Frames of Reference
&
Duties of the Sangha

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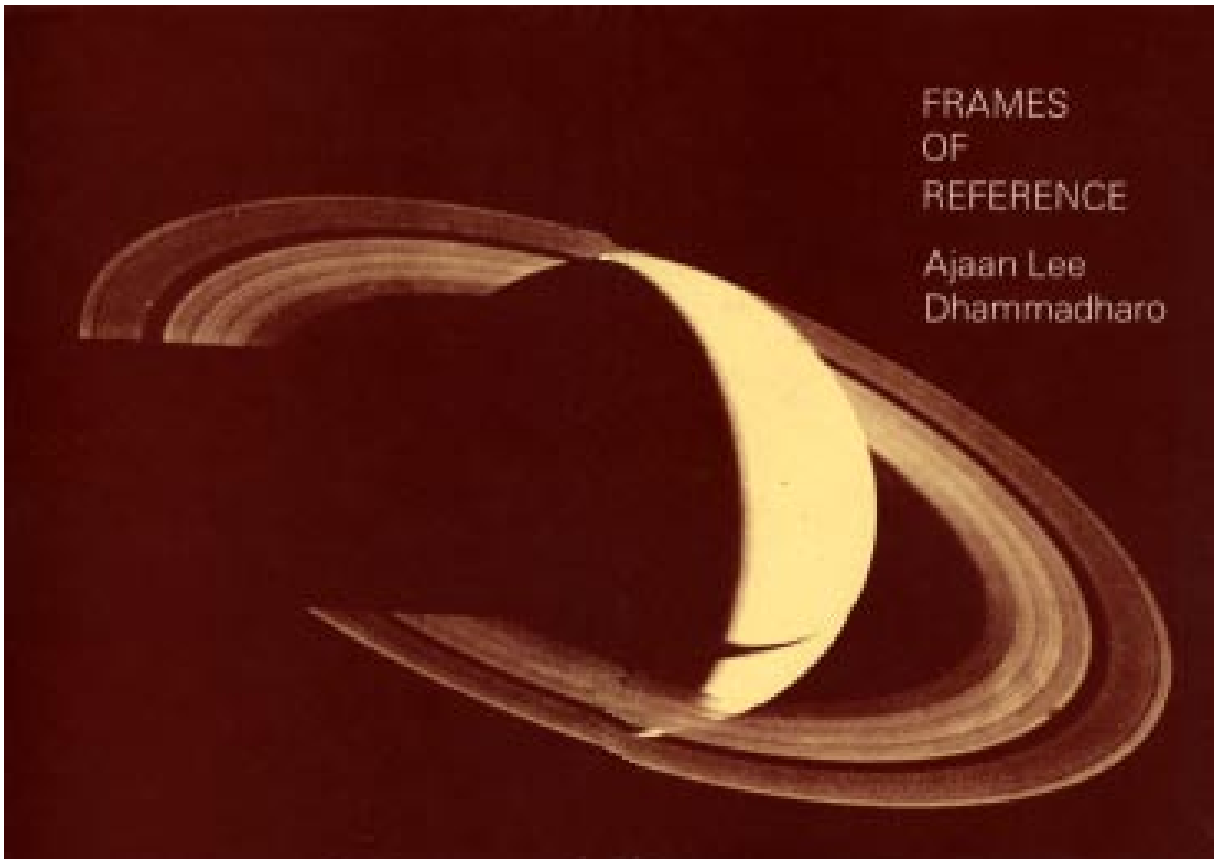

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Duties of the Sangha

by

Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo

(Phra Suddhidhammaraṅsī Gambhīramedhācariya)

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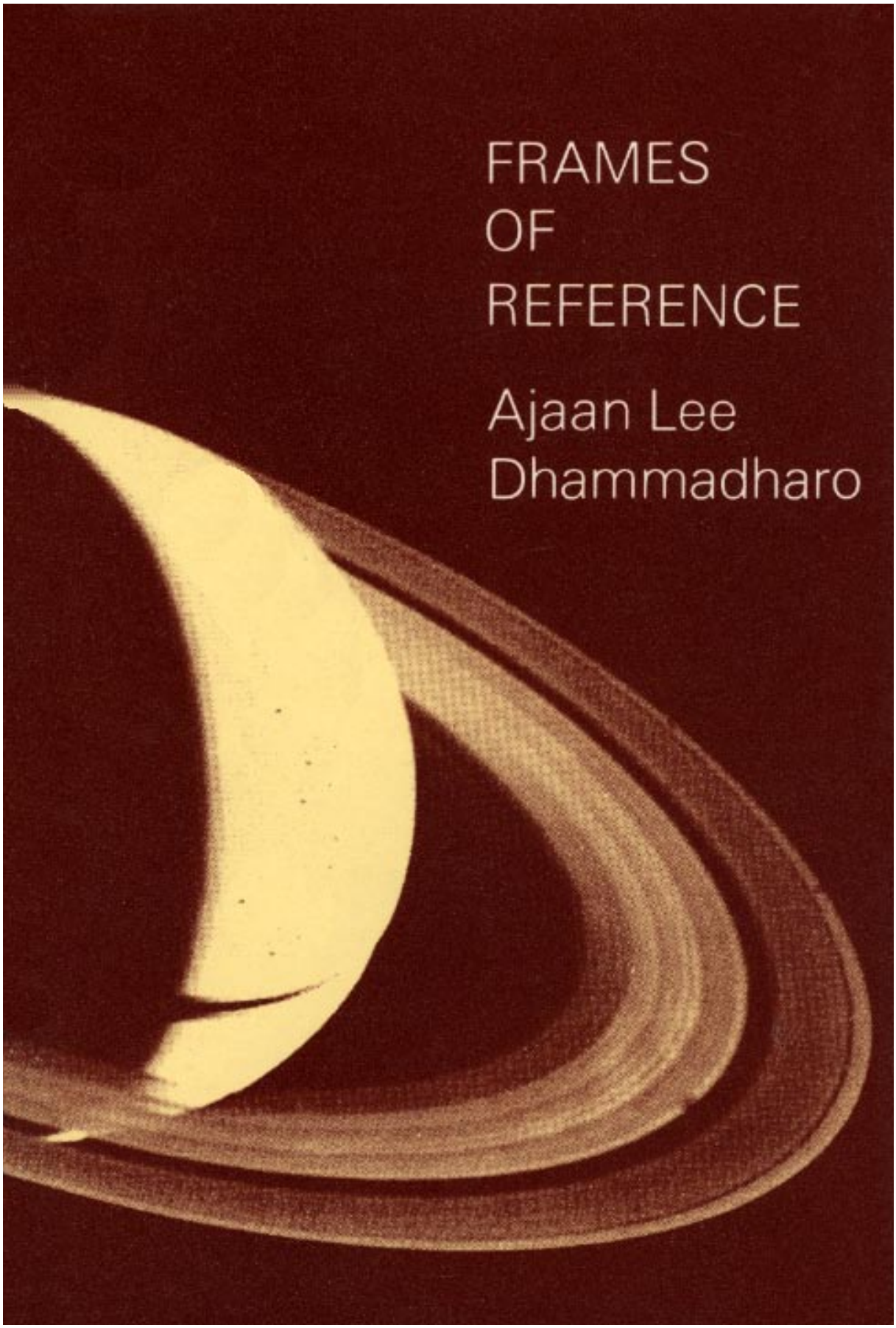

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Foreword: About the Author

Phra Ajaan Lee was born in 1906 in a rural village in Ubon Ratchathani province, northeastern Thailand. At the age of 20 he was ordained as a monk at the temple in his home village, and there began his study of Buddhist doctrine and monastic discipline. He discovered, much to his distress, that life in his temple — as in most temples in Thailand at the time — had little to do with the practice of the Buddha's teachings. As he wrote later in his autobiography, 'Instead of observing the duties of the contemplative life, we were out to have a good time: playing chess, wrestling, playing match games with girls whenever there was a wake…. Whenever I looked into the books on monastic discipline, I'd start feeling really uneasy. I told myself, "If you don't want to leave the monkhood, you're going to have to leave this temple."'

Soon after making this resolution; he happened to meet a monk of the wandering ascetic tradition founded by Phra Ajaan Sao Kantasīlo (1861–1941) and; Phra Ajaan Mun Bhūridatto (1870–1949). Impressed both with the man's teachings and with his way of life, Ajaan Lee set out on foot to find Ajaan Mun and to become his student. He spent two very intensive periods studying with Ajaan Mun: once, that first year, in the forests of Ubon; and then again, four years later; at Wat Chedi Luang in Chieng Mai. Ajaan Mun and Ajaan Sao were unique in their time in teaching that the way to *nibbāna* was still open, and the training they gave their students in the direction of that goal was also unique, involving not only intensive meditation practice, but also

the total re-education of the student's character — his habits, values and powers of observation. As Ajaan Lee wrote in his autobiography, 'Staying with Ajaan Mun was very good for me, but also very hard. I had to be willing to learn everything anew.... Somedays he'd be cross with me, saying that I was messy, that I never put anything in the right place — but he'd never tell me what the right places were.... To be able to stay with him any length of time, you had to be very observant and very circumspect. You couldn't make a sound when you walked, you couldn't leave footprints on the floor, you couldn't make noise when you swallowed water or when you opened the windows or doors. There had to be a science to everything you did — hanging out robes... arranging bedding, everything. Otherwise, he'd drive you out, even in the middle of the Rains Retreat. Even then, you'd just have to take it, and try to use your powers of observation.

'In other matters, such as sitting and walking meditation, he trained me in every way, to my complete satisfaction. But I was able to keep up with him at best only about 60 percent of the time.'

After Ajaan Lee's second period off training, Ajaan Mun sent him out into the forests of northern Thailand to wander and meditate on his own. Ajaan Lee's wanderings eventually took him through every part of Thailand, as well as into Burma, Cambodia and India. Of all of Ajaan Mun's students, Ajaan Lee was the first to bring the teachings of the forest tradition into the mainstream of Thai society in central Thailand. In 1935 he founded a temple, Wat Paa Khlawng Kung, in a cemetery near Chanthaburi, on the

southeast coast; and in 1955 he founded Wat Asokaram in marshy area at the mouth of the Chao Phraya River on the outskirts of Bangkok. He drew students — monks and lay-people, men and women — from all levels of society and all walks of life. In 1957 he was given the ecclesiastical rank of Chao Khun, with the title, Phra Suddhidhammaraṅsī Gambhīramedhācariya. He passed away in 1961.

Even in his last years, however, he continued to retreat regularly into the forest. To quote again from his autobiography: 'Living in the forest, as I like to do, has given me a lot to think about…. It's a quiet place, where you can observe the influences of the environment. Take the wild rooster: If it went around acting like a domestic rooster, the cobras and mongooses would make a meal of it in no time…. So it is with us: If we spend all our time wallowing in companionship, we're like a knife or a hoe stuck down into the dirt — it'll rust easily. But if it's constantly sharpened on a stone or a file, rust won't have a chance to take hold. So we should learn always to be on the alert….

'Living in the forest, the mind becomes confident. The Dhamma you've studied or even which you have'nt studied will make itself clear, because nature is the teacher. It's like the sciences of the world, which every country has used to develop amazing powers: None of their inventions nor discoveries came out of textbooks. They came because scientists studied the principles of nature, all of which appear right here in the world. As for the Dhamma, it's just like science: It exists in nature. When I realized this, I no longer worried about studying the scriptures, and I was reminded of the Lord Buddha and his disciples: They studied

and learned from the principles of nature: None of them followed a textbook.

