very long time. Your *citta* is the kilesas' headquarters. How can they not dominate your *citta*? If you don't fight like the Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples, how can you win? This world is full of hardships because all inhabitants, animals and humans, have to make a living and are surrounded by all sorts of dangers. The monks in this monastery are abundantly supplied with the requisites of living. There are lots of charitable people in this country who love to support monks who faithfully follow the Dhamma teaching, because it's a way for them to make lots of merit. That's why this monastery never lacks the requisites of living. Why then, can't you follow the Dhamma teaching and develop yourself to the utmost of your ability?

You have to accept the hardships that arise from your practice that will free you from *dukkha*. You have to be strong, resolute, courageous and totally commit yourself to this noble endeavour. You should always be mindful of your *citta*, which is driven by the kilesas. *Avijjā paccaya saṅkhāra* means your thoughts are driven by *avijjā*. Listen to that! *Avijjā* is the major force that drives your thoughts and perceptions through

your eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. Avijjā makes you cling to the visual objects, sounds, aromas, flavours and tactile sensations, which causes mental pain and stress, because you are not mindful of your citta. You'll see this very clearly when you're enlightened. I've seen it (and I'm not bragging).

When the going gets tough, you have to be tough and strong. When you become skilful and proficient with your practice, the hardships will diminish. It's only at the beginning stages of practice that it's hard. When you keep on practising you'll be skilful and competent. You'll be tough and strong, skilful and competent if you develop sati, paññā, saddhā and viriya, which will generate the mental power to gradually eradicate the kilesas and āsavas.

You'll see that the kilesas, taṇhā and āsavas are generated in your citta and you'll see the way to destroy them. Don't ever think that the kilesas are anywhere else but in your citta. The real vaṭṭa cakka is the citta that ceaselessly revolves around the cycle of birth, ageing, illness, death and rebirth. I have realised this from my investigation with my sati and paññā. I have no doubt that the cause of birth is avijjā that is firmly embedded deep within the citta to the extent where it's impossible to differentiate the citta from avijjā. This is a crucial fact. When you dig into your citta, you'll see this principal driver of your ceaseless wandering and its followers that control your eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, as well as rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāna. Everything you do is driven by the kilesas that flow out of your citta to accumulate dukkha for you by your mistaken and unfounded opinions or ideas. These kilesas are directed by avijjā which is their master.

For this reason, the Lord Buddha had to teach you to be earnest and resolute with your practice of mental development. You have to concentrate all your efforts and mindfulness at your citta. Listen! The four satipaṭṭhānas or the four establishments of mindfulness is the Dhamma teaching that guarantees and certifies the magga, phala and nibbāna, and the complete elimination of the kilesas. The four satipaṭṭhānas and the four ariya-saccas or Four Noble Truths are the crucial teachings. Where are the four satipaṭṭhānas and the four ariya-saccas? They are in your citta. So you have to exert yourself to the utmost of your ability and win in order to measure up to the Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples.

It's the citta that thinks endlessly whether you have sati or not. This is natural for the citta that is under the control of avijjā. It is avijjā that drives this thinking. The citta thinks with craving or samudaya 99% of the time if you're not watching it and 100% if you're reckless. What does it think about? It perpetually thinks, becoming obsessed with love, hatred, anger, sadness, happiness, the past and the future. How can it find any peace of mind when it's deluded? Right now you can't comprehend this. That's why you have to develop calm for your citta. When it becomes calm, you should investigate with paññā the first of the four objects of the satipaṭṭhāna, which is the body, to clearly see its true nature. What's this body made of?

You have to continually and mindfully probe the body, not casually, occasionally and carelessly, which is the way of the kilesas and samudaya. This is not the way to investigate the four satipaṭṭhānas for the purpose of eliminating the upādāna or attachment to the body. If you investigate with mindfulness or sati, how can you not see the body's true nature? How did the Lord Buddha get to see his body and the bodies of others? How did he become a lokavidū, one who knows the world? His enlightened disciples are also lokavidūs. But the scope of the Lord Buddha's knowledge is far more extensive and profound. Lokavidū means being enlightened to the Four Noble Truths that shake the foundations of the world. Every living being is cursed or blessed with the Four Noble Truths, depending on which parts of the truth it's exposed to. If you develop sati and paññā, you're exposed to the good truth, because it's the path to the cessation of stress. If you develop craving and stress, you're exposed to the bad truths. These cravings and stress are inherent in every living being that still revolves around the vaṭṭa cakka, the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, because they are driven by avijjā.

It is, therefore, imperative to investigate the body's true nature, starting from the skin, to see clearly both sides of the skin, outside and inside that are quite different. The Lord Buddha said it is paṭikkūla or filthy. The outer part of the skin is dirty with sweat and grime from top to bottom. When the body decomposes, it will be even filthier. When it's alive it's wrapped with the skin to make it look attractive. But when you flip the skin inside out, you wouldn't want to look at it, be it the body of a man or a woman. The skin will deceive the eyes of undiscerning people. It's a very thin layer of skin, and yet you're not capable of penetrating it. How can you say that you have paññā or wisdom? The Lord Buddha had penetrated it and so had the sāvakas, because they had paññā.

You have to look at the truth. Don't deny it by seeing something that's ugly as beautiful, something that's repulsive as attractive, something that's impermanent as permanent, and something that's not I and mine as I and mine. If you're constantly contradicting the Lord Buddha's teaching, it means you can't fight the kilesas, because when the kilesas tell you to reject the Dhamma teaching you'll promptly oblige. The

kilesas will always oppose the Dhamma teaching, because they are adversaries. So you must always resist the kilesas. When you see, hear, smell, taste, feel or think about something that will give rise to the kilesas, you must stop. You have to restrain yourself. You also have to search for the kilesas that are hiding inside your citta.

If you want to investigate filthiness or paṭikkūla, you have to look inside your body. Is there a single part that isn't filthy? There isn't, because the whole body is filthy. It's also aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. Will you still keep clinging to it? The Lord Buddha's teaching is the means of removing your delusion and makes you see the truth. You have to apply this Dhamma teaching in your practice and not allow the kilesas to constantly hurt you. The kilesas are having a lot of fun, and you are having a lot of dukkha because you are under their influence and power. You have to really investigate the body: yours and others'. The body has no awareness. It has the five sense organs - the eyes, ears nose, tongue and body - to receive the five sense data. But these five sense organs are not the citta, the one who knows. Only the practitioner of mental development will realise this truth. You'll see that the body is just a medium. When the citta detaches from it, there'll be no sense objects for the citta to perceive.

Normally, the citta will suffuse over the entire body and thereby shoulder the burden of the body with all the filth inside it, and shoulder the burden of I and mine, because the citta is deluded. That's why the Lord Buddha had to teach you to investigate the body in order to see the truth of paṭikkūla, asubha, aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. The body is always changing. There isn't a single instant when the ti-lakkhaṇa or the three characteristics of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā stop working. Aniccaṃ or impermanence works around the clock. Dukkhaṃ or stress constantly oppresses you. Anattā is not-self. Is there really I or mine? These truths are staring at you. You have to investigate with paññā to see these truths. When you see them, your delusion and attachment to the body will be severed automatically. You'll also see that the visible objects, sounds, aromas, flavours and tactile sensations are aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā.

After you've let go of your attachment to your body, you'll still look after it, but you won't consider it to be I or mine. The citta now knows that it's the citta and is fully contented. It doesn't need anything to make it happy. Vedanā is vedanā. The citta is the citta. Dukkha, sukha and neutral vedanās are merely vedanās. They are aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. You should listen when you chant vedanā anicca, vedanā anattā. When it's sukha, it's anattā. When it's dukkha, it's also anattā. When it's neutral, it's also anattā. Similarly with aniccaṃ. What is there to cling to? These phenomena arise and cease, because it's their nature to do so. Vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa are just phenomena. The citta is the citta. How can the citta cling to these phenomena and take them as itself? If it still does, it will unknowingly be like a football kicked around by the kilesas to take up birth in the various realms of existence, like a blind person who doesn't know where he's going because he can't see. Wherever he is led, he will follow.

Wherever the citta is led by the kilesas, it will follow. But it doesn't know where it's going and has to experience a lot of dukkha, like the dukkha of your body at the time of illness, old age and death. Please don't ever think that your body will bring you true happiness. It'll eventually become a heap of fire. If there is attachment to your body or upādāna, the dukkha will be excruciating due to your delusion. So you have to investigate to see the truth of aniccaṃ, asubha and paṭikkūla. You can investigate either your body or someone else's body. Do it repeatedly. At first you look at the pleasant and beautiful aspect of the body to fool the kilesas. Then you have to look at it when it decomposes and disappears until you see it vividly in your citta and let it go. This attachment to your body is very heavy, heavier than a mountain. How can you say that a mountain is heavy? Have you ever lifted a mountain? Has a mountain ever weighed down on you? It has never burdened you, because it keeps to itself.

But your body is a very heavy burden. The Lord Buddha said: Bhāra have pañcakkhandhā- the five khandhas are very heavy burdens. The Lord Buddha didn't say that a mountain is a heavy burden, but he did say it of the five khandhas. This is where you have to investigate your body and someone else's body. Look at it when it comes into being and when it disappears. How can the kilesas consider them to be an entity, pleasant and attractive? This perception contradicts the Dhamma teaching. You have to investigate to see the truth. Then you'll be able to eliminate the kilesas. The notion of beauty, pleasantness, permanence, I and mine will all vanish. The attachment to the body will disappear and the heavy burden will be removed from the citta, which will then rise up to freedom. This is how you should investigate, earnestly and diligently.

The magga, phala, and nibbāna are here and now in the citta. The kilesas are also here and now. They can appear any time. Love, hatred and delusion can appear any time whenever there is an opportunity for them to appear. They are not subjected to time or ritual. In practising Dhamma, you shouldn't pick the time, consult an astrological chart, choose the postures of your exertion or perform rituals. You should concentrate your investigation at the place where the kilesas appear. What are they thinking about? Paññā must

find out exactly what's going on. When you've investigated repeatedly, you'll see it clearly. This was how I practised. I have great concern for all my students because our living together is not certain. We are all *aniccam*, *dukkham* and *anattā*, and we are living in a world of *aniccam*, *dukkham* and *anattā*. So how can we find any certainty? There must always be parting from one another, either while we're still alive or when we pass away.

So while we are still living together, you have to really exert yourself, putting all your effort into it and get something out of it. Don't let our living together be in vain. There's nothing in this world that can be a greater memorial than the enlightening Dhamma. All you have to do is to get the Dhamma into your *citta* to completely extinguish the fires of the *kilesas*, *taṇhā* and *āsavas*, which drive the *citta* recklessly and uncontrollably. You'll then have completely rid yourself of all burdens and accomplished the most gruelling endeavour, which the Lord Buddha proclaimed as *vusitaṃ brahma cariyaṃ*, and your *citta* will have realised absolute freedom. You'll no longer have to seek happiness, be bothered with the past, the future, birth, death or rebirth, because you'll be absolutely contented.

But right now, your *citta* is very hungry, restless, agitated and constantly seeking and grasping due to the influence of the *kilesas*. Can't you see their harm? After you have completely eliminated the *kilesas*, this grasping, restlessness and agitation will all disappear. Then you won't have to waste your time worrying about the past or the future, about birth, death and rebirth, or about happiness and sadness, because you've become enlightened, perfectly contented and you've purified your *citta*. This is the reward of your toilsome undertaking that has come to completion. From this point on, your meditation practice will be for recreational purposes only. Your body can get tired but your purified *citta* won't. It won't gain or lose, or be afraid of birth or death, because it isn't born and doesn't die.

The Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples practised walking or sitting meditation for rest and recreation to minimise the burden of the body on the *citta*. They would meditate as they liked. Some could enter into the various levels of mental absorption or *jhāna samāpattis*, like the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, who could enter into *jhāna samāpatti* for seven days at a time. He could enter into the deepest absorption called *nirodha samāpatti* or complete cessation of all mental activities. For those who couldn't do this, they just calmed their *citta*. They didn't meditate to eliminate the *kilesas*. What *kilesas* are there to be eliminated when all of them have been completely removed? The *citta* is now purified. What is there to purify? This purified *citta* is no longer affected by time and place. It doesn't matter how the body should die, by accident or illness, or if the *citta* has entered into *samādhi* before the body dies or not, because nothing can affect or destroy this purified *citta*.

The reason why the Lord Buddha entered into *jhāna samāpattis* before his final passing away or *parinibbāna* was to show his accomplishments as the world's greatest teacher. After his enlightenment, he taught the world with the wisdom and compassion of a great spiritual teacher and made himself a perfect role model. Therefore, before he was to finally pass away, he showed his accomplishments by entering the first, second, third, and fourth *jhāna*, which are the *rūpa-jhānas*. He then entered the four *arūpa-jhānas* and *nirodha samāpatti*, the complete cessation of all mental activities. At that time, some of his enlightened disciples wondered whether he had already passed away. So they asked the Venerable Anuruddha who had the ability to read the minds and thoughts of others. No one could surpass the Venerable Anuruddha in this respect. Some of the enlightened disciples also possessed this ability, but they were not as good as the Venerable Anuruddha who was able to follow the *citta* of the Lord Buddha going through the various stages of *jhāna*.

When the Lord Buddha entered the level of *saññā-vedayita-nirodha*, the complete cessation of all mental activities, the other disciples couldn't tell whether the Lord Buddha had already passed away. So they asked the Venerable Anuruddha, who was constantly monitoring the Lord Buddha's *citta*. He said, 'No, not yet, he's in the level of *saññā-vedayita-nirodha*'. The Venerable Anuruddha continued to tell the other disciples the movement of the Lord Buddha's *citta* that went through the various levels of *jhāna* and finally passed away between the *rūpa-jhānas* and *arūpa-jhānas*. He didn't pass away in any of the *jhānas*, because he wasn't attached to them. The Venerable Anuruddha then told the others, 'He has now passed away and entered *nibbāna* where nothing more can be said'. This is like flying in an aircraft in the sky that is totally empty of any clouds, where it's not possible to tell how fast the plane is actually going if not looking at the speedometer. It seems like the aircraft isn't moving at all.

It's the same with the purified *citta* that's free from all conventional truths or *sammuti*. All the *jhānas*, from the first through to the eighth and *nirodha samāpatti*, are *sammuti*. The purified *citta* that's completely free from all conventional truths is called *vimutti*. Whilst the *vimutti citta* or purified *citta* of the Lord Buddha entered any level of *jhāna*, it was possible for the Venerable Anuruddha to track. He could tell the other

disciples about the citta of the Lord Buddha as it entered and exited the various levels of jhāna. But when this purified citta exited sammuti, it was like an aircraft flying in empty space with nothing to serve as a point of reference. You can't tell how fast you're going. But if there are some clouds you can. It's the same with the citta that passes beyond sammuti.

You have to investigate thoroughly to see that the five khandhas are merely the citta's embodiment or avatar. When the citta is detached from this embodiment or avatar, it will be detached from all sammuti. So it's not possible to describe this citta with the language of sammuti. You can't say that it's here or there. Where does the purified citta originate from if not from your citta that is currently being shrouded by the kilesas? Where are the kilesas? They're in your citta. And where are the magga, phala, nibbāna and purity, if not in your citta? This is what you have to purify. You mustn't go after other things, because you'll be wasting your time. Don't speculate but go straight to the truth in your citta. Why do you only hear about the other practitioners attaining to freedom from dukkha and attaining to magga, phala and nibbāna at this place or that place? Why can't you attain freedom? They're human beings just like you are.

The Dhamma teaching that they used to eliminate the kilesas is the same Dhamma teaching that you're using. Their kilesas and your kilesas are the same kilesas. Why can't you eliminate them? The problem is really in your ability. The Dhamma teaching is not the problem, because it's complete and perfect. It can always eliminate the kilesas. The problem is with you, the practitioner, who applies this Dhamma teaching. How do you apply it? Do you apply it with weakness and fear of pain and hardship? If this is the case, you'll not succeed. Even when you're fully armed your enemies can still destroy you if you don't fight them with your weapons. Even when you can memorise all the Dhamma teaching, it'll be useless because the kilesas are not afraid. They're only afraid of your practice of saddhā, viriya, sati, samādhi and paññā. The kilesas are always afraid of the Dhamma. They were afraid during the Lord Buddha's time, they are afraid now and they will be afraid in the future. So you have to really commit yourself to the practice. Don't ever relent or give up.



Exposition on the Buddha

October 13th, 1979

Buddhism was founded by the Lord Buddha, a mentor in spiritual and philosophical topics who was renowned for his profound wisdom and insight. As a prince, he ruled his father's kingdom for 13 years before relinquishing his power to pursue his spiritual goal. For six gruelling years he meditated before attaining enlightenment. If his wisdom hadn't been up to the standard of a *sabbaññū*, one who is self-enlightened, he wouldn't have been enlightened and a great spiritual teacher.

The kilesas are very cunning. In the three realms of existence, nothing can be as clever as the kilesas, the rulers of these three realms. How did the Lord Buddha manage to vanquish all the kilesas from his citta? It was through his ability to apply wisdom and insight. How else could he have neutralised the kilesas and become the world's greatest teacher? How could an ignorant person do it? The intrinsic quality of a Buddha is profound and immeasurable wisdom that is boundless like the sky. The teaching of every Buddha is always complete and perfect in every respect -- mental or physical or *sīla*, *samādhi* or *paññā* -- and could be easily understood by the monks and the laity.

Although the Lord Buddha's teaching which was successively transmitted down to us might not be as complete and perfect as when the Lord Buddha taught it, it can still serve as an excellent guide. He taught his followers to be rational, especially those who practise mental development such as the *kammaṭṭhāna* monks. That's why I have always emphasised the development of *sati* and *paññā* as well as being thorough, observant, judicious, contemplative and rational to keep you from practising incorrectly. This is the way to develop wisdom as taught by the Lord Buddha. Although you won't be as wise as the Lord Buddha, at least you'll be his wise, faithful student.

I love to listen to the results attained from practice of my students. Some have been here for quite some time. I have consistently taught them and have never neglected this responsibility. I consider teaching the monks and novices more important than teaching the laity because the monks are better prepared for the practice than the laity since they aren't encumbered by the laity's livelihood. The monks' principal task is walking and sitting meditation. It's something they have to do themselves. There are plenty of lay Buddhist devotees who admire monks who practise faithfully and are always ready to support and provide them with the four requisites of living. You're well aware of this fact. So what are you lacking other than in your exertion in the practice for the *magga* and *phala*? You're not lacking in the four requisites of living. What you lack is exertion and the results from your practice beginning with calm and culminating in enlightenment. So how are you going to resolve this issue other than putting in your effort? If you don't, you'll never achieve any results.

No other vocation is more suited for enlightenment than a monk's vocation. But how can you expect to become enlightened when you merely toy with your practice and your chores. Whatever you do, you must never forget the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. You must always keep them close to your heart, recalling how the Lord Buddha and his disciples practised and achieved their goals, to keep you from falling into evil ways and to be boosted with diligence and energy. The Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples demonstrated how hard and earnestly they practised. Were they ever involved with mundane matters? Their worldly experiences were similar to yours. But when they turned their hearts towards enlightenment, they were really earnest and resolute to the end. They were totally committed to their practice. Their corresponding results were also total. Means and ends are inseparable. The reason why you haven't come across any results is because you haven't applied yourself. You only have yourself to blame.

I'm teaching you with the utmost of my ability and have never hidden anything from you. When it's time to reveal my practices and accomplishments, I do it fully. I make clear every aspect of Dhamma that I know, not holding anything back from you. Why can't you apply them in your quest for enlightenment? One who has gone forth is a fighter who doesn't flinch or retreat. Where are the *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna*? I have told you many times before not to speculate about the *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* being in this place or that place, at this time or that time, in the sky or on the ground, because they are all *sammuti*, or conventional reality. Everything that surrounds you, the five *khandhas* and the entire world, is *sammuti*. The *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* are not in these places, but are in the Four Noble Truths.

The First Noble Truth is *dukkha*, that of the body and the citta. The Lord Buddha called *dukkha* a noble truth because it's absolute. The Second Noble Truth is *samudaya*, the origin of *dukkha*, which are the kilesas and created by the citta. This origin of *dukkha* is comprised of three kinds of cravings: craving for sensual-

ity, craving for becoming and craving for not-becoming. Craving for sensuality means not being satisfied with visual objects, sounds, aromas, flavours and tactile sensations that you experience from birth. This is the most troublesome kilesa. The more you glut yourself with food and sleep, the more you'll increase and strengthen your sensual desire and sex drive.

You have to identify dukkha. Where is dukkha now? It's in your body and citta. What generates samudaya? It's saṅkhāra (thought-formations) and saññā (act of memory or recognition), as well as the objects of the five physical senses and the feelings and emotions in the citta that are created by your attachment to past experiences that consume you with burning desires. This is the way of amassing the kilesas and dukkha. This is the work of samudaya that the Lord Buddha exhorted you to relinquish. He said you have to identify dukkha and abandon samudaya. How do you let go of samudaya if not by the magga, the path of practice leading to the elimination of dukkha? What comprises the magga? It's principally comprised of sati and paññā, the most vital components that will enable you to completely let go of samudaya.

Regarding your craving for sensuality, you have to identify the objects of your desires. Why are you obsessed with this man or that woman. Are they really men or women? Are they worth cherishing? Paññā has to analyse and reveal their true nature before you can let go of your attachment. Regarding dukkha, you have to identify it, for example, dukkha-vedanā or painful feeling which arises from sitting for a long time or from illness. There is a cause for this dukkha to appear. You have to look for the cause of this dukkha. Where does it come from? Who says it's dukkha and bears this dukkha? Who rounds up the dukkha of the body into the citta to afflict the citta with two layers of dukkha? Who can this culprit be if not saññā, memory or recognition, the master of samudaya? The Lord Buddha said you must study the nature of saññā to see that it's just a mental phenomenon.

The body is a physical phenomenon. Vedanā, feelings - good, bad or neutral; saññā, act of memory or recognition; saṅkhāra, thought-formations; and viññāṇa, sense awareness: all are mental phenomena. Viññāṇa will appear when the sense objects come into contact with the sense organs. When there is no contact, viññāṇa will disappear. These four mental phenomena originate from the citta while the body is the citta's avatar. The citta is tenaciously attached to the body by the powerful samudaya and delusion that mistakenly views the combination of the four elements of earth, water, air and fire as one and inseparable. If you don't apply sati and paññā to reveal their true nature, you won't be able to separate the body from the citta.

It's similar with physical pain. When you say physical pain is hurting you, you'll also create mental pain, because you're not using sati and paññā to see it as it is. How can you say that you're relinquishing samudaya? You have to apply sati and paññā to separate the physical pain from the mental pain and study the true nature of pain. When pain appears, does it ever say I'm painful? Does it know it's painful? No, it doesn't! It's just a phenomenon that appears and will eventually disappear. That's all there is to it. It doesn't say it's painful or explain why it appears and disappears. It's the citta that says it's painful and as a result produces another layer of pain, namely mental pain.

For this reason, the Lord Buddha had to teach you to study the nature of mental pain with paññā. What causes mental pain to appear? It's samudaya that's formed by the citta's unfounded opinion of the nature of pain. When the citta thinks that the physical pain is hurting it, it will also produce mental pain, because it will want the physical pain to disappear. The more it wants the physical pain to disappear, the more will be the mental pain. The way to eliminate this mental pain is not to have any desire for the physical pain to disappear. No matter how intense the physical pain may be, you have to calmly and unflinchingly study the nature of this mental pain.

When you have let go of your desire for the physical pain to disappear, the mental pain will disappear. Sometimes the physical pain will also disappear. If it doesn't disappear, like during illness, it won't disturb the citta, because the citta has eliminated its mistaken opinion of the physical pain. This is the way of understanding the nature of pain through the Four Noble Truths, and of realising that it's the citta's erroneous opinion of the nature of pain that's to blame. Who will have to bear the consequences of this mistaken opinion if not the citta? And it's in the citta where you'll have to study the Four Noble Truths.

I have already told you that the components of magga are sati and paññā. It's only magga that can remove samudaya. As soon as samudaya is eliminated, dukkha will disappear. There is no need to talk about nirodha, which is the disappearance of dukkha, because nirodha is the outcome of magga. Nirodha will gradually appear as magga gradually removes samudaya. When samudaya is completely eliminated, complete nirodha will appear. This is the ultimate nirodha, because magga is now the ultimate magga, and satipaññā, the ultimate satipaññā. Nirodha is now complete and perfect. The Four Noble Truths - dukkha, samudaya, nirodha and magga - will each be undeniably true. When pain appears in your body, you'll

accept that your body is the home of pain. If you can live in this body, why can't pain? But there'll be no dukkha and samudaya in your citta because they've been completely eliminated by the magga.

What am I talking about? I'm talking about the magga, phala and nibbāna, and about the Four Noble Truths. Do you have the Four Noble Truths? You're constantly being bombarded with dukkha, both of the body and of the citta. Why can't you see this dukkha? You can't make stew out of sati and paññā, but you can apply them in your contemplation. It's only sati and paññā that can eliminate the kilesas. You must always use sati to supervise your practice. This is vital for your enlightenment. After your enlightenment, you'll never be shaken by anything. What you know, you'll confidently tell others like the Lord Buddha who after his enlightenment boldly propagated his complete and perfect Dhamma teaching to the world, the Dhamma that was previously unknown to others. He was a true sage who would fearlessly teach the timeless truth, the Dhamma that's still alive and well today. If the Dhamma isn't timeless, it would have disappeared a long time ago. What is this Dhamma? It's the Four Noble Truths: dukkha, samudaya, nirodha and magga.