'For these reasons, I'm willing to be ignorant when it comes to texts and scriptures: Some kinds of trees sleep at night and are awake during the day. Others sleep by day and are awake by night.'

พระอาจารย์ลี ธมฺมธโร.....(ท่านพ่อลี)

AJAAN LEE DHAMMADHARO

(PHRA SUDDHIDHAMMARAṄSĪ GAMBHĪRAMEDHĀCARIYA)

Frames of Reference

Introduction

This book on the frames of reference is based to some extent on my own thoughts and opinions. In some spots it may not be directly in line with the original texts, because my primary aim has been to get to the heart of the matter, so that it can be conveniently put into practice. Those who hold zealously to the texts may feel that what I have written is wrong; but as for me, I feel that whoever is able to practice in line with what is written here will find that it can be taken as a guide to the true principles of concentration, discernment and release. To hold to the texts isn't wrong, but they should be held to intelligently, just as in medicine: A doctor who thinks that the only way to cure a fever is to drink a concoction of boiled neem and quinine leaves is wrong. Some doctors may add the leaves of other trees; some may make the medicine into a powder or a pill; some may make a concentrated extract; others may vary the dosage. In the same way, when practicing the Dhamma, to go no further than the texts may in some cases be wrong. Actually, any path that leads to the abandonment of defilement and to release from suffering is right. The value of medicine lies in its ability to cure disease; the value of a method of practice lies in its ability to get rid of defilement. As far as I can see, there is nothing wrong with any method which has been found to work. In the end, all such methods must follow the basic principles of virtue, concentration and discernment, and differ only as to whether they are crude or sophisticated, direct or indirect, fast or slow.

Now, I don't want to set myself up as an absolute authority of any kind. Thus, I want you, the reader, to use your own discernment. Take whatever passage seems right for you as a basis for your practice. There is no need to follow the entire book. Simply focus on a single point, and that will be enough. Once you have mastered an important point, all the other sections will come together and connect right there.

When you are ready to meditate, you should try to find a quiet, solitary place to assist in your practice of the frames of reference. Otherwise, your practice won't go smoothly, because solitude is desirable for all spiritual seekers in general. Just as a person who wants to look at his reflection in the water will be able to see himself clearly only when there is no wind rippling across the surface, in the same way, a person who wants peace which is subtle and profound has to conduct himself in this manner. Or to put it another way, there has to be external peace and quiet before internal peace will arise. When both forms of peace are present, you will know and see the Dhamma as it actually is. So when you put this form of meditation into practice, you should first say your chants and pay respect to the Buddha in whatever way you are accustomed to, and then begin sitting in meditation. You are sure to obtain genuine results in line with what I have written here.

If there is anything defective or wrong in this book, I trust that the reader will show me forgiveness, for I'm not much of an expert when it comes to the texts. I've simply learned a few parts, and put them into practice.

One more point: This practice of training the heart is

very important in that it forms the source of all goodness and merit; and whatever is the source of goodness and merit deserves special care and attention. The heart is a vessel for all that is good. When the heart is pure, any meritorious actions you may perform externally will truly foster happiness. External merit is like a tasty curry. If it's served in a filthy dish, then even though the curry may be delicious, the person eating it won't want to eat his fill because of the filth. But if the dish is clean and the curry delicious, the person eating is likely to eat with confidence to his heart's content. In the same way, if the heart is clean, it will find itself attracted to performing externally meritorious actions. It will always be ready to make sacrifices, because in every case it will taste the nourishment of its goodness. Not only that, a clean heart also forms the path for release from stress and suffering, leading ultimately to *nibbāna*. Those who are to reach the paths *(magga)* and fruitions *(phala)* leading to *nibbāna* will do so by way of the heart. If the heart isn't trained, then no matter how much external merit you may have, you won't be able to reach *nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* can be obtained only by training the heart in the practice of virtue, concentration and discernment. Virtue forms the basis for concentration; concentration, the basis for discernment; and discernment, the basis for release. Concentration is especially important because it forms the basis for discernment and intuitive understanding *(ñāṇa),* which are the crucial factors of the path. You can't do without concentration. If concentration is lacking, you can gain nothing but jumbled thoughts and conjectures, without any sound support.

Concentration is like a nail; and discernment, a hammer. If the nail isn't held firm and straight, the hammer will strike it only hit-or-miss, and the nail will never get through the board. For the heart to penetrate the world and get through to the highest Dhamma, it must take a firm stance in concentration so as to give rise to intuitive understanding. Intuitive understanding can occur only to those who have centered the mind in concentration. As for discernment, it's something we all have, but if it lacks intuitive understanding, it can never get beyond the world.

For this reason, we should all take an interest in the factors which form the path leading beyond suffering and stress to abundant well-being.

If you have questions about any part of this book, please feel free to ask at any time.

The merit coming from the writing of this book, I ask to dedicate to all those who have felt inspired to help pay for its printing costs so that it can be distributed freely as a gift of Dhamma. May the power arising from this gift bear them fruit, so that whatever they aspire to that is upright and just may succeed in bringing them happiness in every way.

Phra Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo

Wat Paa Khlawng Kung
(The Shrimp Canal Forest Temple)
Chanthaburi, 1948

Frames of Reference

An explanation of the four frames of reference, which are — for those who put them into practice — a means for freedom from defilement:

I. *Kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhana:* being mindful of the body as a frame of reference.

II. *Vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna:* being mindful of feelings as a frame of reference.

III. *Cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna:* being mindful of mind as a frame of reference.

IV. *Dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna:* being mindful of mental phenomena as a frame of reference.

In order to use these four frames of reference as a means for centering the mind, you must first familiarize yourself with the following three qualities. Otherwise, you can't say that you are standing firm on your frame of reference. The truth of the matter is that the translations given above are too narrow — for in dealing with the frames of reference, mere mindfulness isn't enough. When it's not enough, and yet you keep being mindful of the body, you will give rise only to feelings of pleasure and displeasure — because the duty of mindfulness is simply to keep referring to an object. So in developing the frames of reference, you have to know your tools —

1. *Sati:* mindfulness; powers of reference.
2. *Sampajañña:* presence of mind. This has to be firmly in place before sending mindfulness out to refer to its object — such as the body — and then bringing it back inwards to refer to the heart.
3. *Ātappa:* focused investigation, analyzing the object into its various aspects.

This can be illustrated as follows: The body is like a saw mill. The mind is like a drive shaft. Presence of mind is the pulley which spins around the drive shaft in one spot. Mindfulness is the belt which ties the mind to its object, not letting it slip away to other objects. Focused investigation is the saw blade which keeps cutting the logs into pieces so that they can be of use. These three qualities must always be present for your practice of centering the mind to succeed.

Now we will discuss the work to be done, the objects for which focused investigation, presence of mind, and mindfulness are responsible, each its separate way. The objects are four —

1. The body *(kāya),* which is a conglomeration of the four properties of earth, water, fire and wind.

2. Feelings *(vedanā):* the experiencing of such sensations as pleasure, pain and indifference.

3. The mind *(citta),* which is what stores up the various forms of good and evil.

4. Mental phenomena *(dhamma):* conditions which possess their own nature, such as the wholesome and unwholesome qualities which occur mixed together in the mind.

These are the four things for which you must be responsible.

I. The Body

The term 'body' here refers to conglomerations of the four properties, both those which have consciousness directing them and those which no longer do, but which still appear to the eye. Both sorts are termed physical bodies *(rūpakāya)*. Physical bodies can be considered under three aspects —

A. The inner body: your own body.

B. Outer bodies: the bodies of other people.

C. The body in and of itself: the act of focusing on an aspect or part of the body, such as the breath, which is an aspect of one of the four properties. This is what is meant by the body in and of itself.

The body, whether inner or outer, is simply a matter of the four properties. Now that you know your duties, you have to perform them properly. *Sampajañña:* Keep your presence of mind in place, right at the mind within. You don't have to direct it anywhere else. *Sati:* Your powers of reference have to be all-round. In other words, refer inwardly to the mind and then out to the object — in this case, the body — and then watch after the mind and its object to make sure that they don't slip away from each other. *Ātappa:* Focus on investigating the body, analyzing it into its various aspects. This can be done in any of five ways:

1. Investigate the 32 parts of the body, beginning with the hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, etc. Make a thorough survey and evaluation. If this method doesn't calm the mind, go on to —

2. Investigate the various repugnant aspects of the body, beginning with the fact that the body is a conglomeration of all sorts of things. In other words, it's a burial ground, a national cemetery, filled with the corpses of cattle, carabao, pigs, ducks, chickens, sour, sweet, greasy, salty, gathered and aged in the stomach, filtered and distilled into blood, pus, decomposing and putrid, oozing throughout the body and coming out its various openings: this body, which all of us in the human race care for without ceasing — bathing it, scrubbing it, masking its smell — and even then its filth keeps displaying itself as ear wax, eye secretions, nasal drip, tooth tartar, skin-scruff and sweat, always oozing out, filthy in every way. What it comes from is filthy, where it stays is filthy (i.e. in a cemetery of fresh corpses, or even worse — we've probably buried hundreds of different kinds of corpses within ourselves). If you look at the human body, you'll see that its characteristics are ill-matched and incongruous. Its smell is something really offensive. If looking at the body in this way doesn't give rise to a sense of dispassion and detachment, go on to —

3. Investigate the in-and-out breath. When the breath comes in long, be aware of the fact. When it goes out long, be aware of it. When you first begin dealing with the breath, start out by sending your awareness out with the out-breath and in with the in-breath. Do this two or three times, and then let your awareness settle in the middle — without letting it follow the breath in or out — until the mind becomes still, paying attention only to the in-and-out breath. Make the mind open, relaxed and at ease. You can settle your

awareness at the tip of the nose, at the palate — if you can keep it centered in the middle of the chest, so much the better. Keep the mind still, and it will feel at ease. Discernment will arise; an inner light will appear, reducing distractive thought. Now observe the behavior of the breath as it swells and contracts — in long and out long, in short and out short, in short and out long, in long and out short, in heavy and out light, in light and out heavy, in light and out light. Focus on making a thorough investigation into these different modes of breathing, without letting the mind move along with the breath. Do this until it gives rise to a sense of mental calm. If, however, this method doesn't make you calm, go on to —

4. Investigate the four properties: earth, water, wind and fire. The parts of the body which feel hard are the earth property. The parts which feel liquid are the water property. The energy which flows through the body is the wind property; and the warmth in the body, the fire property. Imagine that you can take the earth property out and pile it in a heap in front of you, that you can take the water property out and pile it behind you, that you can pile the wind property in a heap to your left and the fire property in a heap to your right. Place yourself in the middle and take a good look at the body, until you see that, when taken apart in this way, it vanishes into nothing, into ashes — what they call 'death' — and you will come to feel a sense of dispassion and detachment. If, however, you don't see any results appearing, go on to —

5. Consider the fact that the body, once it's born, leaves you exposed on all sides to the steady onslaughts of old age,

illness and death. Ultimately, you are sure to be torn away from all that you love and cherish in the world. The body is always displaying its nature —

Aniccaṃ: It's inconstant, unstable, always shifting precariously about.

Dukkhaṃ: It's hard to endure.

Anattā: It's not you, yours, or anyone else's. You didn't bring it with you when you came, and can't take it with you when you go. When you die, you'll have to throw it away like an old log or a piece of kindling. There's nothing of any substance or worth to it at all.

When you consider things in this way, you'll come to feel a sense of dispassion which will make the mind steady, still and firmly centered in concentration.

These five activities are the duties of your focused investigation, fighting to see the true nature of the body. As for mindfulness, it has to follow its own duties, referring to the object under investigation, at the same time referring to the mind within. Don't make reference to anything else. Keep check on whether or not you have your mind on what you're doing: This is presence of mind. Keep track of your mind, observing it at all times to see in what ways it might be acting or reacting on you. Keep your awareness of this always in place, right at the heart.

All the activities mentioned here are aspects of taking the body as a frame of reference. Whether you are dealing with the inner body, with outer bodies or with the body in and of itself, you have to use the three qualities mentioned above. Only when you have them fully developed can you

say that you are developing the great frame of reference *(mahā-satipaṭṭhāna)*.

Normally, mindfulness is a quality we all have, but when it lacks presence of mind, it falls into wrong ways, becoming Wrong Mindfulness. But when you can follow the methods outlined above, you are sure to develop a disinterested steadiness of mind. You will come to feel a sense of dispassion and detachment which will make the mind quiet, calm and unperturbed. This is the ladder of liberating insight *(vipassanā-ñāṇa),* leading to *nibbāna,* which people of wisdom and experience have guaranteed:

nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ
Nibbāna is the ultimate ease.

This ends the discussion of keeping the body in mind as a frame of reference.

II. Feelings

The word 'feeling' refers to the experiencing of sensations which arise from one's own actions, or *kamma.* There are three sorts of feelings: inner feelings or moods, outer feelings, and feelings in and of themselves.

A. Inner feelings, in terms of how they feel, are of three kinds —

1. *Sukha-vedanā:* good moods; a carefree sense of ease or well-being in the mind.

2. *Dukkha-vedanā:* bad moods; a feeling of depression, sorrow, annoyance or discouragement.

3. *Upekkha-vedanā:* neutral moods, during intervals when happiness and sadness are not appearing.

B. Outer feelings are also of three kinds —

1. *Somanassa-vedanā:* pleasure or delight in objects of the six senses — sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations and thoughts; becoming attracted to these things as they come into contact with the heart.

2. *Domanassa-vedanā:* displeasure or discontent which arises from contact with objects of the senses such as sights, sounds, smells, tastes, etc., as they appear to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, etc., and strike one as unsatisfactory or undesirable.

3. *Upekkhā-vedanā:* a feeling of indifference or neutrality as one comes into contact with sights, sounds, etc.

C. Feelings in and of themselves:

This refers to the act of focusing on any single aspect of any of the above-mentioned feelings. In other words, you don't have to be particular. Whenever pleasure arises, for example, set your mind on investigating it. Keep it firmly in mind. Watch after it to see that it stays in focus, and that you stay focused on it. Don't let your frame of reference slip away and change — and don't let any hopes or wants arise in that mental moment at all. Then use your powers of focused investigation to look into the truth of the feeling; and presence of mind to watch after the mind, to make sure that your awareness stays in place. Don't allow the

mental current which causes stress to arise. The cause of stress first arises when presence of mind is weak, and the mind vacillates. The vacillation is called craving for not-being *(vibhava-taṇhā)*. *As* the movement becomes stronger, a mental current arises and goes straying out. The current which strays out is craving for being *(bhava-taṇhā)*. When it comes across a thought or sensory object and grabs hold, that's called craving for sensuality *(kāma-taṇhā)*. For this reason, you should watch after the mind to make sure that it stays with its one object, its feeling of pleasure. Don't let any other preoccupations get involved. Keep your mindfulness and presence of mind firmly in place, and then make a focused investigation of the truth of that feeling. Only when you do this can you say that you are making use of feelings in and of themselves as a frame of reference.

By and large, whenever a mood or feeling arises, we tend to give rise to various hopes or desires. For instance, when a good mood arises, we want that sense of well-being to stay as it is or to increase. This desire gives rise to stress, and so we receive results contrary to what we had hoped for. Sometimes a bad mood arises and we don't want it, so we struggle to find happiness — and this simply piles on more suffering. Sometimes the heart is neutral, neither happy nor sad, neither pleased nor displeased, and we want it to stay that way constantly, or else we start to think that staying neutral is stupid or inane. This gives rise to more desires, and we start to struggle for something better than what we already are. When this happens, we can't say that we're firmly based on our frame of reference — for even though we may be mindful of the fact that a good or a bad

or a neutral feeling has arisen, we're not beyond it. This shows that we lack the three qualities which can nurture and support mindfulness so that it can become a factor of the Path. In other words, start out with presence of mind firmly established, and then use mindfulness to connect the mind with its object. Don't let the mind slip away from the object, and don't let the object slip away from the mind. Keep mindfulness in firm reference to the object, and watch after the mind to make sure that it stays fixed on its one object. As for the object, it's the responsibility of your focused investigation to keep track of whatever aspect of feeling may appear: inner or outer; happy, sad or indifferent. For instance, when pain arises, what does it come from? Look into it until you know its truth. What does pleasure come from? It's the duty of your focused investigation to find out. In what mental moment does indifference occur? It's the duty of your focused investigation to keep watch until you really know. Whatever feelings may arise, inner or outer, are the responsibility of your focused investigation. You have to use your powers of analysis to burn into whatever spot a feeling may arise. This is the first round in your investigation.

2. The second round: Watch the arising of feelings in the present. You don't have to follow them anywhere else. Tell yourself that whatever may be causing these feelings, you're going to focus exclusively on what is present.

3. Focus on the fading of feelings in the present.

4. Focus on the passing away of feelings in the present.

5. Stay with the realization that feelings do nothing

but arise and fall away — simply flowing away and vanishing in various ways — with nothing of any substance or worth. When you can do this, you can say that your frame of reference is firmly established in feelings in and of themselves — and at that point, the Path comes together.

If we were to express this in terms of the factors of the Path, we'd have to do so as follows: The presence of mind which constantly watches after the mind, keeping it at normalcy, making sure that it doesn't fall into unwholesome ways, is virtue. The mindfulness which keeps the mind connected with its object so that it doesn't slip away to other objects, is concentration. The focused investigation which penetrates into each object as it arises so as to know its true nature clearly — knowing both that which arises and disbands, as well as that which doesn't arise or disband — is discernment. These three qualities have to arise together in a single mental moment for the Path to come together *(magga-samaṅgī),* and then the Path will function on its own, in line with its duties, enabling you to see clearly and know truly without having to let go of this or work at that, work at this or let go of that, let go of the outside or work at the inside, work at the outside or let go of the inside or whatever.

When all three of these qualities are gathered together, you can deal with any feeling at all — past, present or future; pleasant, unpleasant or neutral — because when these three qualities are fully developed, they all connect. This is why I made the comparison at the beginning: The mind is like a drive shaft. Presence of mind is a pulley spinning in place around the drive shaft. Mindfulness is the belt

which keeps the mind and its objects from slipping away from each other. Focused investigation is the saw blade which works back and forth, cutting each object to pieces — which is what is meant by *'bhagavant'*.

Only a person who has the discernment to see in line with the truth in this way can be said to have mastered fully the use of feelings as a frame of reference.

III. The Mind

In using the mind as a frame of reference, there are three aspects to be dealt with:

A. The mind inside.
B. The mind, outside.
C. The mind in and of itself.

'The mind inside' refers to a state exclusively in the heart when it isn't involved with any outer preoccupations. 'The mind outside' refers to its interaction with such outer preoccupations as sights, sounds, etc. 'The mind in and of itself' refers to the act of singling out any aspect of the mind as it appears, whether inside or out.

As for the modes of the mind inside, there are three —

1. *Rāga-citta:* a mental state infused with desire or passion.

2. *Dosa-citta:* a sense of inner irritation and displeasure.

3. *Moha-citta:* a cloudy, murky or confused state of mind, in which it is unable to consider anything; in short, delusion.

The mind outside is divided into the same three aspects — states of passion, irritation and delusion — but these are said to be 'outside' because once any of these aspects arises, it tends to go out and latch onto an outer preoccupation which simply serves to further aggravate the original state of passion, irritation or delusion. The mind then doesn't clearly or truly understand its objects. Its knowledge goes off in various directions, away from the truth: seeing beauty, for instance, in things which aren't beautiful, constancy in things which are inconstant, pleasure in things which are painful, and self in things which are not-self.

All of these things are aspects of the mind outside.

'The mind in and of itself' refers to the act of singling out any one of these aspects of the mind. For example, sometimes passion arises, sometimes anger, sometimes delusion: Whichever aspect may be arising in the present, single it out. With your presence of mind firmly in place, be mindful of that aspect of the mind, without making reference to any other objects — and without letting any hopes or wants arise in that particular mental moment at all. Then focus unwaveringly on investigating that state of mind until you know its truth. The truth of these states is that sometimes, once they've arisen, they flare up and spread; sometimes they die away. Their nature is to arise for a moment,and then dissolve away with nothing of any substance or worth. When you are intent on examining things in this way — with your mindfulness, presence of mind and powers of focused investigation firmly in place — then none of these defilements, even though they may be appearing, will have the chance to grow or spread. This

can be compared to the baskets or jars used to cover new lettuce plants: If no one removes the baskets, the plants will never have a chance to grow, and will simply wither away and die. Thus you have to keep your presence of mind right with each mental state as it arises. Keep mindfulness constantly referring to its object, and use your powers of focused investigation to burn into those defilements so as to keep them away from the heart at all times.

To put this another way, all of the mental states mentioned above are like lettuce or green-gram seeds. Mindfulness is like a basket. Presence of mind is the person who scatters the seeds, while the power of focused investigation is the heat of the sun which burns them up.

So far, we have mentioned only bad mental states. Their opposites are good mental states: *virāga-citta* — the mind free from the grip of passion; *adosa-citta* — the mind free from the annoyance or anger which can lead to loss and ruin; *amoha-citta* — the mind free from delusion, intoxication and misunderstandings. These are wholesome states of mind *(kusala-citta),* which form the root of all that is good. When they arise, maintain them and observe them so that you can come to know the level of your mind.

The are four levels of good mental states —

1. *Kāmāvacara-bhūmi:* the level of sensuality.
2. *Rūpāvacara-bhūmi:* the level of form.
3. *Arūpāvacara-bhūmi:* the level of formlessness.
4. *Lokuttara-bhūmi:* the transcendent level.

1. The level of sensuality: A mental state arises and connects with a wholesome object — any sight, sound, smell, taste, tactile sensation or idea which can form the basis for wholesome mental states. When it meets with its object, it becomes happy, joyful and glad. (Here we are referring only to those sensory objects which are good for the mind.) If you were to refer to the Heavens of Sensual Bliss as they appear within each of us, the list would run as follows: Sights which can form the basis for wholesome mental states are one level, wholesome sounds are another, and same with wholesome smells, tastes, tactile sensations and ideas. Together they form the six levels of heaven on the sensual level.

2. The level of form: A mental state arises from thinking about *(vitakka)* a physical object which serves as the theme of one's meditation; and then analyzing *(vicāra)* the object into its various aspects, at the same time making sure that the mind doesn't slip away from the object *(ekaggatārammaṇa)*. When the mind and its object are one in this way, the object becomes light. The mind is unburdened and can relax its sense of concern. Rapture *(pīti)* and ease *(sukha)* arise as a result. When these five factors appear in the mind, it has entered the first level of *jhāna* — the beginning stage in the level of form.

3. The level of formlessness: The mind lets go of its physical object on the level of form, but is still attached to a very subtle mental notion — the *jhāna* of unbounded space, for instance, in which you are focused on a sense of emptiness

and awareness with no physical object or image passing into your field of attention, so that you are unable to know its full range. What has actually happened is that you have curled up and are hiding inside. This isn't the kind of 'going in to know' which comes from having finished your work. It's the 'going in to know' which comes from wanting to run away. You've seen the faults of what arises outside you, but haven't seen that they really lie buried within you — so you've hidden inside by limiting the field of your attention.