Dukkha disappears because samudaya ceases. Samudaya is comprised of craving for sensuality, craving for becoming and craving for not-becoming - kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇhā and vibhava taṇhā. You have to relinquish your cravings with magga. When you see that your cravings produce your dukkha you'll relinquish them. What is magga? It's silā, samādhi and paññā.

Right view and right thought are the components of paññā. Right speech, a component of silā, is to talk about getting rid of the kilesas, taṇhā, and āsavas, not talking about politics or mundane matters. There are ten topics that conform to right speech and are called sallekha dhammas or purifying talks. They are the following:

1. Appicchataḱathā - wanting little.
2. Santosa - being contented with whatever is given.
3. Asamsaggakathā - not socialising or interacting with others.
4. Vivekathā - delighting in seclusion.
5. Viriyārambhakathā - practising diligently.
6. Silā - being morally and ethically pure.
7. Samādhi - mental calm and stability.
8. Paññā - contemplating on the three characteristics of impermanence, stress and not-self that will eventually lead to enlightenment.
9. Vimutti - freedom from stress.
10. Vimutti ñāṇadassana - realising vimutti.

These are the ten topics of the sallekha dhammas. If you want to talk, you should talk about these topics because they're uplifting and full of interest.

Right action is another component of silā. Walking and sitting meditating to eliminate the kilesas are right actions. There are other actions that seem to be right, like building temples, but if monks take them up they can unknowingly promote the growth of the kilesas and destroy the Dhamma in their cittas - if they have any. If they don't have any Dhamma, then these tasks will totally ravage their cittas and are not right actions for meditators.

There are four kinds of right exertion:

The exertion to prevent evil from arising. What is evil? It's the kilesa-driven actions that produce stress.

The exertion to eliminate evil that has already appeared.

The exertion to do good and virtuous actions.

The exertion to maintain and nurture the goodness and virtue that you already have.

Right mindfulness is the establishing of mindfulness at the body, feelings, citta and Dhamma.

Right samādhi is making the citta calm and stable. Wrong samādhi is to have visions of heaven or hell and mistake them for the magga, phala and nibbāna. These are the components of magga, the weapon for the total destruction of the kilesas.

It's normal for the citta to accumulate the kilesas, because it's still under the spell of the king of the kilesas, which is avijjā that continually instigates saṅkhāra to think about the kilesas, taṇhā and āsavas. Avijjā will never let saṅkhāra think about Dhamma. Only you can. In the beginning stages of practice, it's necessary to push saṅkhāra to think about Dhamma or magga. Saṅkhāra that thinks about samudaya is for the amassing of the kilesas. Saṅkhāra that thinks about Dhamma and eliminates the kilesas and āsavas is magga and is in your citta.

So why don't you ever come up with any results from your practice? When are you going to get serious with your practice instead of being weak and lazy? How are you going to become enlightened if you're weak, lazy, foolish and incompetent? Are these the qualities for attaining the magga, phala and nibbāna? If they are, all living beings would have already attained the magga, phala and nibbāna. There wouldn't be any need for them to strive with diligent effort, endurance and perseverance. But in truth, your exertion is your only weapon that will destroy the kilesas, taṇhā and āsavas, and achieve the freedom from dukkha.

Therefore, you must really put in your effort. Don't be complacent. The community of practitioners is getting smaller with every passing day. Don't blame me for not warning you. The number of enlightened teachers who truly know the way are steadily decreasing. Some day you'll be like a loose kite in the sky with nothing to hold it from being blown away by the wind. You should now accumulate as much Dhamma whilst you still can, because those who can truly teach Dhamma are nearly extinct and you can actually count them. There are not many role model monks left for you to follow and those that are left are getting older with each passing day. If you don't accumulate the Dhamma now when it's conducive and favourable, when will you do it?

You're studying with your teacher now because you can't practise on your own. After you've learned how to practise, you should practise and should at least accomplish samādhi. Then you'll have to investigate with paññā, which is very extensive and profound. It's not possible to explain paññā to make every listener understand at the same time. But it's possible to explain to each individual practitioner who has specific questions arising from his investigation, because there are specific issues to be resolved. It's rather difficult to explain paññā in general terms.



The Four Noble Truths

October 19th, 1979

The words of the Lord Buddha are not ordinary because they originated from a brilliant and profound mind. If they had not been so, how could they destroy the kilesas of countless sentient beings, free them from dukkha and enlighten them right in his presence? In fact, his transcendent teaching is indispensable and vital for the removal of the kilesas and instantaneous enlightenment. Such is the power of experiential truth. Memory has no such power. Not a single kilesa can be eliminated by memory.

For example, you can recite nibbāna is the supreme happiness, nibbāna is the supreme emptiness, but it can't get you to nibbāna. Talking about nibbāna doesn't get you to nibbāna. But practising mental development will. When you do, you can distinguish truth from falsehood. The citta of a person who memorises the scriptures is still tainted with the kilesas. The Dhamma realised in the citta from practice is the real Dhamma. Sati and paññā appear in the citta. Ignorance and the kilesas also appear in the citta. It's in the citta where you destroy the kilesas and realise freedom from dukkha, nowhere else.

As a practitioner, you should always watch your citta if you want to remove the kilesas with the Dhamma teaching. You should investigate everything that the citta is involved with. Find out why it has to get involved with these things and identify the trouble and pain that follow with sati and paññā. You can't run away from the Four Noble Truths. The Lord Buddha said dukkha is a reality although no one in the world has any desire for it. Why did he say dukkha and the origin of dukkha are noble truths? Because they are real. If you don't remove the kilesas, taṇhā and āsavas with magga, you'll never eliminate dukkha.

It is, therefore, necessary to develop magga, which is also a noble truth, so that nirodha (the cessation of dukkha) can appear. Nirodha -- the cessation of dukkha is also a noble truth. These Four Noble Truths are in the citta. The citta is the container for the kilesas, taṇhā and āsavas, the endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth, and every form of dukkha and enlightenment. Wisdom originates in the citta. The kilesas are neutralised in the citta. Freedom from dukkha is realised in the citta. The transcendental and blissful experience occurs in the citta. Having attained enlightenment, the citta can either be called Dhamma or the purified citta. The term citta is used whilst it's still in possession of the five khandhas, because they are sammuti (conventional reality) and the purified citta has to abide with the norms of sammuti despite being an absolute reality. After the citta has realised absolute reality, it doesn't matter what it is called.

The problem is with the kilesas which are extremely tenacious. No other task is more gruelling than the elimination of the kilesas that are deeply embedded in the citta. The kilesas are as infinite as the citta is infinite, as deep as the citta is deep, and they are capable of dragging the citta to wander endlessly in the various realms of existences. If you had to display the existences and dukkha that you've gone through, it would fill the whole world. If everyone had to display his or her kilesas, taṇhā, āsavas, dukkha and existences, there wouldn't be enough room to show them. To eliminate the kilesas, you mustn't do it lightly. If you aren't earnest with your practice, you'll never become enlightened.

When you've earnestly developed magga, the weapon that will destroy the kilesas, to full maturity, you'll see the true nature of the kilesas, which are magga's opponents, and eliminate them with an earth-shattering bang like the Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples did. What they achieved still rings true today. Their illustrious achievements are celebrated by Buddhists of all nationalities. How could they be so highly esteemed if they were not enlightened? You have to have faith in them before the absolute truth can materialise.

The task of neutralising the kilesas is an arduous one. I can confidently attest to this fact. It's a lot more difficult to discipline human beings than to train animals, because human beings are more sophisticated than animals. Correspondingly, the development of human beings takes more effort than animals. It requires a lot more effort, forbearance and know-how. Disciplining and developing human beings is the most difficult task. Who are these human beings? I'm referring to the Lord Buddha who strived in disciplining himself until he passed out. Is this difficult or not? I have also read from the scriptures how hard it was for the enlightened disciples to discipline themselves also

When I say how hard it is to train human beings, I mean you. You're responsible for training yourself to become good and virtuous, by removing all evils which are the products of the kilesas from your citta. This task is very arduous and requires a lot of effort. Otherwise you won't be able to come up with any results. You have to fight the kilesas blow for blow and must not be afraid of death, which follows you like your

shadow. When the time comes, everybody, good or bad, still possessed with the kilesas or not, will have to die. Once you've acquired a body, you've also acquired death. Before you die, you should achieve the task of training yourself, completely eliminate the kilesas, and realise the supreme happiness. As long as the kilesas are still embedded in your citta, there won't be any supreme happiness. Though you might look happy, you're just putting up a front, because you're still full of greed, hatred and delusion. This kind of happiness is not your goal. Your goal is the supreme happiness of enlightenment that can only be realised through strenuous exertion.

You should take the Lord Buddha as your role model. When you're discouraged, you should recollect the Lord Buddha's virtues. If the discouragement still remains you should recollect the Dhamma's and the Saṅgha's virtues; then your discouragement will disappear. This is the way to muster up your courage. The Lord Buddha is the victor. When you think of him you'll become courageous. You should always look at the way he practised.

The citta can't freely do what it pleases because it's under the kilesas' control, like a prisoner who is always watched by guards. It's also true of the activities of saññā and saṅkhāra which are always supervised by the kilesas. The citta is like a buffalo held on a leash whilst left grazing in the pasture. We're all completely ignorant of the kilesas' harmfulness. As a result, the kilesas are having a great time amassing their power and influence over the cittas of all sentient beings. None of these beings can escape from their grip except those who take up the Dhamma teaching with strenuous exertion, which is the only way for them to be free. You must, therefore, strive for the total elimination of the kilesas. After the kilesas have been completely eliminated by sati, paññā, saddhā and viriya, the khandhas - such as thoughts and perceptions - will all be free from the kilesas' influences and become the Dhamma's assistants in propagating the Lord Buddha's teaching to others. The Lord Buddha, after having attained enlightenment, used the khandhas to teach the Dhamma to the world for forty-five years.

How happy will you be after you're freed from the prison of the vaṭṭa citta, which is the citta that is still under the kilesas' influence and control, and the prison of the vaṭṭa cakka, which is the endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth? The vaṭṭa cakka and the vaṭṭa citta have now been destroyed by the middle way of practice, the majjhimā paṭipadā. You can now see very clearly that the kilesas, regardless of how many there were, were the master puppeteers that supervised every activity of the khandhas. The one who had to reap the khandhas' actions driven by the kilesas was the citta, which was like a toilet bowl for the filth of greed, hatred, delusion, lust and suffering. When all of this filth has been removed, you'll see clearly that there is nothing left to oppress the citta. Throughout the day and night, you can freely see, hear, taste, smell, touch and think about anything without having any love or hatred for them. Previously, you were driven by the kilesas to think endlessly, aimlessly and emotionally. Now you think rationally, purposely and without any stress. This is the result of training human beings.

You have to earnestly exert yourself, even if it's difficult. The Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples all seriously exerted themselves and are now your role models. You're the Lord Buddha's follower and a front-line soldier, how can you be weak and relent in your exertion? As a bhikkhu or Buddhist monk you're a front-line soldier. Furthermore, you're a kammaṭṭhāna bhikkhu who is intent in the practice for the realisation of the Four Noble Truths. If you're weak and discouraged, you're not following the Dhamma teaching. Therefore, you must be earnest and resolute. Don't ever dismiss from your mind that the training of human beings is extremely hard. This is a very vital point to remember.

Every type of kilesa, from the coarse to the intermediate to the subtle ones, are all harmful like fire. Be it the fire itself or the sparks from the fire, they are all hot and only differ in their intensity. All of them are detrimental. It's best to extinguish all of them. Then it will be natthi santi param sukkaṃ - no happiness can be greater than the happiness of the absolute peace which follows the total extinction of the kilesas that the practitioner of mental development will come to possess. There is no need to ask anybody for confirmation regarding this attainment. It doesn't matter how long ago the Lord Buddha passed away. I speak with the greatest respect for the Lord Buddha, not out of contempt. For whom did the Lord Buddha teach sandiṭṭhiko - Dhamma is self-evident? For whom did he teach paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi - Dhamma is to be realised here and now by the wise? For whom did he teach the majjhimā paṭipadā tathāgatena abhisambuddhā - the middle way, if not for all of us practitioners?

To neutralise the kilesas, you have to do it right here in your citta. How can you not know when the kilesas gradually disappear and happiness subsequently appears? The virtue of sandiṭṭhiko, or being self-evident, isn't solely preserved for the Lord Buddha and his enlightened disciples, because it's the result from following the middle way, the majjhimā paṭipadā. When you earnestly practise, you'll experience this result right in your citta and you'll be totally rid of all doubts.

I'm very concerned for my students. I'm getting older with each passing day. Eventually, I'll have to lay down my teaching responsibility. Taking care of my body will eventually take up all my strength and energy. I'll have to let go of everything else like Tan Ajaan Khao who can only watch his breath until it expires. But crucially his citta is never weakened. To him, his body is just a puppet he plays with. Parā have pañcakkhandha - the five khandhas are very heavy burdens. You play with them until they expire. After you're separated from them, you'll be free from all responsibilities, worries and anxieties. The numbers of enlightened teachers are steadily decreasing and are close to extinction. Now is the time to really concentrate on your exertion.

You must never see anything in the entire world to be more valuable and greater than enlightenment. If there were, the citta would definitely not let it go. It would not abandon its wrong views, love, hatred and anger that are relished by everybody. We all like anger and love though we know they hurt. According to the Dhamma teaching, there's nothing better than the citta freed of love and anger. When you realise this fact, you'll relinquish everything and develop mental calm because the happiness derived from mental calm is far superior to all other happiness. The calmer your mind becomes, the more blissful you will be, the more you will be able to relinquish and eventually let go of everything.

You'll relinquish visible objects, sounds, aromas, flavours, tactile sensations and the five khandhas - rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa, because they aren't satisfactory. All that is left for you to let go of is the citta. What makes you love it and remain attached to it? Who is this perpetrator? You'll keep on investigating until you find it and let it go. You'll then have relinquished everything. This sounds rather easy. But looking back at the way I had to exert myself, it wasn't that easy because I had to wager my life for it. When you have fulfilled all the prerequisites, you'll definitely become enlightened. So you have to be resolute and earnest with your practice.

Don't ever make any trouble here. From the time this monastery was established, there has never been such an incident. There has never been any quarrel amongst the monks, because everyone respects the Dhamma, thus making it easy for everyone to live in harmony. You're here to eliminate the kilesas. So you mustn't let the kilesas incite you to make any trouble because it's really shameful. As a practising monk, you must never think you're better than others, because this is morally wrong. When you act like you're better than others, you're just showing your dark side for others to see. If you're really good, you don't have to show off, because it will be obvious. If you're good and don't flaunt it, you're really good.

As a Dhamma practitioner, you have to be rational, not emotional. If you want to be good but don't have any goodness in you, you can't be good. You're not good simply because you want to be. And when you try to impress others with how good you are, it will be futile, shameful and vulgar. This is the work of the kilesas that you're supposed to eliminate. How can you allow them to incite you to quarrel with other monks like dogs do? Monks are not dogs, and this monastery is not a doghouse. When monks quarrel, it's like dogs fighting and the worst thing that can happen to a monastery. Here, I'm merely illustrating a point. It doesn't mean that the monks here quarrel. I'm merely pointing out the differences between good and bad, benefit and damage.

You're here to develop moral excellence. So you have to be always mindful of your actions. When you're mad at someone, you have to remind yourself that this is the work of the kilesas that you must neutralise, not nurture. The more you think about the object of your displeasure, the more you will nourish the kilesas and your delusion. Instead, you must look at your citta which is being consumed by the fire of anger that you must extinguish before it spreads out to burn others. As a practitioner, you must always opanayiko -- look at your citta.



The Importance of Correct Behaviour

November 7th, 1979

Some practitioners are confused and lost because they don't faithfully follow the Dhamma teaching. If they did, how could Buddhism ever decline? The problem is with the Buddhist followers who don't strictly follow the Dhamma teaching, but not with the teaching because the teaching is always complete and perfect. It is, therefore, imperative for monks living in a monastery to be always mindful of their actions. They must not allow the kilesas to direct their conduct so as to create friction amongst themselves that will at least cause resentment, and at worst, division or a schism. When you have resentment, it'll be difficult for you to meditate. This is crucial. It'll be good for you if you strictly adhere to the Dhamma teaching that will prevent the kilesas from directing your selfish behaviour. Why can't you do it when it's so simple?

You and the other monks are grown-ups and are good friends, you should be able to settle your differences amicably. When a monk talks or acts improperly, he should be grateful when the other monks admonish him. This is *pavāraṇā*, to gratefully accept criticism. The monks will do this *pavāraṇā* every year on the last day of vassa, the rains retreat. Each monk will say to the assembly of monks *saṅghaṃ bhante pavāremi*, I gratefully submit myself to your criticism. Monks should, therefore, admonish other monks when they misbehave. But if monks aren't sincere about letting other monks criticise them, it will be useless and pretentious. An insincere monk is not a real monk, whose only aim is enlightenment, who will not instigate any trouble. The world, however, is usually full of clashes, clashes for happiness, money and power. Occasionally, these conflicts grow to catastrophic proportions. But monks are not affected by these clashes because they are constantly eliminating the cause of these clashes.

When you have to eliminate the cause of your stress, it's usually hard. The hardship that arises from restraining and removing the kilesas is an unavoidable by-product that you have to experience in your quest for freedom from stress. But this hardship is not for promoting the kilesas that create more stress; it's for boosting the Dhamma that generates more happiness. The Lord Buddha undoubtedly serves as an excellent example in this regard. Had he not faced up to the pain of the body and the mind, he wouldn't have become enlightened and a great spiritual mentor. It's the same with all the enlightened disciples who also had to confront hardship in their quest for enlightenment. They never relented or quit. They all had to experience hardship right from the beginning.

There isn't much opposition in other tasks. But in the task of eliminating the kilesas, there are lots of kilesas opposing you, sometimes to the point where you can't put up with them and unknowingly fall for their tricks that'll put you to sleep. This occurs in many practitioners. For this reason, you have to constantly be on your guard. Mindfulness or *sati* is indispensable and when you're continually mindful, *sati* becomes *sampajañña*. It's hard when you have to force yourself to be mindful. But you have to constantly watch your mind and pull it inside. When you're not watching, your mind will go outside and will harm and burn you.

The kilesas are never relenting or lazy. It's normal for a practitioner to sometimes feel weak or strong especially during the beginning stages. But the kilesas are never weak - not until the time when your *sati*, *paññā*, *saddhā* and *virīya* are fully developed. Then the kilesas' opposition will diminish because they will become weakened by the power of Dhamma that will attack and completely destroy them. Then there will be no kilesas left to turn the *citta* against the Dhamma. I would really love to see you become enlightened after all the efforts I've put into teaching you. I have never kept any Dhamma secrets from you but have always been ready to explain any Dhamma that will benefit you because I want you to become enlightened. But you have to be resolute, wise, tough and strict with yourself.

As soon as you have realised mental calm, you'll immediately see the value of your practice. The happiness from this mental calm is far superior to all other happiness. After you have realised mental calm, you'll discover your true worth and the harm of your restlessness. You'll be enthusiastic to practise harder. These were the results of my practice. There are two types of mental calm. The first type which most practitioners experience is mild and gradual. The second type which few practitioners experience is sudden and dramatic, like suddenly falling into a deep well or an abyss and then starting to experience psychic events, such as seeing heavens and hells. This second type needs the supervision of an experienced teacher. But the first type can be practised safely without much supervision.

When the *citta* enters into calm, it should be left alone until it exits from calm before it'll be ready for the work of investigation. The elimination of the kilesas must be done with *paññā*, not *samādhi*. *Samādhi* only rounds up the kilesas inside and subdues them but doesn't destroy them. When *samādhi* weakens, the

kilesas will become active and aggressive again. Your emotions can also diminish your samādhi. When you investigate with paññā, the kilesas will gradually decrease. This is the proper way of practice that will eliminate delays caused by addiction to samādhi. In investigation with paññā, you should use the methods that suit you, on any object and within the framework of the Four Noble Truths. After you've understood the nature of that object, you'll also understand the nature of other similar objects.

You should also concentrate your investigation on the body, using it to lock up your citta by making the skin like a prison wall. You should force your citta to take a tour of the body, such as the flesh, sinews, bones, liver, kidneys, intestines, stomach, newly eaten food and digested food, going from top to bottom. If you investigate paṭikkūla, filth and asubha, loathsomeness, you'll see impurity and unattractiveness. If you investigate the four elements, you'll see that every body part is composed of the four elements. They're not I or mine. The body is not attractive as the kilesas lead you to believe. The kilesas are deceptive. Whatever they tell you is not true. Is there any part of your body that is really beautiful? There is none, but the kilesas keep telling you that there is, which contradicts the Dhamma teaching, which is true. As a result, they make you suffer.

You have to force the citta to investigate the various parts of the body, because they're the truth, in terms of asubha, elements, or aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ and anattā. You can investigate whatever aspect you like. When you investigate asubha, it'll lead you to the elements as well. You can also investigate any one of the ti-lakkhaṇa, be it aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ or anattā, or you can investigate all three of them as they are all inter-related. This is investigation with paññā. You should also compare your own body parts with other people's body parts to see that they are all the same. How then can your citta become deluded or obsessed? Your citta will gradually become calmer. Your unfounded perception of beauty will gradually decrease. After repeated investigation with paññā, you'll eventually gain insight, dispel your delusion and sever your attachment to the body.

After having investigated with paññā for some time, your citta can become tired, similar to performing a physical task. It's then time to take a rest in samādhi. You should solely focus your attention on your meditation object to draw the citta into calm. After your citta has rested and restrengthened, it will exit from calm and resume investigating. When you investigate, you shouldn't speculate on the outcome but let it happen naturally. You should devise your own investigating methods based on what you've heard from your teacher. This is the way of developing wisdom. The investigation with paññā will only cease after all the kilesas are eliminated. When your sati and paññā have reached the level of mahāsati and mahāpaññā, you'll no longer have to force paññā to investigate but you'll have to restrain it from investigating when it goes overboard and becomes exhausted. The citta can get tired like the body if it doesn't take a rest. But the citta at this stage is happier investigating than taking a rest. So you have to force it to take a rest. The way to rest the citta is to enter into samādhi or calm, which is the correct thing to do, because it's conducive to ease and smoothness.

I'd really love to hear my students telling me about the results of their practice. Who will become enlightened? Who will do the investigation? Who will destroy the kilesas? Where are the kilesas? What are the methods used to eliminate the kilesas? These are the things that you have to see clearly from your practice, which is a lot better than hearing it from your teacher. Don't pay any attention to the affairs of the world and saṃsāra. They are the kilesas' creations that have for a long time afflicted you with immeasurable stress and suffering. You shouldn't have any doubt about this by thinking that you'll be good, happy and at ease by letting the kilesas drag you around or by believing the kilesas.

You should always look up to the Lord Buddha, who also used to be the kilesas' storehouse like the rest of us. He had already experienced the stresses created by the kilesas. If he could have been enlightened with the kilesas, he wouldn't have had to practise mental development. He would have remained a prince. You should take the Lord Buddha as your role model. You shouldn't doubt the kilesas' ability to hurt you; be it greed, hatred, delusion or lust, they're hurting you all the time except when you fall asleep. When you wake up, the kilesas also wake up and start to hurt you through your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and thoughts. This happens to every unenlightened person without any exception. As long as the citta is not purified, you'll never be free from stress.

The kilesas' activities occur through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and citta. So you have to make the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and citta activate the magga, phala and nibbāna. By practising mental development, you're changing the creator from the kilesas to the Dhamma, investigating with paññā whatever you see or hear. The result of this investigation is happiness. The result of the kilesas' action is stress. The kilesas pay no attention to time, race, class or colour of people. They will always crush and ruin them. You

have to change this by replacing the kilesas with the Dhamma. When you see, hear, smell, taste and touch, let satipaṇṇā supervise you. When you think, let satipaṇṇā direct you to think rationally.

If this is hard to do, so be it. Don't be deterred by hardship because it will hinder your progress, weaken and discourage you, which is just the kilesas' way of deceiving you. Dhamma never makes you weak. If you follow the Dhamma, you have to be rational. The kilesas are never rational because they despise logic. They love desire and craving which are their heart and soul. So how can you be ignorant of human nature after you've understood the kilesas' nature? The citta of all people are the same. All human beings are created by the kilesas and are accompanied by the results of their own good and bad past kamma. Consequently dukkha is unavoidable. How can this human body avoid being the home of dukkha? Your house is not the home of dukkha, but your body is. It's an aggregate of dukkha.

Khandha means aggregate. Every khandha or aggregate is dukkha. Rūpa, vedanā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa are all dukkham, aniccaṃ and anattā. So how can these five khandhas not be aggregates of dukkha? The citta is also the home of dukkha. If you don't apply satipaṇṇā to eliminate this kilesa-induced dukkha, the citta will always be the home of dukkha, will never be free from dukkha, and will never be purified. If this is the case, what are you waiting for? How can you remain weak, lazy and inactive? You should fight the kilesas to the last breath. If you should die, then you should die fighting. If you don't die, you'll surely reach the shore of freedom, the shore of nibbāna, like a true follower of the Lord Buddha who is not obsessed with this world of cemeteries, births and deaths.