Some people, when they reach this point, believe that they have done away with defilement, because they mistake the emptiness for *nibbāna*. Actually, it's only the first stage in the level of formlessness, and so is still on the mundane level.

If you seriously want to know whether your mind is on the mundane or the transcendent level, then observe it when you turn your awareness inward and make it still — when you feel a sense of peace and ease that seems to have no defilements adulterating it at all. Let go of that mental state, to see how it behaves on its own. If defilements can reappear, you're still on the mundane level. Sometimes that mental state remains unchanged through the power of your own efforts, but after a while you become unsure of your knowledge. Your mind has to keep fondling, i.e. making a running commentary on it. When this is the case, don't go believing that your knowledge is in any way true.

There are many, many kinds of knowledge: The intellect knows, the heart knows, the mind knows, cognizance knows, discernment knows, presence of mind knows,

awareness knows, unawareness knows. All these modes are based on knowledge; they differ simply in how they know. If you aren't able to distinguish clearly among the different modes of knowing, knowing can become confused — and so you might take wrong knowing to be right knowing, or unawareness to be awareness, or knowledge attached to suppositions *(sammuti)* to be freedom from suppositions *(vimutti)*. Thus you should experiment and examine things carefully from all angles so that you can come to see for yourself which kind of knowledge is genuine, and which is counterfeit. Counterfeit knowledge, merely knows, but can't let go. Genuine knowledge, when it goes about knowing anything, is bound to let go.

All three levels of the mind discussed so far are on the mundane level.

4. The transcendent level: This begins with the path and fruition of entry into the stream to *nibbāna*. Those who reach this level have begun by following the threefold training of virtue, concentration and discernment on the mundane level, but then have gone on to gain their first true insight into the four Noble Truths, enabling them to free themselves from the first three Bonds *(saṅyojana)*. Their minds are thus released into the stream to *nibbāna*. The three Bonds are —

a. Self-identification *(sakkāya-diṭṭhi):* the view which leads us to believe that the body is our own.

b. Doubt *(vicikicchā):* the uncertainty which leads us to be unsure of the good we believe in — i.e. of how much truth there is to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

c. Attachment to precepts and practices *(sīlabbata-parāmāsa):* fondling the good that we practice; being attached to those forms of goodness which are merely external, e.g. observing precepts or practices by clinging simply to the level of bodily action or speech. Examples of this attitude include such things as developing virtue by adhering simply to the precepts; practicing concentration by simply sitting like a post; not being able to free yourself from these actions, always holding onto the goodness which comes from them, happy when you have the chance to perform them in a particular manner, upset when you don't; thinking, for instance, that virtue is something you get from monks when they give you the precepts; that the eight precepts are to be observed only on certain days and nights, months and years; that you gain or lose merit simply as a result of external actions associated with your accustomed beliefs. None of these attitudes reaches the essence of virtue. They go no further than simply clinging to beliefs, customs, and conventions; clutching onto these forms of goodness, always fondling them, unable to let them go. Thus this is called 'attachment to precepts and practices'. Such attitudes are an obstacle to what is truly good. Take, for example, the long-held belief that goodness means to practice charity, virtue and meditation on the sabbath days: Stream-winners have completely let go of such beliefs. Their hearts are no longer caught up in beliefs and customs. Their virtues no longer have precepts. In other words, they have reached the essence of virtue. Their virtue is free from the limits of time. In this they differ from ordinary, run-of-the-mill people. Ordinary

people have to hand goodness over to external criteria — believing, for instance, that virtue lies on this day or that, during the Rains Retreat, during this or that month or year — and then holding fast to that belief, maintaining that anyone who doesn't follow the custom can't be virtuous. In the end, such people have a hard time finding the opportunity really to do good. Thus we can say that they don't know the true criteria for goodness. As for Stream-winners, all the qualities of virtue have come in and filled their hearts. They are able to unshackle themselves from the conventional values of the world which say that this or that is good. What is truly good they have seen appear in their hearts. Good lies right here. Evil lies right here. Neither depends on external actions. This is in line with the Buddha's saying,

mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā
mano-seṭṭhā mano-mayā

All matters are preceded by the heart,
Excelled by the heart,
Achieved through the heart.

This is what is meant by 'Stream-winner'.

Stream-winners are like people who have rowed their boats into the main current of the Chao Phraya River, and so are destined to float down to the river's mouth and into the sea of *amata* — deathless — *nibbāna.* There are three ways they can reach the sea:

(1) The lowest level of Stream-winner is like a boatsman who leans back with his hand simply placed on the rudder. This level of Stream-winner reaches the goal slowly.

(2) The second level is like a boatsman who has his foot on the rudder, his hands on the oars, and rows along.

(3) The third level: The boat is equipped with a motor and the boatsman is at the steering wheel, and so he reaches the goal in practically no time at all.

This — reaching the stream to *nibbāna* — is the beginning stage of the transcendent level. If you were to simplify the three Bonds, you could do so as follows: To be attached to the body as being one's own is self-identification. To be attached to the actions of the body is attachment to precepts and practices. Not knowing how to separate the mind from the body or from one's actions makes one unable to see clearly and know truly: This leads to uncertainty and doubt.

These are simply my opinions on the matter, so you who read this should consider things carefully on your own.

This ends the discussion of the transcendent and mundane wholesome states of mind.

When you know the characteristics of the various mental states, you should use the three qualities mentioned above as your tools: Keep your mindfulness, presence of mind and powers of focused investigation firmly in place at the mind. To be able to gain knowledge, you have to use the power of focused investigation, which is an aspect of discernment, to

know how mental states arise and fall: pulling out, taking a stance, and then returning into stillness. You must keep your attention fixed on investigating these things constantly in order to be able to know the arising and falling away of mental states — and you will come to know the nature of the mind which doesn't arise and doesn't fall away.

To know the arising and falling away of mental states of the past is one level of cognitive skill *(vijja),* and deserves to be called 'knowledge of previous births'. To know the states of the mind as they change in the present deserves to be called 'knowledge of death and rebirth'. To know how to separate mental states from their objects, knowing the primal nature of the mind, knowing the current or force of the mind which flows to its objects; separating the objects, the current of mind which flows and the primal nature of the mind: To be able to know in this way deserves to be called 'knowledge of the passing away of the mental effluents'. The objects or preoccupations of the mind are the effluent of sensuality. The current which flows is the effluent of a state of being. Not knowing the primal nature of the mind is the effluent of unawareness.

If we were to express this in terms of the four Noble Truths, we would have to do so as follows: The objects or preoccupations of the mind are stress in its true form *(dukkha-sacca).* The current of the mind which flows into and falls for its objects is the true cause of stress *(samudaya-sacca).* The mental state which penetrates in to see clearly the truth of all objects, the current of the mind and the primal nature of the mind, is called the mental moment which forms the Path *(magga-citta).* To let go of the objects, the

mental current and the primal nature of the mind, without any sense of attachment, is the true disbanding of stress *(nirodha-sacca)*.

When the three qualities that assist the mind — presence of mind, mindfulness and focused investigation — are vigorous and strong, presence of mind becomes the awareness of release *(vijjā-vimutti),* mindfulness becomes intuitive understanding *(ñāṇa),* and focused investigation becomes liberating insight *(vipassanā-ñāṇa),* the discernment which can stay fixed on knowing the truth of stress without permitting any sense of pleasure or displeasure for its object to arise. Intuitive understanding fathoms the cause of stress, and the awareness of release knows the heart clearly all the way through. When you can know in this way, you can say that you know rightly.

* * * * * * *

Here I would like to back up and discuss the question of the mind in a little more detail. The word 'mind' covers three aspects:

(1) The primal nature of the mind.
(2) Mental states.
(3) Mental states in interaction with their objects.

All of these aspects, taken together, make up the mind. If you don't know the mind in this way, you can't say that you really know it. All you can do is say that the mind arises and falls away, the mind doesn't arise or fall away; the mind is

good, the mind is evil; the mind becomes annihilated, the mind doesn't become annihilated; the mind is a natural phenomenon, the mind isn't a natural phenomenon; the mind gains release, the mind doesn't gain release; the mind is *nibbāna,* the mind isn't *nibbāna;* the mind is sensory cognizance, the mind isn't sensory cognizance; the mind is the heart, the mind isn't the heart….

As the Buddha taught, there are only two paths to practice — the body, speech and heart; and the body, speech and mind — and in the end both paths reach the same point: Their true goal is release. So if you want to know the truth concerning any of the above issues, you have to follow the path and reach the truth on your own. Otherwise, you'll have to argue endlessly. These issues — for people who haven't practiced all the way to clear insight — have been termed by people of wisdom as *sedamocana-kathā:* issues that can only make you break out in a sweat.

Thus I would like to make a short explanation: The primal nature of the mind is a nature which simply knows. The current which thinks and streams out from knowing to various objects is a mental state. When this current connects with its objects and falls for them, it becomes a defilement, darkening the mind: This is a mental state in interaction. Mental states, by themselves and in interaction, whether good or evil, have to arise, have to disband, have to dissolve away by their very nature. The source of both these sorts of mental states is the primal nature of the mind, which neither arises nor disbands. It is a fixed phenomenon *(ṭhiti-dhamma),* always in place. By the primal nature of the mind — which is termed '*pabhassara',* or

radiant — I mean the ordinary, elementary state of knowing in the present. But whoever isn't able to penetrate in to know it can't gain any good from it, like the proverbial monkey with the diamond.

Thus the name given by the Buddha for this state of affairs is really fitting: *avijjā* — dark knowledge, counterfeit knowledge. This is in line with the terms '*pubbante aññanaṃ*' — not knowing the beginning, i.e. the primal nature of the mind; '*parante aññāṇaṃ*' — not knowing the end, i.e. mental states in interaction with their objects; '*majjhantika aññāṇaṃ*' — not knowing the middle, i.e. the current which streams from the primal nature of knowing. When this is the case, the mind becomes a *saṅkhāra* — a concoctor, a magician, fabricating prolifically in its myriad ways.

This ends the discussion of the mind as a frame of reference.

IV. Mental Phenomena

Mental phenomena as a frame of reference can be divided into three sorts: inner mental phenomena, outer mental phenomena, and mental phenomena in and of themselves.

A. Inner mental phenomena can be either good or bad, but here we will deal only with the five Hindrances *(nīvaraṇa),* which are bad —

1. *Kāma-chanda:* sensual desire.
2. *Byāpāda:* ill-will, malevolence.

3. *Thīna-middha:* sloth and torpor.
4. *Uddhacca-kukkucca:* restlessness and anxiety.
5. *Vicikicchā:* uncertainty.

These five Hindrances can be either inner or outer phenomena. For example:

1. The mind gives rise to desire, but hasn't yet streamed out to fix its desires on any particular object.
2. The mind gives rise to a sense of irritation and discontent, but without yet fixing on any particular object.
3. A state of torpor arises in the mind, without yet fixing on any particular object.
4. The mind is restless, anxious and disturbed on its own, without yet fixing on any particular object.
5. The mind is doubtful and uncertain — unable to think anything through — but without yet fixing on any particular object. It's simply that way on its own.

If these five Hindrances are still weak and haven't yet streamed out to become involved with any external objects, they are called 'inner mental phenomena'.

B. Outer mental phenomena simply come from the inside:

1. Once the mind has given rise to a sense of desire, it streams out and fixes on such external objects as sights, sounds, smells, tastes, etc.