As long as you're under the shadow of birth, ageing, sickness and death, you'll never find contentment. Speculation and theory is not the truth, but realising aniccaṃ, dukkham and anattā is. When you've reached this level, your doubt in your practice will disappear and your diligence will increase. You'll enjoy practising and fighting the kilesas for your freedom from dukkha without any concern for your well-being. When your citta becomes strengthened by your investigation with paṇṇā, it will be very powerful. No power in this world can be greater than the citta's and paṇṇā's combined. You must, therefore, develop paṇṇā. Don't be weak or heedless and never neglect your practice. Be always mindful. Don't crave food but eat with moderation, just enough to sustain your body and support your practice. You have to be thorough and meticulous with your investigation, leaving no stone unturned, because it's the only way to become enlightened. The development of paṇṇā requires careful contemplation, investigation and analysis in order to beat the kilesas, which are extremely clever and versatile, and to experience the enlightened bliss that was discovered by the Lord Buddha, whose sole purpose was to share it with all living beings.

As followers of the Lord of Buddha, you have to keep practising, having the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, as your guide, not the kilesas that are constantly hurting you. Don't be lazy. If you put in a lot of effort you'll be skilful like a boxer who has to do a lot of training before going into the ring and becoming a champ. It is likewise with the citta. When you practise a lot of samādhi, you'll be skilful with samādhi and become a samādhi expert. It's the same with paṇṇā. You'll practise relentlessly when you're completely certain of the magga, phala, and nibbāna. The citta's strength will become formidable and you'll practise very hard without having any mercy for yourself. During the time of my intense training, my body was very fit for this kind of exertion. It was also very energetic, so I had to fast in order to curb it and to keep the practice going smoothly.

When I fasted, my practice went on smoothly, efficiently and easily. My citta was totally committed to the practice and paid no attention to my body. It wasn't concerned how gruelling the practice might be. All it wanted was to achieve results. My dogged determination generated an intense diligent effort. My aspiration was the main driving force; the stronger my ambition, the stronger was my exertion. This will undoubtedly be obvious to every practitioner. I couldn't remain still because I was very eager and hopeful. I couldn't help but put in an all-out effort. Today, I can't do that kind of exertion any more. My body is a lot weaker now and needs assistance to keep it from falling over and my citta no longer has that kind of determination. I no longer have any aspiration for the magga, phala, nibbāna and the desire to become an arahant any more. These aspirations have all unquestionably disappeared. So what is there to aspire for? Why do I have to practise when there are no goals for me to aim for? If I had to do that kind of exertion today, I wouldn't be able to do it. I would die before I got started.

After my citta had reached the ultimate goal, it stopped exerting right away. My satipaṇṇā that had been working around the clock like a Dhamma Wheel stopped immediately, like shutting down a machine or a factory. I had finished my task and became an entirely different person. As soon as mahāsati and mahāpaṇṇā came to an abrupt halt, they disappeared, because there was nothing for them to destroy. Thereafter, I still practised meditation, casually, when I felt like meditating for mental and physical relaxation. This was how I came to see the immeasurable benefits of the Dhamma that had fully taken control of my citta. At the same

time I also saw the harm done by the kilesas that used to dominate my citta, tyrannising and hurting it for countless aeons.

What, then, is there to be doubtful about? All the visual objects, sounds, aromas, flavours, and tactile sensations have existed since prehistoric times. It's you who imagine and fantasise about them. When you see or hear something, it's your citta that imagines or forms opinions about them, fooling you by telling you that they're good or bad, pretty or ugly when they themselves don't even know it. Your citta is deluded by believing the kilesas. You don't know the danger posed by your imagination. Only satipaṇṇā knows this and is capable of beating the kilesas. As soon as the kilesas start to form opinions, satipaṇṇā will know it right away. So how can the kilesas ever deceive you when you always know of their deceptions?

For instance, when you think of a tiger. As soon as you think about it, the thought will disappear. You'll know right away that this tiger is the product of saṅkhāra or thought formation. Or when you think that a woman is pretty, you'll know immediately that it's you who thinks this. The woman doesn't say anything about herself. She is just a visual object formed by the four elements of earth, water, wind and fire. It's you who form the opinion that she is pretty. As soon as this opinion is formed, satipaṇṇā will know immediately, and the opinion will disappear right away. This notion of beauty or ugliness is the product of saṅkhāra which deceives you. This is where you'll see the deception of the kilesas, not out there, but here inside your mind. This is the way of realising insight by knowing that you're fooled by the kilesas which use saṅkhāra to do it.

You have to keep on investigating until you've destroyed all the kilesas and experienced true peace and true happiness. Then the years, the months, the hours, the minutes, and all the conventional realities or sammuti will not affect you any more because you have let go. Previously it was the kilesas that dragged you to cling to them. But after all the kilesas have been destroyed, the citta becomes entirely Dhamma. The question as to where the Dhamma is will disappear. Where are you going to look for the Dhamma, when you have found and experienced the Dhamma in yourself? What is the Dhamma? You already know this. How can you ever be deluded again? After you've found the real thing, why would you follow its tracks? The tracks will lead you to the real thing you're looking for, like following the tracks of an ox. After you've found the ox, you don't have to follow the tracks any more. When you've acquired the genuine Dhamma, your endeavour comes to an end. After following the tracks of truth until reaching the real truth, the tracking is over.

As a practitioner, you have to be resolute and earnest. When your train of thought becomes worldly and pierces your citta like an arrow, you must immediately take out the arrow by stopping your worldly thoughts, no matter how intense your desire to think might be. You have to understand that this is your enemy mounting an offensive. You must suppress these thoughts. Don't cherish them. Then it will be possible for you to stop them. You have to subdue them with satipaṇṇā, which will not only curb them, but will also search for them, round them up, and destroy them. This is the way to take care of yourself and free yourself from harm and danger. You've already experienced lots of births and deaths and should be completely chastised by them and should have learned your lesson by now. When you are born, you'll also die. When you take up birth, you'll also take up dukkha.

The Lord Buddha said, 'Dukkhaṃ natthi ajjha tassa' - dukkha doesn't befall one who doesn't take up birth. Saṅkhāra not only causes you to take up birth, but it also causes you to experience dukkha by creating craving. For this reason, 'Dukkhaṃ natthi ajjha tassa' also means dukkha doesn't befall one who doesn't crave. 'Tesaṃ vupasamo sukho' - the extinction of saṅkhāra-created craving is supreme bliss. This saṅkhāra-created craving is now destroyed by the Dhamma Wheel, which is the middle way of practice, the majjhimā paṭipadā.



Investigating Avijjā

December 5th, 1966

Ven. Ajaan Mahā Boowa gave this desanā in response to an enquiry made by an Elder Bhikkhu concerning the citta and avijjā. This is what he said:

As long as one still doesn't know, one will then always go wide of the mark, for even while one is doing the investigation, one doesn't know that one is investigating avijjā. One can only guess and wonder to oneself as to what this thing really is. To oneself, it is still a perplexing question. One, therefore, focuses the citta with undivided attention to investigate in order to find out what exactly is happening right at that point. One will then eventually hit at the right spot, although one might not know what one has run into. This is because the name of avijjā, and the true and genuine avijjā, are two different things. The flow of avijjā that spreads throughout the whole world is merely its branches. It is like when we go and chase after a band of bandits - when we catch the bandits, they usually turn out to be the followers. We are totally in the dark as to the whereabouts of the leader of the bandits. We must keep up our pursuit and keep on arresting these bandits. Then we must surround them. When we have many people helping and cooperating with us in chasing these bandits, then we will have mustered up an enormous strength. We must then surround their hideout. Then we must keep on catching and arresting them. Normally, if we question any of these followers, they will not tell us who their commander is. So whichever bandits we come across, we must arrest them and tie them up until all of them are caught and accounted for. The last of the bandits that we have captured will be the leader. The chief will be found in a very important hiding place which is well secured and protected, and guarded by the members of the band. We will keep on arresting the bandits until we arrive at the cave where the chief is hiding. When we have totally eliminated all the bandits hiding in that place, then we will know clearly.

But this is just a simile. So long as the citta is still involved with anything, then it is still deluded. Whether it is delusion in the way of good or evil, it is a branch of avijjā. But the citta doesn't know what the real avijjā itself really is. Therefore, all the techniques of investigation have a purpose which will be illustrated by the following simile. It is like emptying the water from a pond so that we can catch the fish in it. When there is plenty of water in the pond, we will not be able to make out how many fish there are, so we must first bail out the water. When the pond becomes steadily drier, then the fish will steadily converge together. All the fish will have to swim to where the water is, while at the same time the water is being continually bailed out. All the fish will steadily come together. As the water level decreases, one will get to see the fish swimming here and there. In the end, when all the water vanishes, then the fish will have no place to hide, and then one will be able to catch them. The sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches, that intermingle and mix with the conditions of the citta, are like the water that covers up the fish and which the fish depend on as their living environment. The purpose of our investigation into these things is similar to the man who is bailing out the water; his objective is not the water, but the fish themselves. The objective of our investigation is not these objects either. We just want to get to know about these things steadily, because as soon as we get to know about them, then the citta will lose its anxiety and worry. The citta will get to know about those things that it is involved with, and it will also get to know itself, the one which is involved with these things, and it will know that it is in the wrong. It will know that it is its own misperceptions that cause it to be obsessed with loving and hating these things. Then the scope of the investigation will become steadily narrower and narrower as it steadily draws inwards.

This is similar to the water that becomes steadily dried up. When one investigates the body, which is an element aggregate of earth, water, air and heat, one will see that it is similar to all of the other external material things. There is no difference between them. This is the aspect of materiality. They are all made up of the four elements. What is abnormal or unnatural is the perception of the citta that has preconceptions about these things. It is a branch of avijjā that leads towards the principal part. The more one investigates and sees clearly the things that come into involvement with oneself, the more clearly will one see the one who goes out to be involved with them. It is likewise with the water level. The more it decreases, the more clearly will one come to see the fish. The more one can see clearly from the investigation into the natural processes - both those outside and inside the body - and one's cetasika Dhamma, the mental concomitants, then the more one will see clearly the point or origin, or the principal determinant that gives rise to these things. The more we keep driving inwards, the more restricted will be the field of knowing inside the citta. Correspondingly, the anxiety of the heart will become less and less. The scope of the flow of the heart that is

being sent outwards will become narrower. Whenever it stirs itself up to become involved with other things, it will investigate those things that it is involved with, as well as investigating its stirring up.

In this way, it gets to see both aspects of things. One gets to see the truth of both sides - that is, the things that come into involvement, and the one who becomes involved with them. One then keeps on progressively driving inwards. Once having got to the real avijjā, for most practitioners who do not have a teacher to forewarn them, they will take it as the real thing, since they have investigated everything else, and know clearly within their heart that they have truly realized the truth of all these things, and have truly let go of all of them. But the one who knows all of these things - what is it? One now becomes possessive and protective of this thing. This is the convergence of avijjā, and one now becomes deluded with it. This avijjā is the delusion of oneself. Concerning the delusion for the external things, this is just a branch of avijjā. It is not the real avijjā itself. This is what one becomes deluded with. One is now deluded with the one who knows about all of these things. But who is this one? What is it? This is what one has forgotten to investigate and analyse. Once the citta has been restricted into a very close and small sphere, it will gather into a point. This nucleus of the citta that appears at that time is very bright and luminous. It is rapturous, joyful, bold and courageous. It seems that all of the happiness has gathered into that point.

What are all of these things the results of? If we want to speak in terms of cause and effects, then this is a result. We can say, that this is the result of our patipadā - our mode of practice. This is correct as long as we are not deluded in it. But if we are deluded, then this is samudaya. This is the core, or the heart, of samudaya. But for the practitioner who is interested in investigating everything that comes into contact with him, he will then inevitably be drawn towards this point, because everything else that one has investigated and realised the nature of, will no longer attract one's attention. And whenever one turns the citta to investigate these things, the citta will take no interest in them, for it is already satiated with these investigations. But the thing that can attract its attention will draw its interest towards it. It will now become interested at that point. All the mental conditions arise from this point. The concoctions of the citta arise from this point. The sukha that arises appears at that point, but the sukha that appears also exhibits its changes. It then becomes a cause of one's investigation, because at this level one is extremely watchful. This sukha is not constant. The avijjā-contrived sukha is not stable. Sometimes it manifests its changeability by becoming slightly dull enough to indicate that it is fluctuating. And this is how it keeps on changing. This process of change is as subtle as the subtlety of the Dhamma of this level.

This is the point which can cause one to become complacent. This is the point where an intent and indefatigable practitioner can become complacent if he doesn't have anyone to forewarn him and exhort him about this. However, in spite of this complacency, if he still keeps up his interest and scrutiny, he will still be able to know, for this is the only place which can attract the heart. It is the cause of the attraction and the cause of one's satisfaction in doing the investigation, and of the gratification in that experience. Such is the way it was with my investigation. It can really bewilder one, to the extent where one cannot make out what avijjā really is. One then ends up with the understanding that it is this thing, which is all the time brilliant and luminous, that will be nibbāna. When I say all the time, I refer to all the time of one who is constantly exerting, and one who is continually doing the work of purification. One is extremely protective and possessive, not allowing anything to touch or impinge upon it. One is extremely vigilant and mindful. As soon as anything comes into contact with it, one will immediately try to remedy it. But the thing that one is being possessive of - one doesn't know what it is. This protectiveness and possessiveness is a burden to the citta, but during that time one doesn't know this.

It is not until the time is ripe that one becomes interested in doing the investigation at this point. One now raises the question: "What is this thing? I have investigated everything else, but what is this thing?" The citta then begins to concentrate at this point, while paññā is also being directed and focussed right at it. What really is this thing? Is this the truth, or not yet the truth? Is this vijjā or avijjā? All of these are the perplexing questions that arise out of one's investigation. One then keeps on with the investigation with the following approach: Why is there protectiveness and possessiveness? If it is really the truth, why is there the need for protectiveness or care? Taking care of it is also a burden and a responsibility. If this is the case, then this thing must be one form of harm to one who still has protectiveness and care or a thing that one should not put one's trust in although one still doesn't know what this thing is - whether it is the real avijjā or not - since one has never experienced or seen the difference between the true genuine vijjā and avijjā, or in other words, between vimutti and sammuti.

This is how paññā can arise. That is, one has now become interested at that point. One then investigates at that point. Looking in retrospect at what I have investigated, this thing is really quite involved and unusual. But what I have said here is brief, precise, and right to the point, and enough to bring the point across in as much as it is appropriate to do so. This can be summarised as follows: Whatever manifests

itself, that is what one must investigate. Whatever appears, it all has to do with sammuti. This refers to the subtle Dhamma that appears within the heart. Finally, the point that is very bright and luminous is precisely the spot of avijjā. One must concentrate right there with paññā. This particular nature is also one form of a natural process, similar to all of the other sabhāva-dhammas everywhere. One cannot take it as 'I' or 'mine', but one's possessiveness and protectiveness indicates that one is taking it as 'I' and 'mine'. Consequently, it means that one is going on the wrong path. This is how paññā keeps probing and moving in. What is this thing? It is like looking back at oneself. When one looks outside, one can see the earth, the sky, and everything else that comes within the field of one's vision. But when one doesn't look at oneself, one will not be able to see oneself.

The paññā of this level is the paññā that turns around to look at the termination point or the end. When paññā contemplates and investigates, it does so in the same way that it did with all the other things - that is, not for the purpose of holding on to them. This is the investigation to see according to the truth of these things that appear as they are. When this particular thing ceases, it doesn't go out like all the other things. As far as the cessation of all the other things is concerned, they happen at the time when one can feel within oneself that one has now understood them. That is the way that it is with these things. But it is not so with this particular thing. This thing just dissolves suddenly. It is similar to a lightning flash. It happens just at one instant. Or it can be said that it just turns over and then vanishes. It is only after the disappearance of this thing that one realises that this thing was avijjā. This is because once this thing has disappeared, then there is nothing left behind. There is nothing to appear as sammuti any more. What remains is not like the other things - it is the nature that is purified. Even though one has never come across it before, once it appears, one does not have any doubt. This is when the burden is totally shed off.

It was this thing that was taken as 'I' - this was when it was still unbroken. Whatever one investigated, it was for this thing. As far as 'knowing' was concerned, it was this 'I' that knew. Brightness - it was this 'I' that was bright. Being light, it was this 'I' that was light. Being happy, it was this 'I' that was happy. This 'I' refers specifically to this thing. This is the real avijjā. Everything was done for this thing. Once this thing has dissolved, there is nothing to strive for any more. Finish! This can be compared to a pot whose bottom has fallen out. No matter how much water is poured into it, none can be retained. Everything that is concocted up following the natural way of the khandhas can still be created, but there is nothing to retain them. This is because that particular container or vessel has already been dissolved away, leaving nothing behind. As soon as they are concocted up, they will immediately cease, pass away and disappear, for there is nothing to retain them and there is no one to possess them. The nature that knows that there is no longer a possessor is fully contented within itself. This is the nature that is completely satiated. It has got rid of all responsibility and care. This is the state of contentment, or the absolute state. It was this avijjā that concealed this nature, and which prevented one from seeing the natural wonder of the citta, which is the true and natural thing. Instead, one took and saw this avijjā as a natural and wonderful thing. One, therefore, becomes obsessed, protective and possessive of this avijjā, and has the understanding that this thing is 'I' and 'mine', by thinking that 'My citta is bright and luminous; my citta is bold and courageous; my citta is happy; my citta knows everything'.

But this nature doesn't know itself. The Lord Buddha called this the genuine avijjā, but as soon as one turns around and realises this, then this thing just dissolves away. As soon as one knows it, then this thing cannot remain standing. It will then disintegrate. As soon as this thing fades away, it is like opening the cover of a pot and being able to see all the things contained within it. It was only this thing that covered everything up. The ultimate truth, which is apart from the Four Noble Truths: dukkha, samudaya, nirodha and magga, is the state of purity. It is the truth that is distinct from the Four Noble Truths. Among these Four Noble Truths, two of them bind, and two of them unbind. What do they unbind or bind? They bind this pure citta by enshrouding it. To unbind means to reveal it, by removing the veil of concealment, so that one can see the true and natural state of purity. For the truth of it has always been so. But the two truths of dukkha and samudaya cover it up like the cover of a pot, covering the pot so that it is not possible to see the things contained within it. The magga, which is one's mode of practice, reveals or exposes. Magga and nirodha uncover it, so that one can see what is contained within the pot, seeing clearly what they are. Even though the state of purity has always existed, it is blotted out by dukkha and samudaya. But on the other hand, magga and nirodha are on the correction side, and they will expose it. That which they reveal is this state of purity. It is this state of purity that dukkha and samudaya conceal. Once it is exposed, then that is the end of the problem.

These two truths are phenomena - they are sammuti. The magga is sammuti. Nirodha is sammuti. Once having manifested themselves, they then pass away. Dukkha and samudaya are also sammuti. Once the two sammutis have overcome and corrected the other two sammutis, then that nature becomes an absolute or

unconditioned nature, which is called vimutti, and this is what is revealed. This is the unveiling of vimutti, the natural state of purity. This is where the burden is shed off. That is the end of it. Once one has attained to the state of purity, one no longer conceives up the illusion of self. But externally, all the external Loka Dhammas, the external worldly things, still remain as they are. The internal Loka Dhamma, which refers to the good and evil and the dukkha and sukha within oneself, ceases to be a problem when this point finally dissolves away. One who has investigated up to this level will find that the scope of his work is not wide. Once he has learned the way of tackling it from a teacher who has known, experienced, and passed beyond it, he will be able to progress on very quickly. But the crucial point is that he must not engage in speculating or imagining about it, as this is not the way. Instead he should investigate whatever appears within the field of his awareness, and get to understand it, going on like this step by step; this is the correct way to do it.

Avijjā refers specifically to this thing. This is the genuine avijjā. All the other things are just its branches and divisions. It is like vines and creepers that grow in one place but can spread anywhere. They can extend very far and wide. As soon as one takes hold of them, and traces them back to the root, they will then lead one back to this one point. This is where the main stem is, and where the root is. Once the root has been pulled out, then they will all wither away. The branches and divisions of avijjā are involved, numerous and expansive. So when one has got to the real avijjā, one doesn't know what it is. But one keeps on investigating. One has paññā, so one keeps on investigating. Even though one doesn't know that this thing is avijjā, if one still keeps on investigating, then this is the correct way of doing it. Consequently, it will be revealed. It is like when one is eating. The state of fulfilment will steadily appear so that one can see it very clearly. What I have related to you here is a summary of avijjā.

Avijjā is the origin of birth, the origin of kamma and the origin of the vaṭṭa cakka, the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The citta under the control of avijjā perpetually builds up births and existences right within itself. It is the nature of this citta not to remain still, but to be constantly creating births and existences. It goes in pursuit and accumulates things for itself. Usually it collects things to push itself down morally. To destroy the wheel of kamma is to exterminate avijjā. Once it is obliterated, there will be no rebirth.

All the external things that one used to be involved with will still come into contact, but they just come and go, and do not get in to take up roots and residence right within this point any more. They merely pass by, come and go. One can also see with absolute clarity that this nature does not continue on with anything. One has seen previously, step by step, how this nature used to carry on with things. Once this nature no longer goes on with anything, one then knows. So concerning birth and existences, as to whether one will be born again or not, it will not be necessary for one to speculate about it, because one's present state has clearly indicated to one. Once it no longer continues on or goes on building up any more lives or existences, then there is no birth or life to follow in the future, since the generating source has been destroyed. It will no longer build up itself, nor erect any cause for itself, like it used to do in the past. This is the demolition of the generating source. This is when the khandhas become entirely khandhas. The khandhas are now entirely pure, having nothing to do with the kilesas. When that particular citta is without any kilesas, then these khandhas are also free of the kilesas. They are now just instruments. But if the heart is tainted by the kilesas, then correspondingly, all the khandhas will be equally defiled. Rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa will then become the factors that will enhance and strengthen the kilesas within the heart. If the citta is pure, then the khandhas are also pure. Nothing is defiled by the kilesas. But as long as the citta is still tainted with the kilesas, then the khandhas will always be defiled. That is the way it is.

The ceaseless building up of lives and existences is the way of the citta. It cannot remain still. Such is the nature of the citta that is still possessed by the revolving wheel as the prime mover. It will still have to turn round continually, because all of its turning around is solely geared towards lives and existences. But once that nature has disintegrated, then there is no longer a builder. One then knows that one will not take up birth any more. It was the same way when the Lord Buddha made his utterance. One knows right within the present, that there is nothing to build itself up any more. Good is one kind of virtue and it does not intermix. One also knows that evil is another thing, while this one, which is the citta, is also another different thing. They are not connected. This separation is not forced, but is something that happens naturally. But when they merge together, then one does not force this either. There are causes that bring them together. When these causes disappear, then they consequently dissociate by themselves. From my own experience and investigation, there was a particular instant when this thing came to cease. It happened at a single moment. It was a time that one had never thought of before. It was an instant that attracted one's attention. At the time when avijjā ceased, it happened in a single moment. It was as if it had turned itself over into another world - that is, if one uses the world as a simile. It turned into a new world by suddenly turning itself over. It just suddenly flipped over. Avijjā then ceased at that moment. It was not foreseen or anticipated that it would turn over - it just happened of itself. This is the subtle aspect.

In following the Buddhist path of practice; for the purpose of freeing oneself from dukkha, there are two tricky points. During the time when the attachment, the upādāna, between the body and the citta, is being cut off, and they are going their separate ways, there is a twist to it. Another trap is at this point. These are the two places that a practitioner can misperceive. Apart from these, there should not be any doubt. It is only at these two places. I used to spend the time developing my practice at Wat Doi Dhammachedi, of Tan Ajaan Kong Mar. It was there where I was puzzled by the question of avijjā. During that time the citta was so bright that I was amazed and awe-stricken by it. All the radiance, lustre, splendour, and marvel, had all gathered within it. I was lost in the wonder of the magnificence of the citta. Looking at my body, I could not see it at all. Everything that I looked at seemed to have turned into the space element. Everything was all empty. The citta was at its brightest. While I was lost in amazement and awe-struck, I was actually lost in delusion unknowingly. Speaking in terms of the subtle Dhamma, this is one form of delusion. But fortunately, while I was admiring the magnificence of the citta and murmuring to myself how fantastic this citta could become, there unexpectedly arose the Dhamma within me. It was as if someone was talking to me inside.

This is what it said: ‘Wherever there is a centre or nucleus of the one who knows, that is where the source of birth is’. That nature actually has a focus. There actually is a nucleus of this knowing and brightness. But then I was not considering what this point was, so I was really dumbfounded. Then I concentrated in contemplating and meditating on this question. It was in hind-sight; after I had turned my investigation to this point, and had finally solved this problem, that I realised the implication of this guidance that had foretold that wherever the spot or nucleus is, that is where the source of birth is. Indeed, it referred to this very thing. Before, I could not comprehend this. It was, in fact, a spot. No matter how wonderful it is, it is still the nucleus of that wonder. It is a spot that is readily discernible. But once that thing disintegrates, then there is no longer a spot, because this spot is also sammuti. Regardless of its subtlety, it is still sammuti. This is what I call the true and genuine avijjā. Whenever I exhorted my fellow bhikkhus, I always told them that when they have got to this point, they must not be protective of anything. They must not cherish, but they must investigate. Even if the citta should be exterminated from this investigation, then let it happen. Let’s get to see what will be the thing that will realise and experience the state of purity. Should everything be totally annihilated, without anything to experience this state of purity, let’s find that out. But just don’t hold on to anything.