2. Once the mind has given rise to a sense of irritation, it streams out and fixes on a sight, sound, smell, taste, etc., and then dislikes its object, wanting it to be destroyed.

3. The mind, already in a state of torpor, streams out and fixes on an outer object. Once it has fixed on the object, it then becomes even more torpid.

4. The mind, already restless, streams out to fix on such outer objects as sights, sounds, smells, tastes, etc.

5. A mental state of uncertainty arises in the mind, and the mind lets it stream out to fix on such external objects as sights, etc.

These are thus called outer mental phenomena. When any mental phenomenon first arises in the mind, it's called an inner phenomenon. When it flares up, grows stronger and streams out to an outer object, it's called an outer phenomenon.

C. Mental phenomena in and of themselves:

This means to focus on any one of these Hindrances — because not all five Hindrances can appear in the same mental moment. You can thus pick out any Hindrance at all to focus on and examine. For example, suppose that sensual desire has appeared: Keep your presence of mind firmly in place at the heart, and use your powers of reference to keep the mind on the phenomenon. Don't waver, and don't let any hopes or wishes arise. Keep your mind firmly in one place. Don't go dragging any other objects in to interfere. Focus your powers of investigation down on nothing but the phenomenon occurring in the present. As long as you haven't gained clear, true insight into it, don't let up on your efforts. When you can do this, you are developing mental phenomena in and of themselves as a frame of reference.

The phenomena mentioned above are all unwholesome phenomena *(akusala dhamma)*. They act as obstacles to such things as *jhāna,* liberating insight and the transcendent. Thus, if you want to gain release from them, you must first center the mind firmly in concentration. To be able to center the mind firmly, you have to develop the following three qualities within yourself —

(1) *Sampajañña:* presence of mind. Always have this firmly in place.

(2) *Sati:* mindfulness. Keep the mind in firm reference to whatever phenomenon has arisen within it. Watch after the phenomenon to keep it with the mind; watch after the mind to make sure that it doesn't lose aim and go slipping off to other objects. Once you see that the mind and its object have become compatible with each other, use —

(3) *Ātappa* — the power of focused investigation — to get to the truth of the phenomenon. If you haven't yet gained clear and true insight, don't relax your efforts. Keep focusing and investigating until the power of your discernment is concentrated and strong, and you will come to know that mental phenomena — whether inner, outer, or in and of themselves — simply arise, fade and disband. There is nothing of any lasting worth to them, because they are all *saṅkhata dhamma* — conditioned phenomena; and whatever is conditioned falls under the truths of *aniccatā* — inconstancy; *dukkhatā* — stress, i.e. it's hard to bear; and *anattatā:* It's not you, yours, or anyone else's. It simply changes in line with natural conditions. No one with any real discernment holds onto these phenomena as self or as

anything of lasting worth, because such people have seen that these things are like wheels or gears: Whoever holds onto them will have to be trampled or mashed.

Thus if you hope for the genuine happiness offered by the Buddha's teachings, you should take the three qualities mentioned above and make them permanent features of your heart — and you will come to see clearly the phenomenon free from fabrication, called the Unconditioned *(asaṅkhata dhamma),* the genuine Dhamma. Uncreated, uncaused, it simply is, by its very nature. It doesn't circle about, arising and passing away. The Unconditioned is a perfectly ordinary part of nature, yet no one in the world can know it aside from those who have developed virtue, concentration and discernment. So if you sincerely want to go beyond suffering and stress, you should work to give rise to clear and true insight through your own efforts. When you can keep your presence of mind constantly in place, you will be able to know the nature of the mind. Your powers of reference and focused investigation will have to be constantly in place within for you not to be misled by the objects and preoccupations of the mind.

Most of us, ordinarily, have no clear sense of our own nature, and so we can't clearly see the thoughts and urges which arise within us. As a result, we go out to fasten onto their objects, giving rise to the wheel of rebirth *(vaṭṭa-saṃsāra),* circling around and around without end.

Here I will refer to the wheel within: Not knowing the primal nature of the mind is the cycle of defilement *(kilesa vaṭṭa),* or unawareness, which is the beginning of the cycle. This gives rise to the act of mental fabrication or synthesis,

which is the cycle of intention and action *(kamma vaṭṭa)*. This in turn leads us to experience mental objects and preoccupations, which is the cycle of retribution *(vipāka vaṭṭa)*. Thus there are three parts to the cycle.

The three parts of the cycle can be illustrated as follows: Unawareness is the hub of the wheel. Mental fabrications are the spokes; and mental preoccupations, the rim. The sensory organs form the yoke and harness, sensory objects are the oxen, and the driver is birth, old age, illness and death. Now pile on your belongings — your defilements — and with a lash of the whip, you're off: The oxen drag you away, leading you up the mountains and down, until in the end you crash and are smashed to smithereens, i.e. death.

For this reason, we must make our awareness penetrate into the nature of the mind at the center of the axle, which doesn't turn with the wheel and which is said to be 'uncycling' *(vivaṭṭa)*. Whoever can do this will find that the path is sudden and short, not slow. For example, in ancient times, monks and lay disciples were able to reach Awakening even while sitting and listening to a sermon, while going for alms, or while gazing at a corpse. From this we can gather that after they had imbued themselves with the qualities mentioned above, they focused their investigation on that particular point and gained clear and true insight right then and there, without having to pull in or out, back or forth. They were able to let go naturally, with no 'in' or 'out', no 'coming' or 'going'.

Those who investigate will see the truth. Some people believe that they will have to abandon all mental preoccupations before they can train the mind, but the truth of the matter is that the mind is usually deluded right there — at

its preoccupations — and the spot where you are deluded is the spot you have to investigate. If you don't solve the problem right where you're deluded, don't believe that you can let go by running away. Even if you do run away, you'll end up coming back and falling for the same old preoccupations once more.

People of discernment, though, whether they deal with what is inside or out, can give rise to virtue, concentration, discernment and release in every context. They have no sense that the inside is right and the outside wrong; that the inside is wrong and the outside right; or that the inside is refined and the outside base. Such opinions never occur to people of discernment. Discernment has to be all-around knowing or knowing all around before it can be called full-fledged discernment. Knowing all around means to know the inside first and then the outside. All-around knowing means to know the outside first, and then to bring that awareness all the way in. This is why they are called people of discernment: They can bring the outside in; what is base they can make refined; past and future they can bring into the present, because they have brought the parts of the Path together in equal measure — mindfulness, presence of mind and focused investigation — each performing its duties, forming the way which leads beyond all suffering and stress.

Those who can do this will be able to reach the truth in any posture. All that will appear to them will be the condition of stress *(sabhāva-dukkha)* and the condition of things in themselves *(sabhāva-dhamma)*. To see things this way is called *'yathābhūta-ñāṇa'* — seeing things for what they really are.

Summary

The four frames of reference can be reduced to two: physical and mental phenomena, or — another way of putting it — body and mind. Even though they are divided into four, it is simply the current of the mind which is divided. When you come to the essence of the practice, it all boils down to the body and mind. If you want really to simplify the practice, you should focus on investigating the body, and then focus on investigating the mind.

1. To focus on investigating the body: Be aware of any one aspect of the body, such as the breath, and then when you can keep focused on it accurately, spread your awareness to observe other aspects of the body, examining them from various angles. While making your investigation, though, don't let go of your original focus — the breath. Keep examining things until you have gained clear and true insight into the aspects of the body, and the mind becomes more quiet, still and subtle than before. If anything arises while you are investigating, don't fasten onto it in any way.

2. To focus on investigating the mind: Set your awareness at one spot or another, and keep that awareness perfectly still. After your mind has been still long enough, examine the ways it then changes and moves, until you can see that its movements, whether good or bad, are simply a form of fabrication *(saṅkhāra)*. Don't let yourself become preoccupied with anything you may come to know, think or see while examining. Keep your awareness in the present.

When you can do this, your mind is headed towards peace and clear insight.

This way of practice falls in line with all four of the frames of reference. When you can do this, you will give rise to the mental moment which forms the Path — and the moment the Path arises in full power is the moment you can let go.

Letting go has two forms:

(1) Being able to let go of mental objects but not of one's own mind.

(2) Being able to let go both of the objects of the mind and of one's self.

To be able to let go both of one's objects and of one's self is genuine knowing. To be able to let go of one's objects but not of one's self is counterfeit knowing. Genuine knowing lets go of both ends: It lets the object follow its own nature as an object, and lets the mind follow the nature of the mind. In other words, it lets nature look after itself. 'Object' here refers to the body; 'self' refers to the heart. You have to let go of both.

When your knowledge can reach this level, you don't have to worry much about virtue, concentration or discernment. Virtue, concentration and discernment aren't the nature of the mind; nor is the nature of the mind virtue, concentration and discernment. Virtue, concentration and discernment are simply fabricated phenomena, tools for extinguishing defilement. When defilement is extinguished,

then virtue, concentration and discernment disband as well. Virtue, concentration and discernment are like water. Defilement is like a fire. The mind is like the person using the water to put out the fire. When the water has put out the flames, the water itself has vanished — but the person putting out the fire hasn't disappeared. The fire isn't the water, the water isn't the fire. The person isn't the water, the water isn't the person. The person isn't the fire, the fire isn't the person. The genuine nature of the mind isn't defilement, nor is it virtue, concentration and discernment. It simply is, in line with its own nature. Those who don't know the nature of the truth maintain that death is annihilation or that *nibbāna* is annihilation of one sort or another. This is simply their own misunderstanding. Even those who have gone no higher than the level of Stream-entry are able to know that the true nature of the mind isn't in any way annihilated, which is why they are people of strong, unwavering conviction, believing in the paths and their fruitions. Even though their hearts aren't yet entirely free from the admixture of defilements, those defilements can't efface the true nature of their hearts — just as an ingot of gold, when it falls into the dirt, may be covered with soot, but the soot can't turn it into anything other than gold.

This is unlike ordinary, run-of-the-mill people. An ordinary person's mind may be pure from time to time, but it doesn't stay that way. It can't escape from being defiled again — just as a sharpened knife will stay in shape only if it is kept bathed in oil. If you put the knife to use, or forget to keep it bathed, the steel of the blade might turn into something other than steel.

Thus each of us should earnestly make the effort to reach at least the Stream, for although all the qualities I have mentioned — whether conditioned *(saṅkhata dhamma)* or Unconditioned *(asaṅkhata dhamma)* — lie mixed within every one of us, none of them are as exalted as *virāga dhamma:* the act of dispassion that extracts the Unconditioned from the conditioned as gold is extracted from crude ore.

The Buddha's teachings are subtle and deep. Whoever isn't set on truly putting them into practice won't know their taste — like a cowherd hired to watch over cattle without ever knowing the taste of their milk.

Thus we are taught:

To study is to know
the texts,
To practice is to know
your defilements,
To attain the goal is to know
and let go.

Duties of the Sangha

Preface

This year a large number of monks and novices came to be ordained and to live together here at Wat Asokaram for the Rains — some of them planning eventually to leave the monkhood, some of them to stay. This being the case, I wrote down a piece explaining and analyzing our duties for their information, so that they would have something of religious value to keep and take with them for the progress of the community of monks and novices in the days to come.

After the piece was written and read aloud to the group, it seemed appropriate for use in the area of administering the Sangha at large, and so it has been printed for free distribution as a gift of Dhamma, in order that Buddhism may prosper and thrive for the well-being of us all.

Phra Suddhidhammaraṅsī
Gambhīramedhācariya
(Lee)

Wat Asokaram
Samut Prakaan
October 6, 1960

Duties of the Sangha

I would like to explain to the community which has come to spend the Rains at Wat Asokaram this year what our duties are, so that our sense of our responsibilities in our practice will be in line with the aims and directives of those who have been placed in charge.