This is for the purpose of preventing them from becoming protective of this thing. If this drastic measure is not applied, then they will unavoidably become attached to it. All that is needed is just to get to know. If anything should cease, then let it cease. Even if the citta should cease due to the power of the investigation, then let it be. Don’t cherish it. This is what one has to commit oneself to while doing this investigation. But nothing can escape from the truth. Whatever arises must cease. Whatever is real and in its natural state, will not cease. That is, this pure citta will not cease. Everything else ceases, but the one who knows these cessations does not cease. The one who knows that all of these things have ceased does not cease. That is just the way it is. Now if one wants to say that one has withheld this, one can. Or if one wants to say that one hasn’t retained this, how can one assert this when one knows within oneself? But one must not be possessive, for if one should cling, then it is similar to holding on to avijjā, because avijjā is subtle and it is inside the citta. If one cherishes the citta, it is similar to clinging on to avijjā. So if the citta should be exterminated along with avijjā, let it be. One should go right ahead and cut them down. Don’t leave anything behind. Wipe them all out, for this is the most fitting way to do it. If there is any hesitance, one will definitely be attached to it. This refers to the practice at this stage. One must not waver, but must wholly commit one’s effort into revealing and uncovering it all. Whatever should cease, let them cease. This is the right and proper approach to it. The part that does not cease will not cease under any circumstances. Regardless of what one may assert, it will not cease.

Consider the following example: When a bandit has taken refuge in a house, if we want to save the house, then that will allow the bandit to shoot at us. But if it is deemed necessary to burn down this house, then we must do it. If we want to save the house and consequently allow the bandit to go on living, then it will cause more damage to things that are much more valuable than the house. So we have to sacrifice this house and set fire to it. In like manner we should set fire to avijjā. Should the citta cease, then let it cease. But in fact the citta does not cease. But one only gets to know this after avijjā has been totally burned down. One now realises that this precious state of purity has been covered up by avijjā. Once avijjā has ceased, then this state of purity is revealed. Instead of disappearing with avijjā, this state of purity does not vanish. But if one becomes possessive of avijjā, then one will become attached to it and will not make it through. From what I have investigated, that is the way it is. All of the sāvakas who had seen the truth of the Lord Buddha had all accepted the Lord Buddha. They accepted him on the basis of the principle of truth, and not based on appearances or concepts. Their acceptance was based on the living truth that they had similarly

experienced, just like the way that the Lord Buddha had experienced before them. It is an acceptance that has never faded away. Whether one is near or far away from the Lord Buddha, this will never diminish, as the truth is identical. Even the fact that the Lord Buddha had passed into parinibbāna over two thousand five hundred years ago, is not in conflict with this truth, since that has to do with sammuti, with the time and place, or with the element aggregate.

But the truth principle itself is unchanging. That state of purity always remains to be the state of purity, both during the time when one is still alive, and when one has finally passed away into nibbāna. This is the absolute truth. One who has known the principle of truth will believe in the principle of truth. The important point is that one should not hold anything back. When it is the time to exterminate, one must get rid of all of them. Don't cherish anything. One must investigate so that one gets to know everything. Whatever appears, one must take that appearance as the object of one's investigation. If nothing becomes manifest, then one doesn't know what to investigate. When good arises, one must be aware of it. Evil, sukha and dukkha, all arise within the heart, and nowhere else. One must keep track of them and know them all, because all of these things arise and cease. They are the things that deceive and cause one to be deluded. There is nothing else but these things - the things that arise and cease. They fool one and make one become deluded. Apart from these things, there is nothing else that deceives. But we take it as I and Self. Just as you said earlier, this citta has a thousand and one faces. It can really manifest as 'I' and self. Even without using any device, it can easily deceive us. It does this right in our presence. This is the way we deceive ourselves. Other people might fool us some of the time, but we fool ourselves all of the time. This is really sad.

Once one has corrected one's own deception, then all the harm is eliminated. Then there will be nothing to fool oneself any more. Everything is true. All the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, will not deceive one any more. It was only oneself who threw dust into one's eyes. Before, when one saw things, one began to imagine that they were such and such, and thus began the process of forming pictures and images. One used one's own ārammaṇa to deceive oneself, while the object had already disappeared into the blue. Like when one had seen something or witnessed some event which subsequently passed away and disappeared: the mental images that were drawn within the citta did not vanish. This was the thing that deceived oneself, constantly fooling one. Stepping on a twig and thinking that it was a snake, one then jumps into the air. Checking it and seeing that it was not a snake, one then loses one's apprehension. But if one was still uncertain, one would jump again. But once having examined it and realised that it was a piece of wood, one would then have overcome one's doubt.

It is likewise with one's practice when one has investigated, and known what it is, one then loses one's doubt. When one knows within oneself that such and such is so and so, one then will have got rid of one's uncertainty. If one doesn't know what these things are, one will hang in suspense. The alarm and anxiety of the citta is boundless - it can only be curbed by the Dhamma. Nothing else in this whole world can do it. It is therefore good to be inclined to meditate and contemplate - one will inevitably find a way out. Even if one is blocked by a mountain, one will still be able to make it through. It can be achieved by the power of investigation. When one keeps on probing and examining, one will eventually come across the solution to the problem. Having comprehended the cause and effect relationship, one will then see through the riddle. In the beginning stages, these puzzles will be gradually solved. Finally, at the climax, when avijjā is uprooted once and for all, this will happen all in one instant.



A Glossary of Pali and Buddhist Terms

Common Thai words used in the text:

Wat	Monastery.
Pa	Forest.
Baan	Village.
Acharn	Also written as Ajahn, a polite way of addressing a monk with more than 10 pansa, see Ācariya.
Sālā	Meeting hall in a monastery, a hall where the monks can meet and eat. The hall is also used for acts within the Sangha, and for Dhamma talks.
Pansa	See vassa in Pāli glossary.
Than	Venerable, normally addressing a monk.
Phra	Normally means: Monk. It is used to address a monk, but sometimes also can be used to address laypeople that are committed to practice. To make it clear that it only means monk, one should use PhraSong
Kruba	(Isaan word for Than) Venerable, normally addressing a monk.
Kruba Acharn	See: Than Acharn.
Luangta	Venerable Grandfather,” a reverential term for an elderly monk.
LuangPhor	“Venerable Father,” a reverential term for an elderly monk.
LuangPhu	“Venerable Grandfather,” a reverential term for an elderly monk.
Phor	Father.
Mae	Mother.
Than Acharn	“Venerable Teacher,” a reverential term for addressing a senior monk, or the abbot.

The following is a list of the Pāli words used in the text, together with a brief explanation according to the Thai Forest Dhamma Tradition.

Abhidhamma	(1) In the discourses of the Pāli canon, this term simply means ‘higher Dhamma’, and a systematic attempt to define the Buddha’s teachings and understand their interrelationships. (2) A later collection of analytical treatises based on lists of categories drawn from the teachings in the discourses, added to the Canon several centuries after the Buddha’s life.
Ācariya	Teacher, mentor; used also as a term of respect for a senior Bhikkhu.
Akālika	Timeless, not dependent on time.
Akusala	Bad, demerit, unskillful, evil, unwholesome.
Anāgāmi	Non-Returner. A person who has abandoned the five lower fetters and will never again return to this world. also pure abodes at the end of glossary.
Anālaya	Unattached.
Ānāpānasati	Mindfulness of breathing. A meditation practice in which one maintains one’s attention and mindfulness on the sensations of breathing. One of the best known forms of meditation practice.
Anattā	The five <i>khandhas</i> (see below) are not self individually or collectively, nor is there a self-entity to be found anywhere within the heart (<i>citta</i>). It is one of the three universal characteristics of all phenomena. The other two are <i>anicca</i> and <i>dukkha</i> .
Anicca(ṃ)	The unstable, impermanent, transient nature of all things in all realms of existence; in other words all things arise and cease, are subject to change and will become otherwise. <i>Anicca</i> is one of the three universal characteristics of existence.
Appanā	To attain, fix the mind upon. This refers to the deep state of <i>samādhi</i> , also called one-pointedness
Arahant	A liberated person; an Accomplished One; a person who has abandoned all ten of the fetters (<i>saṃyojana</i>) that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth and who is thus not destined for future rebirth. One who is enlightened; the final stage of the Noble path.
Ārammaṇa	Support, a supporting condition for the mind, an object; sense data or objects. Usually meaning “those sense objects, that give rise to emotional reactions”.
Ariya	Noble, ideal. Also, a ‘Noble One’ (see ariyapuggala).
Ariya-puggala	Noble person; enlightened individual. An individual who has realised at least the lowest of the four noble paths (see magga) or their fruitions (see phala). Compare puthujana (worldling).

Ariya-sacca	Noble truth; The word ‘ariya’ in this context means ‘objective’ or ‘universal’ truth. These are the Four Noble Truths: The Noble Truth of <i>dukkha</i> ; the Noble Truth of the origin of <i>dukkha</i> ; the Noble Truth of the cessation of <i>dukkha</i> , and the Noble Truth of the Eightfold Path leading to the cessation of <i>dukkha</i> .
Āsava	Commonly translated as effluents or outflows. <i>Āsavas</i> are those defilements that ‘flow out’ from the heart into thoughts, speech, and action. There are usually considered to be four types: sensual desire, desire for existence, views and opinions, and fundamental ignorance.
Asubha	That which is unpleasant, loathsome, contrary to what is usually desired.
Avijjā	Will, intention; not knowing or understanding correctly, but wanting to know and understand; fundamental ignorance; delusion about the nature of the citta. <i>Avijjā</i> is the lack of any knowledge that is higher than the level of mere convention, or lack of insight. It is ignorance so profound that it is self-obscuring, turning everything upside down, it makes us believe that what is wrong is right, what is unimportant is important, what is bad is good. Ignorance here does not indicate a lack of knowledge but rather a lack of knowing, or knowing wrongly. <i>Avijjā</i> is that which must be overcome and transcended to realise enlightenment.
Āyatana	Spheres of sensation; sense fields. They include the internal fields – eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and heart and the external – the spheres of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and mind.
Bhāvanā	Development by means of meditation.
Bhikkhu	A monk, usually in reference to Buddhism. One who lives on donated food.
Bhikkhuni	A Buddhist nun; (The order of the Buddhist nuns has been extinct for more than 1000 years)
Brahmā	“Great One”; an inhabitant of the heavens of form or formlessness.
Brahmavihāra	The four ‘sublime’ or ‘divine’ abodes that are attained through the development of boundless <i>mettā</i> (goodwill), <i>karuṇā</i> (compassion), <i>muditā</i> (gladness at the well being of others), <i>upekkhā</i> (equanimity).
Buddha	Derived from “supreme knowing”; awake; one who has attained enlightenment on his own, without a proper teaching present.
Buddho	Used as a <i>parikamma</i> (preparatory) word for the recollection of the Buddha.
Caṅkama	Walking meditation, usually in the form of walking back and forth along a prescribed path.
Cetasika	Mental concomitant (see <i>vedanā</i> , <i>saññā</i> , and <i>saṅkhāra</i>).
Citta	Usually translated as the mind or the heart; the pure citta is radiant and bright and is a state of knowingness. The <i>citta</i> of a person who is not an Arahant is under the power of <i>avijjā</i> . As long as there is <i>avijjā</i> there is intention. Intention creates <i>kamma</i> that attaches itself to the <i>citta</i> . Everything originates within this <i>citta</i> first. One can see the <i>citta</i> as the driver or programmer of the body (biological robot). If the <i>citta</i> intends to think or walk, feel, memorize etc., it will do so by using the functions of the body.
Dāna	Giving, making gifts, generosity.
Desanā	A Talk on Dhamma; exposition of the doctrine.
Deva(s)	‘Shining One’ – an inhabitant of the heavens of sensual bliss, which are immediately above the human realm.
Dhamma	Phenomenon; event; reality; the Truth; the way things are in and of themselves; the basic principles which underlie their behaviour. Dhamma is used also to refer to the teachings of the Buddha.
Dhātu	Element; natural condition; essence. Thus, the four elements of earth (solidity), water (liquidity), fire (heat) and air (motion).
Dhutaṅga	Voluntary ascetic practices that monks and other meditators may undertake from time to time or as a long-term commitment in order to cultivate renunciation and contentment, and to stir up energy. For the monks, there are thirteen such practices: (1) using only patched-up robes; (2) using only one set of three robes; (3) going for alms; (4) not bypassing any donors on one’s alms path; (5) eating no more than one meal a day; (6) eating only from the alms-bowl; (7) refusing any food offered after the alms-round; (8) living in the forest; (9) living under a tree; (10) living under the open sky; (11) living in a cemetery; (12) being content with whatever dwelling one has; (13) not lying down.
Dosa	Aversion; hatred; anger. One of three unwholesome roots (<i>mūla</i>) in the mind.
Dukkha(ri)	Disease, discomfort, discontent, suffering and pain; it is the unsatisfactory nature of all phenomena. It is one of the universal characteristics of existence.
Jhāna	Mental absorption. A state of strong concentration focused on a single physical sensation (resulting in four <i>rūpa-jhānas</i>) or mental sensation (resulting in four <i>arūpa-jhānas</i>). Development of <i>jhāna</i> arises from the temporary suspension of the five hindrances (see <i>nīvaraṇa</i>) through the development of five mental factors: <i>vitakka</i> (directed thought), <i>vicāra</i> (evaluation), <i>pīti</i> (rapture), <i>sukha</i> (pleasure), and <i>ekaggatārammana</i> (singleness of concentration).
Kamma	The law of cause and effect; intentional acts of body, speech and mind which result in becoming and birth. Actions of body, speech or mind that have a content of good, bad or neutral which will bring back a corresponding result.
Kammaṭṭhāna	Lit: “ <i>kamma</i> = action, <i>ṭhāna</i> = a region or place.” The basis of practice, subjects of meditation.