The administration of the Sangha, as set out by the ecclesiastical authorities of Thailand, is divided into four departments:

I. The Department of Internal Governance.

II. The Department of Education.

III. The Department of Building and Development.

IV. The Department of Spreading the Dhamma.

Each of these departments, if its activities were in line with its aims, would cause the religion to prosper. But I have come to see that each of them is so deficient as to be destructive — bringing about, to a great extent, the corruption of monks and novices. This is why I would like to give the monks and novices here some sense of their duties and of the true aims of each of these departments. Otherwise, governance will turn into 'covernance' — covering up what we don't want to be seen.

Each of these departments is divided into two sections: the central office and the offices in the out-lying regions. In the central office, the responsibility of the ecclesiastical authorities of both sects, Dhammayutika and Mahanikaya,

is to co-operate in firmly carrying out the duties of each department in the area of central administration. As for the the out-lying regions, the responsibility of the ecclesiastical authorities on the regional, provincial, district and township levels, and of the abbots of all temples, is to train the officers of each department in their respective jurisdictions to be firm in carrying out their stated duties. Any individual who proves incompetent in a particular area should not be placed in charge of the corresponding department.

Thus I would now like to explain the duties of each department in a way that will bring about order, in line not only with the laws and regulations of the Sangha, but also with the disciplinary standards (Vinaya) and with rectitude (Dhamma) — because all of these laws and regulations need to be both right and up to standard if they are to lead to the well-being of the religion.

I. The Department of Internal Governance

Governance is of three sorts:

A. Governing by regulations of the Sangha.

B. Governing by Vinaya (Discipline).

C. Governing by Dhamma (Rectitude).

A. *Governing by regulations of the Sangha* is as follows: The ecclesiastical chief of each region has the right, the authority and the responsibility to administer his jurisdiction

in accordance with all of his stipulated duties, including the procedures to be followed in appointing officials on the regional, provincial, district and township levels; in appointing the abbots of temples, preceptors and minor officials; and in delegating responsibilities on each level. This being the case, each of these officials should use his powers strictly in accordance with the regulations and guidelines set down by the Sangha authorities. Anyone who sees that he is unqualified in a particular area should not accept appointment in that area. At the same time, those who make the appointments, if they see that a particular individual is unqualified, should not appoint him to a position of responsibility. If he is appointed, it will be damaging to that area and destructive to the religion.

B. *Governing by Vinaya:* One should explain to those who come under one's authority the various procedures connected with the Vinaya so that they will understand how to follow them.

1. Point out, for example, how an *apalokana-kamma* is to be performed so as to be in line with the Vinaya. If there are discrepancies from the norm, point them out and correct them.

2. Point out how and in what sort of places a *ñatti-kamma* is to be performed.

3. Point out what sorts of acts should be performed as *ñatti-dutiya-kamma*, how they are to be performed, where, when, and with how large a chapter of monks.

4. Point out what sorts of acts should be performed as *ñatti-catuttha-kamma*, on what sorts of occasions, and with how large a chapter of monks so as to be correct according to procedure.

On the whole, there are still great discrepancies in following these procedures even within the individual sects. When we compare the different sects, the differences are even greater. This being the case, whose responsibility is it to govern the Sangha so that there is uniformity throughout?

To have standards means to weld discipline to justice — or in other words, Dhamma and Vinaya. For example, we should have standards in the way we worship and chant — how the words are to be pronounced according to the Magadha and Sanyoga traditions, and which tradition to use on which occasions. There should be guidelines concerning this which are consistently followed everywhere, and similar guidelines concerning the way we dress and use the necessities of life, so that we will all be orderly and in proper line with one another. Otherwise, there will be discrepancies, high and low. If there is order, however, even the differences of high and low will present an acceptable appearance. Having standards is thus an important part of governance. If the authorities were really sincere about carrying out their duties, instead of simply letting things slide, it would help lead to the growth and prosperity of the religion. On the whole, though, there is a tendency in the area of governance not to look after things, and simply to let them be. This has led to factions and splits within the monkhood, each group taking offence at the way other groups behave.

Thus close adherence to the Vinaya and to the standards of order would lead to concord with no need for force or compulsion: concord which would come of its own from the good and noble standards of the religion.

When the lotuses are gathered unbruised,
the water stays clear:
This is where there appear
the virtues of those who can govern.

Every official — and every monk and novice as well — should be strict in keeping his personal conduct within the bounds of the Vinaya, so as not to abolish any of the training rules by means of his behavior. In other words, whatever has been set down by the Buddha should not be abolished through not observing it; and at the same time, whatever was not set down by the Buddha should not be established as a new observance through the example of one's behavior.

There are many kinds of standards and procedures related to the Vinaya which must be studied, practiced and observed. Taken together, they are called *'vinaya-kamma'*. Some *vinaya-kamma* are our own personal responsibility in training ourselves. For example —

1. *Kāya-kamma:* Act only in ways which are correct in light of the Vinaya, and which are called *'karaṇīya-kicca',* things to be done (such as observing the precepts of the Pāṭimokkha). Whatever goes against the Buddha's ordinances should be renounced. Such things are termed *'akaraṇīya-kicca',* things not to be done.

2. *Vacī-kamma:* Any words whose purpose would be incorrect in light of the Vinaya should not be spoken in any circumstances. Speak only those words which would be classed as Right Speech.

3. *Mano-kamma:* We are bound to have thoughts which tend towards the accumulation of defilement and lead to transgressions of the training rules, such as —

abhijjhā: greed focused on the four necessities of life (food, clothing, shelter and medicine);

byāpāda: ill will and malevolence;

micchā-diṭṭhi: wrong views, which would draw the mind into ways running counter to the standards of the Vinaya.

If we don't correct such mental states, we are bound to break the training rules. For this reason, we should establish ourselves in all four of the Principles of Purity *(pārisuddhisīla)* —

a. *Pāṭimokkha-saṅvara-sīla:* Restraining our thoughts, words and deeds so as to show respect for all of the major and minor rules of the basic monastic code.

b. *Indrīya-saṅvara-sīla:* Keeping watch over our senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, feeling and ideation, so as to keep them quiet and restrained, and to do away with those defilements which pertain to the training rules.

c. *Ājiva pārisuddhi-sīla:* Maintaining our livelihood in an honest and above-board manner, not asking for anything, by word or deed, in circumstances ruled out by the Vinaya; training ourselves to have few wants; keeping our conduct in line with the standards of the Vinaya; searching for the

necessities of life with the proper attitude in each stage of the search -

(1) *Pubba-cetanā:* When the thought first occurs to the mind, keep it in line so as not to deviate from the Vinaya.

(2) *Muñcaya-cetanā:* When going through the actions of searching, maintain purity in thought and deed.

(3) *Aparāpara-cetanā:* Once the desired item has been obtained, use it in line with the regulations laid down in the Vinaya. This is called —

d. *Paccavekkhaṇa-sīla:* Reflecting carefully before using things. The act of reflection gives results on many levels:

— We should first reflect on our thoughts, words and deeds while using the item to see if they are in line with the Vinaya.

— Then we should reflect further on the fact that all things are made up of impersonal elements or properties, foul and repugnant; that they are inconstant, stressful and not-self — not beings, not individuals, not 'my self' or anyone else's.

suññho sabbo:

All things are empty, with no one in charge.

When we consider things correctly in accordance with the standards of the Vinaya, we are genuinely exercising good internal governance over ourselves. The ultimate standards for judging clearly whether or not we are governing ourselves well are as follows:

(1) Whatever maxim or rule leads one to behave with a mind tinged by sensual desire is neither Dhamma nor Vinaya.
(2) Whatever behavior aims at the creation of suffering for oneself or for others is neither Dhamma nor Vinaya.
(3) Whatever behavior leads to the accumulation of defilement is neither Dhamma nor Vinaya.
(4) Whatever behavior aims at status and prestige is neither Dhamma nor Vinaya.
(5) Whatever behavior leads away from having few wants is neither Dhamma nor Vinaya.
(6) Whatever behavior aims at socializing with others is neither Dhamma nor Vinaya.
(7) Whatever behavior leads to laziness and carelessness is neither Dhamma nor Vinaya.
(8) Whatever behavior makes one a burden to others is neither Dhamma nor Vinaya.

A person who behaves in any of the above ways has not truly taken the Buddha as his teacher, for as the Buddha said, the Dhamma and Vinaya are our teachers in his place. Any behavior which does not follow the Buddha's teachings should be regarded as something not to be done. We should restrict our behavior to those things which should be done in our own areas of responsibility. For example, behave so as to extract yourself from sensual desires; so as to gain release from suffering; so as not to accumulate defilements within yourself; so as to have few wants: If you happen to

receive many possessions, share them with others. Behave so as to be satisfied with what you already have, and know how to care for and repair what you have so that it will become better. Behave in a way that leads to physical and mental solitude. Be persistent and energetic in doing good in line with your duties. Behave so as not to be a burden to others — so as to be light in body and mind. To behave in these ways is truly to be established in the Dhamma and Vinaya.

To be able to conduct yourself in this manner means that you are able to govern yourself. And when a person can govern himself, he develops authority from within, through the disciplinary standards, enabling him to govern others well.

This is what is meant by 'governing by Vinaya'.

C. *Governing by Dhamma:* This means to govern with one's own inner quality as a person, i.e. having rectitude constantly in the heart; keeping the mind firmly established in Right View by fostering discernment through the practice of meditation; developing Right Concentration so as to wipe out the fetters of sexual lust — which include, for example, sensual inclinations *(kāma-chanda),* a willingness to give in to sensual moods, and which tend towards mental pain and stress. When a person's mind falls under the power of such fetters, it means that there is no quality to him. For the mind to lack quality means that it has fallen in with the mental Hindrances *(nīvaraṇa)* —

1. *Kāma-chanda* (sensual inclinations) or sexual lust: indulging in sensual moods, taking pleasure in sensual desires which arise within and which lead one to take pleasure in sensual objects — a sign that the heart isn't centered in the proper way. This then leads to *paṭigha:* The mind is 'struck', sometimes to its satisfaction, sometimes not, which is the basis for:

2. *Byapada:* ill will and malevolence.

3. *Thīna-middha:* discouragement, apathy, laziness; not making the effort to center the mind in the factors of *jhāna;* not developing a theme of meditation in the mind. The mind thus surrenders to lethargy and discouragement, abandoning its duties and responsibilities. This leads it to become restless and a prey to distraction, unable to put a halt to its train of thought. This is called —

4. *Uddhacca-kukkucca.* When this is the case, then no matter how much Dhamma one may study, the heart is still dark and blinded. Whatever one knows or sees is unclear. One's conduct is lax and lacking, unable to progress to anything of higher value. For the heart to be caught on a snag like this is termed —

5. *Vicikicchā:* doubt, uncertainty, indecision, an inability to go forward or turn back. When this is the case, the mind is classed as having no quality. In other words, it lacks the concentration which will give rise to discernment and the skill of release.

Those, however, who can escape from the Hindrances and center the mind into *jhāna* or concentration will give rise to discernment: the power to keep their defilements within the bounds of rectitude, and to unbind their good-

ness so that it can govern others effortlessly, achieving their own well-being and that of others through the power of their governance. They will awaken from the mundane world, and the supreme good — Dhamma — will appear within them. This is what it means for the heart to have quality.