Karuṇā	Compassion; sympathy; the aspiration to find a way to be truly helpful to oneself and others. One of the ten perfections (<i>pāramīs</i>) and one of the four 'sublime abodes' (<i>brahmvihāra</i>).
Kāyagata-sati	Mindfulness immersed in the body. This is a blanket term covering several meditation themes: mindfulness of breathing; being mindful of the body's posture; being mindful of one's activities; analysing the body into its parts; analysing the body into its physical properties (see <i>dhātu</i>); contemplating the fact that the body is inevitably subject to death and disintegration. <i>Khandha(s)</i> Heap; group; aggregate; physical and mental components of the personality and of sensory experience in general. Normally it refers to the five <i>khandhas</i> , namely <i>rūpa</i> , <i>vedanā</i> , <i>saññā</i> , <i>saṅkhāra</i> , and <i>viññāṇa</i> .
Kilesa(s)	Fangs or soldiers of <i>avijjā</i> ; normally translated as defilement(s). The usual list includes greed, aversion and delusion in their various forms; passion, hypocrisy, arrogance, envy, conceit, vanity, pride, stinginess, worry, stubbornness, complacency, laziness, restlessness, shamelessness, and all sorts of more subtle variations.
Kusala	Wholesome, skilful, good, meritorious. An action characterized by this moral quality (<i>kusala-kamma</i>) is bound to result (eventually) in happiness and a favourable outcome. Actions characterised by its opposite (<i>akusala-kamma</i>) lead to sorrow. See <i>kamma</i> .
Lobha	Greed; passion; unskilful desire. <i>Rāga</i> is the most predominant in this group. One of three unwholesome roots (<i>mūla</i>) in the mind.
Loka	The world.
Loka-dhamma	Affairs or Things, that matter in the world. The standard list gives eight: wealth, loss of wealth, status, loss of status, praise, criticism, pleasure, and pain.
Lokavidū	One who sees and knows the cosmos. Also an epithet for the Buddha.
Magga	Path. Usually referring to the eight fold path leading to <i>nibbāna</i> , that is: Right View, Right Attitude, Right Speech, Right Activity, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. When it is used in the combination of <i>magga</i> , <i>phala</i> and <i>nibbāna</i> then it refers to the four Noble paths – the path to Stream-entry (<i>Sotāpanna</i>), the path to Once-returning (<i>Sakadāgāmī</i>), the path to Non-returning (<i>Anāgāmī</i>) and the path to Arahantship.
Mahā	Great, superior. In Thailand, also a degree in <i>Pāli</i> studies.
Majjhima	Middle; appropriate; just right.
Māna	Conceit.
Mettā	Friendliness; pure love; loving kindness.
Moha	Delusion.
Nāma	Name or meaning. The four mental groups of the five <i>khandhas</i> .
Nibbāna	Lit: 'Extinguished'; liberation; the unbinding of the mind from mental outflows (<i>āsava</i>) and the 10 fetters (<i>saṅyojana</i>) which bind it to the round of rebirth. Since this term is used to refer also to the extinguishing of fire, it carries connotations of stilling, cooling and peace. (According to the physics taught at the time of the Buddha, a burning fire seizes or adheres to its fuel; when extinguished, it is un-bound). <i>Nibbāna</i> is the ultimate goal of Buddhist training.
Nimitta	A sign. In meditation practice, a mental image which is usually visual, a vision.
Nirodhā	Cessation, disbanding stopping; ending of <i>dukkha</i> ; the final truth.
Opanayiko	Referring inwardly; to be brought inward. An epithet for the Dhamma.
Ovāda	Advice, instruction.
Pāli	The canon of the Buddhist texts or the ancient language in which it is written.
Paññā	Wisdom, discernment; insight; common sense; ingenuity.
Parikamma	Preparatory practice. Preparatory meditation.
Parinibbāna	Final <i>Nibbāna</i> attained at the death of the Buddha or any of the Arahants and the ultimate state of <i>nibbāna</i> reached thereafter.
Pariyatti	Theoretical understanding of Dhamma obtained through reading, study, and learning. It is often used in connection to <i>paṭipatti</i> (the practice of Dhamma) and <i>paṭivedha</i> (direct, first hand realization of the Dhamma; enlightenment).
Pāṭimokkha	The code of monastic rules; the 227 rules for Buddhist monks that are usually recited every fortnight.
Paṭiccasamuppāda:	Dependent origination. The chain of the twelve conditions (causes and effects) starting from ignorance and leading to birth, illness, death and suffering.
Paṭikūla	Loathsome, disagreeable, unclean, filthy.
Paṭipadā	Road, path, way; the means of reaching a goal or destination. The 'Middle way' (<i>majjhimā paṭipadā</i>) taught by the Buddha; the path of practice described in the fourth noble truth.
Paṭipatti	The practice of Dhamma, as opposed to mere theoretical knowledge (<i>pariyatti</i>). See also <i>paṭivedha</i> .
Paṭivedha	Direct, first-hand realisation of the Dhamma. See also <i>pariyatti</i> and <i>paṭipatti</i> .
Phala	Fruition; results. Specifically, the fruition of any of the four noble paths (see <i>magga</i>).

Piṇḍapāta	Walking on the alms round.
Rāga	Lust, attachment, desire.
Rūpa	Form (visible object); bodily form; all material form both gross and subtle.
Sabhāva-dhamma	Condition of nature; any phenomenon, event, property, or quality as experienced in and of itself.
Saddhā	Faith, belief, conviction.
Sakadāgāmi	Once-Returner: A person who has abandoned the first three of the fetters (<i>saṅyojana</i>) that bind the <i>citta</i> to the cycle of rebirth and has weakened the fetters of sensual passion and malevolence, and who after death is destined to be reborn in this world only once more. It is the second of the four stages culminating in Arahant.
Sallekha-dhamma	Topics of effacement (effacing defilement) - having few wants, being content with what one has, seclusion, uninvolvedness in companionship, persistence, virtue (see <i>sīla</i>), concentration, discernment, release, and the direct knowing and seeing of release.
Samādhi	Calm, tranquillity, firmness and stability. Absorbed concentration which has many levels and kinds.
Samaṇa	Contemplative, a recluse. Literally, a person who abandons the conventional obligations of social life in order to find a way of life more 'in tune' (<i>sama</i>) with the ways of nature.
Sāmaṇera	Literally, a small <i>samaṇa</i> ; a novice monk who observes ten precepts and who is a candidate for admission to the order of <i>bhikkhus</i> . See <i>pabbajā</i> .
Samatha	Calm, tranquillity.
Sammuti	Conventional reality; convention; relative truth; supposition; anything conjured into being by the mind.
Sampajañña	Self-awareness; presence of mind; clear comprehension.
Saṃsāra	The total sphere of all the realms of existence.
Samudaya	Origin; arising. <i>Samudaya-sacca</i> is the truth of the cause of suffering.
Samyojana	Fetter that binds the mind to the cycle of rebirth (see <i>vaṭṭa</i>) - self-identification views (<i>sakkāya-diṭṭhi</i>), uncertainty (<i>vicikicchā</i>), grasping at precepts and practices (<i>sīlabbata-parāmāsa</i>); sensual passion (<i>kāma-rāga</i>), resistance (<i>vyāpāda</i>); passion for form (<i>rūpa-rāga</i>), passion for formless phenomena (<i>arūpa-rāga</i>), conceit (<i>māna</i>), restlessness (<i>uddhacca</i>), and unawareness (<i>avijjā</i>). Compare <i>anusaya</i> .
Saṅgha	The community of the Buddha's disciples. On the conventional level, this refers to the Buddhist monastic order. On the ideal level, it refers to those of the Buddha's followers, whether lay or ordained, who have attained at least the first of the four transcendent paths (see <i>magga</i>) culminating in Arahantship.
Sankhāra	Formation; condition. As a blanket term, this refers to all forces which form or condition things in nature, and to the formed or conditioned things which result (e.g., it is that which puts together the parts that make up anything). As the fourth <i>khandha</i> , it refers to thought and imagination.
Saññā	One of the mental components, the third <i>khandha</i> , which is associated with the function of memory, as for instance interpretation, recognition and association. <i>Saññā</i> both recognises the known and gives the meaning and significance which colours all of one's personal perceptions.
Sāsana	A religion, a system of teaching and training.
Sāsadā	The world teacher, the supreme teacher, the Lord Buddha as a teacher.
Sati	Mindfulness, awareness, true objective seeing. A moment of <i>sati</i> is a moment without <i>kilesas</i> .
Satipaṭṭhāna	The practice and method of developing mindfulness; usually referring to the four foundations of mindfulness – body, feelings, mind, and phenomena, viewed in and of themselves as they occur.
Sāvaka	A hearer (of the teaching). A disciple of the Buddha, especially a noble disciple
Sīla	Morality, moral behaviour, moral precepts.
Sotāpanna	Stream-Enterer: a person who has abandoned the first three of the fetters (<i>saṅyojana</i>) that bind the <i>citta</i> to the cycle of rebirth and has thus entered the 'stream' leading to Nibbāna. This is the first of the four stages culminating in Arahantship.
Sugato	Well-faring; going (or gone) to a good destination. An epithet for the Buddha.
Sukha	Pleasure; ease; satisfaction. Contented
Sutta	A thread, the discourses of the Buddha.
Tañhā	Craving – the cause of <i>dukkha</i> – which takes three forms: craving for sensuality, for becoming, and for not becoming.
Tathāgata	Literally, 'one who has truly gone (<i>tathā-gata</i>)' or 'one who has become authentic' (<i>tathā-agata</i>), an epithet used in ancient India for a person who has attained the highest spiritual goal. In Buddhism, it usually denotes the Buddha, a title the Buddha used to refer to himself.
Tilakkhaṇa	The three characteristics of existence. This refers to the three things that are invariably found to be natural to all phenomena. They are: impermanence (<i>anicca</i>), suffering (<i>dukkha</i>), and non-self (<i>anattā</i>).
Tiṭṭhaka	Three baskets: The earliest Buddhist canonical text consisting of three sections: 1. Buddha's discourses (<i>Suttas</i>), 2 Rules of Discipline (<i>Vinaya</i>), 3. The higher Dhamma (<i>Abhidhamma</i>)
Ugghatitaññu	Of swift understanding;

Upācāra	Approach, access. The name of the second stage of <i>samādhi</i> .
Upādāna	Clinging; attachment; sustenance for becoming and birth
Upanissāya	Basis, support, those good characteristics that enable someone to recognise Dhamma, to take it up and gain from it.
Upāsaka	A white robed male devotee.
Upāsikā	A white robed female devotee.
Vāsanā	Impressions and tendencies from the past.
Vassa	The Asian monsoon or rainy season; the annual three month long meditation retreat. In the forest tradition the retreat accentuates a lifestyle of renunciation, strict ascetic practices, and intensive meditation. <i>Vassa</i> also indicates the number of years a monk has been ordained and it is used to determine who is a junior or senior monk. Only if a monk had stayed the full <i>vassa</i> at the same place, then it is counted as one <i>vassa</i> .
Vaṭṭa	Circular, a round. It usually refers to the cycle of death and rebirth.
Vedanā	Feeling; the sensation of pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain.
Vijjā	Knowing, knowledge, in contrast to <i>avijjā</i> – ignorance.
Vimutti	Freedom, deliverance.
Vinaya	The Bhikkhu's code of conduct and discipline and the books containing them.
Viññāṇa	Cognisance; consciousness; the act of taking note of sense data, external and internal as they occur.
Vipāka	Result, fruition, consequence of one's action.
Vipassanā	Insight, based on a clear and quiet mind and of such a type as is deep and effective in curing the defilements. It is clear intuitive insight into physical and mental phenomena as they arise and disappear, seeing them as they are in terms of the three universal characteristics (<i>ti-lakkhaṇa</i>) and the four Noble Truths. and in terms of <i>dukkha</i> , its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation (see <i>ariya-sacca</i>).
Viriya	Energy, it is one of the 7 factors of enlightenment.