Most of us, by and large, have no constant quality in our hearts. Instead, we go looking for quality in things outside, and so can never succeed or find security. When this is the case, we are unfit to govern ourselves — and if we are unfit to govern ourselves, then to govern others for the sake of their betterment will be extremely difficult.

This concludes our discussion of the Department of Internal Governance and the duties of those who accept responsibility in this area.

This is all there is to the Department of Internal Governance. Whoever has responsibilities in this area must constantly bear his duties in mind if he is to contribute to the true prosperity of the religion. Otherwise, the establishment of this department will be empty and in vain, yielding no full-fledged benefits.

The point to remember is that the governance of the Sangha in Thailand is of three sorts:

A. Governance by regulation and law — the legislative act setting up the constitution of the Sangha; the Sangha directives and by-laws.

B. Governance by Vinaya.

C. Governance by Dhamma.

This is all it comes down to. If we were to discuss this point in detail, there would be much more to say.

Now, however, we will go on to discuss Part II.

II. The Department of Education

Education in Buddhism — of the kind which gives knowledge conducive to the prosperity of the religion — is of three sorts, as follows:

A. Sutamaya-paññā: Discernment acquired through study.

People who are learned *(bahūsuta)* — who have studied and memorized a great deal — fall into two groups. The first group contains those who have studied in line with the curriculum of the Department, i.e. the official textbooks known as 'Nak Dhamma' (literally, Dhamma expert) levels 1, 2 and 3; or the Pali courses, levels 3–9. Whether or not one passes the examinations is not important. What is important is the knowledge gained. This sort of education gives rise to one level of understanding, termed *sutamayapaññā* — discernment acquired through study.

The second group contains those who study on their own — listening to sermons, reading textbooks, studying the Vinaya, Suttas and Abhidhamma; discussing questions with one another *(dhamma-sākacchā),* which can lead to understanding on a higher level, so that one may apply one's knowledge to training oneself.

Both groups are classed as being on the elementary level of education in the study of Buddhism.

The study of memorized doctrine *(pariyatti dhamma)* is of three sorts —

1. Studying like a snake *(alagaddūpama-pariyatti):* This refers to a person who has studied and is thoroughly knowledgeable, but who makes himself poisonous to others. The deadly venom of a monk is sensual defilement, which includes *rāga* — infatuation and delight in sensual objects; *dosa* — irritation, displeasure, a strong mental poison which darkens the heart, annihilating whatever merit is there, destroying its own goodness. When this happens, the really deadly poisons appear: *kodha* — anger; and *moha* — delusion, confusion about one's own good and evil, seeing right as wrong and wrong as right, being unreasonable and misguided in one's views. All of this is classed as delusion, a poison buried deep in the heart.

Thus to gain an education without then conducting oneself in line with the Dhamma can be called studying like a snake. Such a person makes himself into a cobra's head, spreading his venom into anyone who comes near. To consort with such a person is to consort with a fool, and can poison the mind, drawing it into evil and unwholesome ways, such as searching for well-being with reference only to this lifetime, without looking for what is more worthwhile — one's well-being in future lifetimes — or for what is most worthwhile: the liberation of *nibbāna*.

2. Studying for the sake of emancipation *(nissaraṇattha-pariyatti):* When we have studied the Dhamma and Vinaya

and learned what is good and evil, right and wrong, wholesome and unwholesome, we shouldn't do whatever we see as wrong or harmful to ourselves and others. Instead, we should develop whatever is gracious and good, benefiting ourselves and others in any of the following three ways: Having learned the factors which promote well-being in the present life, we should give rise to them for ourselves and others. Having learned what is necessary to bring about our well-being in future lifetimes — going to a good bourn [realm] or the heavenly realms in the next life — we should conduct ourselves accordingly. As for the the ultimate well-being — *nibbāna* — when we have learned what sort of person it will appear in, and how to behave so as to be worthy of it, we should then foster the qualities within ourselves necessary to bring it about.

The qualities leading to these sorts of benefits are four —

a. *Chanda:* a willingness and readiness to abandon all unwholesome mental qualities. Whether or not we can actually abandon them in line with our intentions, we should nevertheless always show a willingness to abandon them, to follow the practice and to develop our strength of character step by step. This is *chanda,* a factor which lures and propels us into making future progress.

b. *Viriya:* persistence in making the effort to relinquish the evil within ourselves; an unwillingness to lie wallowing in our evils; persistence in fostering virtue within ourselves, in maintaining and developing the virtues we already have, and in using them for the well-being of others. This is termed *viriyiddhipāda* — persistence as a factor leading to success.

c. *Citta:* Whatever task we undertake, we should be fully intent on it, and not shirk our duties. We should try to develop our virtuous actions so that they reach the goal, the supreme well-being to which we all aspire. Whatever happiness is appropriate to us in this life, we should bring it about through our own intentness of purpose. Whatever happiness should arise in future lifetimes, we should set our hearts on striving to cultivate it. As for the happiness unrelated to worldly baits *(nirāmisa-sukha),* we should focus our whole attention on correctly developing the path to reach it. We will then be able to attain our goal without a doubt.

d. *Vimaṅsā:* circumspection. The discernment gained from our studies should be put into practice in line with the factors of the Noble Path. Before doing anything in thought, word or deed, we should first run things through carefully in the mind, from beginning to end, and only then go ahead to act. We should give rise to the mental virtue termed Right Concentration. Concentration gives rise to discernment, and when the discernment of liberating insight arises within us, it leads to the happiness which lies beyond the world. To be circumspect and thoroughly aware that whatever will not be beneficial to ourselves or others should not be done, and that whatever will lead to our own well-being and that of others — in this life, in the next, or in the ultimate sense — should be fostered within ourselves through our own circumspection and discernment: This is *vimaṅsiddhipāda* — circumspection as a factor leading to success.

When we do this, we will reap two sorts of results: *iddhiriddhi* — the power which arises from being established in these four qualities; and *puññariddhi* — the influence

which arises from our own inner virtue. *Iddhiriddhi* is authority, *puññariddhi* is kindness. To have these two qualities is to be a person with two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two arms, two legs — *'puriso',* a complete human being, who can help others become complete in their hearts as well.

This is what it means to be a person who studies for the sake of emancipation.

3. Studying to be a treasurer *(bhaṇḍāgarika-pariyatti):* This refers to the education of a person who has already finished the training, i.e. an arahant, one who has gained release from all defilements. Why does such a person have to study? For the sake of the work of the religion, so as to be of assistance in helping Buddhism to prosper. When was it ever the case that a person had to be thoroughly acquainted with all aspects of formulated Dhamma and customs before doing away with defilement? Some people are born in lower-class families, others in upper-class families. Some have a great deal of social sophistication, others don't. Still they are able to free their minds from defilement by means of the practice, for in practice it isn't necessary to know a great deal of formulated Dhamma. Even a person who knows only a fair amount can still put an end to defilement. So when such a person sees that he can be of help to others, he must educate himself. His study is for the sake of gaining a sense of the differences in societies, in communities and in types of individuals; to gain a sense of time and place; to know the varieties of beliefs and customs that people adhere to. When he becomes thoroughly and properly acquainted with

all customs and conventions, he can then deal effectively with other people for their benefit. This is why he must study and take an interest in such things. Education of this sort is thus called studying to be a treasurer, and is an aspect of the Department of Education.

These, then, are the three forms of studying memorized Dhamma.

B. Cintāmaya-paññā: Discernment acquired through reflection.

When we have studied — in whichever way — we mustn't stop there. We should take all the Dhamma we have learned and chew it over with our own discernment. To chew things over in this way — thinking and evaluating — may give rise to a flavor different from that of our previous education. We think things through on our own, instead of simply believing what other people say or what is written in books. We believe our own sense of reason, discovered within ourselves and termed *'paccattaṃ'* — individual and personal. This sort of education grows out of the earlier sort, in the same way that a person who has learned how to read the letters of the alphabet can then go on to use that knowledge to read textbooks and gain knowledge more valuable than the alphabet on its own.

To make a comparison with food, this second form of education has more flavor than the first. The first sort of education is like taking food, arranging it according to type — main-course dishes in one group, desserts in another — and then finding delight simply in seeing it arranged. The second form of education — thinking, evaluating, reason-

ing things through — is like taking the food and tasting it. The person who does this gets much more use out of the food than the person who simply sits and looks at it: He can nourish his body and know whether or not the food tastes good, whether it's sour or sweet, very sweet or just a little sweet — all on his own. This is what it means to pursue this second form of education properly. To study in this way gives rise to the flavor of the Dhamma, which can then be used to nourish the heart. When the heart is fed on what is truly nourishing, it gains strength in the area of the Dhamma, termed —

1. *Saddhā-bala:* conviction in the worth of inner virtue. Our conviction in the right actions we perform and in the results they will bear us becomes a dominant force in the heart.

2. *Viriya-bala:* The quality of perseverence becomes dominant. We become resolute and courageous in practicing what is good.

3. *Sati-bala:* Our powers of mindfulness become all-encompassing in the great frame of reference.

4. *Samādhi-bala:* The mind develops the steadiness and strength termed 'heightened consciousness' *(adhi-citta),* beyond the power of the Hindrances.

5. *Paññā-bala:* Right Understanding, which comes from the sense of reason fostered in the heart through circumspection. Understanding is strength which can make the mind energetic, competent and powerful.

Discernment acquired through reflection can give rise to the flavor of the Dhamma through the act of thinking, but for thought to be truly nourishing and energizing, we must go on to develop discernment through meditation so as to be complete in our practice.

C. Bhāvanāmaya-paññā: Discernment acquired through meditation.

Coming to know ourselves: We should study and investigate ourselves so as to gain knowledge exclusively within by centering the heart in concentration. To study ourselves by ourselves means to study by means of our own inner alphabet — the various parts put together out of the four properties *(dhātu)* within the body; the five *khandha;* and the six sense media *(āyatana)*. To study on this level means to study with and within the mind, investigating the inner alphabet:

A = *Kesā,* the hair on the head.
B = *Lomā,* the hair on the body.
C = *Nakhā,* the nails which grow from the ends of the fingers and toes.
D = *Dantā,* the teeth which grow in the mouth along the upper and lower jaws.
E = *Taco,* the skin which enwraps the various parts of the body.

All five of these are things which a contemplative should study. Usually, when we are to become ordained, we don't even know our own inner ABC's, much less how to spell. So our preceptors, out of concern for us as their sons in the monkhood, teach us these five things even before we become

monks and novices. If after our ordination, however, we neglect them, it shows that we have no respect for education, and no reverence for the teachings of the Lord Buddha. This is the cause for degeneracy in the Department of Education. To be able to read all 32 of the parts in one's body, and to teach others to do the same, is to qualify as a member of the Sangha, or as a true disciple of the Lord Buddha.

We should study all four or all six of the properties within us — earth, water, wind and fire — as a basis for tranquility meditation, giving rise to *jhāna* by thinking about and evaluating the parts of the body until we gain an understanding of earth, water, wind and fire, together with space and cognizance, the overseer of the house. Study the five *khandha* — body, feelings, labels, mental constructs and cognizance. Keep careful restraint over the six sense media — eye and visual objects, ear and sounds, nose and smells, tongue and tastes, body and tactile sensations, intellect and thoughts. The mind will then enter the first level of *jhāna,* composed of thinking, evaluating, rapture, ease and singleness of preoccupation. Such a person thus goes on to a higher level of education, comparable to high school or secondary education. When the heart becomes quiet, a cool and refreshing sense of pleasure called *'rasa',* the flavor and nourishment of the Dhamma, will appear in it. *Attha:* We will realize the aims of the Dhamma, and our own aspirations as well.

Studying on this level will give rise to a higher level of knowledge termed liberating insight *(vipassanā-ñāṇa)* — clear comprehension in terms of the four Noble Truths — enabling us to go beyond suffering and stress. This is termed the awareness of release. We will gain a special knowledge

which is apart from all of the mundane things we may have learned: This is transcendent knowledge which, beginning with liberating insight, enables us to escape one after another the fortress walls of the citadel of Death.

The citadel of Death has ten walls —

1. Self-identification *(sakkāya-diṭṭhi):* assuming the truth of our views; assuming that the body is our self or belongs to us.
2. Doubt *(vicikicchā):* uncertainty about the paths and fruitions leading to *nibbāna*.
3. Attachment to precepts and practices *(sīlabbata-parāmāsa):* groping about, i.e. undependability in our behavior, which leads us to clutch at various beliefs, searching for absolute standards of good outside of the acts of our own heart and mind.
4. Sensual passion *(kāma-rāga):* desire caused by the power of defilement.
5. Irritation *(paṭigha):* annoyance coming from the mind's sense of being 'struck' or disturbed.
6. Passion for form *(rūpa-rāga):* attachment to certain kinds of physical phenomena.
7. Passion for formless phenomena *(arūpa-rāga):* attachment to mental phenomena, such as feelings of pleasure.
8. Conceit *(māna):* construing ourselves to be this or that.
9. Restlessness *(uddhacca):* distraction, the mind's tendency to get engrossed or carried away.
10. Unawareness *(avijjā):* delusion; being unacquainted with cause and effect, and out of touch with what is true.

All ten of these factors are walls in the citadel of Death. No one who lacks discernment will be able to destroy them, which is why the Buddha was especially insistent on this level of education, teaching his followers to study it from the very day of their ordination so that their education would be complete.

To summarize,. there are three aspects to this third level of education —

1. Learning the alphabet: Studying in line with the labels we have for the various parts of the body, such as hair of the head, etc.

2. Learning to spell: Taking the consonants — such as the four properties of earth, water, wind and fire — and then adding the vowels — feelings, labels, mental constructs and cognizance — so that there is awareness of the six sense media, enabling us to know that there are good sights, good sounds, good smells, good tastes, good tactile sensations and good ideas in the world, and that sometimes things which are not so good can also come in through the six sense media. The awareness which enters in and interacts in this way can be called *paṭisandhi-viññāṇa* — cognizance connected with physical phenomena, interacting with physical phenomena, enabling us to know all levels of good and bad. When we are able to evaluate and choose what is good and bad within ourselves, we qualify as being able to 'read', knowing thoroughly all the ways our inner alphabet works in practice.

3. Learning to make sense of it all: The word 'sense' *(attha)* here has two meanings:

a. Realizing the results our education is aimed at.

b. Comprehending all the various parts into which we are analyzed — the 32 parts of the body, the properties, the *khandha* and the six sense media — or, what it all comes down to, the body and mind, plus the activity of thought, word and deed. To put it briefly, all things are achieved through the heart.

mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā:

The heart comes before all else. All things are excelled by the heart and achieved through the heart. A trained heart is the most superlative thing there is.

When we have tasted within ourselves the flavor and nourishment of all dhammas — mundane and transcendent (the flavor of deathlessness, which surpasses all flavors of the world) — then,

kevala paripuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ
brahmacariyaṃ:

We have performed the entirety of the holy life. Our training in the holy life is perfect and pure.

This is what it means to graduate, to finish our higher education in the Buddha's teachings.

Whoever has duties in the area of education, then, should attend to them. Otherwise, Buddhism is sure to degenerate because of our own lack of education. If this happens, the Department of Education established by the Sangha authorities will be futile and worthless, due to our own misunderstanding of its meaning and aims.

III. The Department of Building and Development

This department is another important area, in that it works for the convenience of the Sangha through improving, repairing and maintaining the physical surroundings in which we live. To be specific, its duties are to build and repair, inspect and maintain our dwellings or monasteries so that they will qualify as *senāsana-sappāya* — comfortable, amenable places for contemplatives to stay.

Meditating monks by and large tend to have fixed notions about this area, believing that to sponsor or do construction work for the sake of Buddhists at large is to devote oneself to merely material concerns, and that such work thus shouldn't be done. Some even believe that work of this sort closes off the paths and fruitions leading to *nibbāna.* Nevertheless, these people have not gone beyond the material benefits they criticize. For this reason, we should examine the area of building and development to see whether or not it is appropriate and accords with the Vinaya.

I would like to divide the duties in this area into two sorts, in line with the two major duties of those who are ordained —

A. The duty of study *(gantha-dhura):* Those monks who are *gāmavāsī,* or village dwellers, are responsible for improving, repairing and developing the places in which they live, for the sake of the common good of Buddhists at large. When building, they should have a sense of scale, order and beauty so that their buildings will fit in with their physi-

cal surroundings. For example, monks' quarters, restrooms, meeting halls and ordination halls should be arranged, in so far as possible, in an orderly way, in keeping with their functions. Once built, they should be kept clean and in repair so as to contribute to the beauty of their surroundings. If anything is lacking, and one is in a position to search for it by proper means, then it should be obtained and maintained in a righteous manner for the sake of one's own convenience and that of the group. All of these activities form a part of the duty of study: improving and developing the place in which we live.

B. The duty of meditation *(vipassanā-dhura):* This refers to those monks termed *'araññavāsī'* or forest dwellers, who search for secluded areas appropriate for meditation, such as those mentioned in the Pali: under the shade of a tree; in a secluded dwelling; under a lean-to, far from settled areas; in a quiet tower; under an over-hanging rock; in a cave; in a forest; in a cemetery; or in a deserted building. One should learn how to select such a place, and how to keep it clean and neat for the sake of one's convenience as a meditator while living there. This is 'building and development' in the forest: Observing one's duties in caring for one's dwelling, improving and maintaining order in one's surroundings, and improving oneself while living there. This is building and development on the external level, one sign of a person who knows how to maintain himself in physical seclusion.

As for internal building and development, one should build a shelter for the mind: *vihāra-dhamma,* a home for the heart. One should foster *magga,* the path to one's home; and

phala, the goodness which arises in the heart as a result. The shelter along the way is Right Concentration: the four levels of *jhāna.* This is the true shelter for those who are ordained.

Once we have been ordained as contemplatives, we should realize that we come under this particular department, and so should perform our duties properly. But by and large we don't understand the true aims of the various departments, and so grope around in external matters, without building or developing any internal qualities which can give the heart shelter. When the heart has no internal quality as its shelter, it will go living outside, building and helping only other people. If the heart is entangled with external matters, then after death it will be reborn attached to physical objects and possessions. Those who are attached to their monasteries will be reborn there as guardian spirits. Those who are attached to their quarters, their ordination halls, their meeting halls, their bodies, will be reborn right there. This is called sensual clinging: Whatever object we cling to, there we will be reborn. For example, there is a story told in the Dhammapada Commentary of a monk who received a robe which gave him great satisfaction and of which he became very possessive. When he died he was reborn as a louse right there in the robe, all because he had no inner quality as a dwelling for the heart.

So for our building and development to go beyond physical objects, we should build and repair a shelter for the heart. Only then will we be qualified to take on external duties — and in performing our duties, we should be careful not to let our inner home become overgrown with the

weeds of defilement, or to let the termites of the Hindrances eat into it. Don't let vermin, lizards or lice — character flaws *(mala)* — take up residence inside. Roof the home of the heart — *jhāna* — with restraint of the senses so that the fires of passion, aversion and delusion don't burn it down.

To purify the principles of our conduct *(sīla)* is to clear and grade our property. To give rise to *jhāna* is to build a home for ourselves. To develop discernment within the mind is to light our home. We will then be safe both while we stay and when we go. When we are able to do this, it will lead to the true prosperity of the religion.

This is what it means to observe our duties in the area of building and development.

IV. The Department of Spreading the Dhamma

Ways of spreading the Dhamma fall into three categories:

A. The first category: Study *(pariyatti)*

This refers to the appointment of monks in the various divisions to teach and train the populace at large. In addition, the establishment of syllabi such as the Nak Dhamma courses, and the appointment of teachers to instruct in accordance with them, can also be classed as a means of spreading the Dhamma.

Spreading the Dhamma can give rise to many sorts of benefits — welfare in this life, welfare in lives to come, and acquaintance with the ultimate welfare — *nibbāna*. These are the aims of spreading the Dhamma by means of the

written and spoken word, which is one aspect of the good which Buddhism has to offer.

1. Here, for those of us who are interested in welfare with regard only to this life, I would like to point out the way, which has four factors —

a. Initiative *(uṭṭhāna-sampadā):* We should be persistent and diligent in our work and our duties, making our living by means that are moral and upright, in line with the principles of Right Undertaking.

b. Maintenance *(ārakkha-sampadā):* We should take good care of the possessions we have earned, and take good care of ourselves — which we have also worked hard to earn — so as not to fall into ways which are evil or wrong.

c. Having admirable friends *(kalyāṇa-mittatā):* We should associate with good people, and avoid associating with immoral people who would lead us astray and cause our possessions to be squandered away.

d. An appropriate life style *(samajīvitā):* We should spend our earnings wisely and provide for our needs in a proper way. We should avoid spending our earnings in wrong ways which would soil our way of life.

These four principles form the way to well-being in this lifetime, but we shouldn't be short-sighted or unrealistic. The truth of the matter is that each and every human being born will have to die and be parted from the happiness found in this world.

2. This being the case, we must provide for our welfare

in the lives to come. The way to happiness in the lives to come, as taught by the religion, is as follows —

a. Conviction *(saddhā-sampadā):* Our convictions should be well-founded and well-informed, firm in the belief that there is good and evil, that there is merit *(punna)* and that our actions bear fruit which we will receive. We should then avoid doing evil, and cultivate goodness as far as we are able.

b. Virtue *(sīla-sampadā):* We should be true to our moral principles, and train ourselves to be full-fledged human beings in thought, word and deed. Whatever we do should be done with honesty and rectitude.

c. Generosity *(cāga-sampadā):* We should be mature in our generosity, making donations to others, for instance, as we are able. To be giving in this way, the Buddha teaches, is a Noble Treasure, bearing dividends both in this life and in lives to come. If we are not giving of our possessions, they will bear us fruit only in this lifetime. At death, they will vanish. We won't be able to transfer them for use in the next life, just as Thai currency can't be used outside the boundaries of our country. When a person travels abroad, he won't be able to use his native currency at all unless he is sensible enough to exchange his money beforehand and deposit it in an appropriate bank. Only then will it be of use to him when he goes abroad. In the same way, sensible people deposit their possessions in the bank called the field of merit *(puññakkheta):* When they sacrifice their wealth in this way, it becomes a Noble Treasure, bearing dividends on the road ahead. And this doesn't apply only to possessions: When a person crosses the border from one country into another,

even his native language won't be of any use. The Buddha thus taught us a foreign language — chanting and the meditative practice of developing good will and loving-kindness — which will serve us as language in the world to come.

d. Discernment *(paññā-sampadā):* We should be circumspect and judicious in all our actions. Otherwise, we will act under the influence of such forms of delusion as *chandāgati* — being prejudiced by affection, with no reasonable thought for right or wrong; *bhayāgati* — being prejudiced by fear, with no thought for what is reasonable; *dosāgati* — being prejudiced by anger and dislike, with no thought for right or wrong; and *mohāgati* — being prejudiced by delusion, mistaking right for wrong, and wrong for right. To act in any of these ways means that we have no discernment. For this reason, whatever we may do in the area of making merit, we should first weigh things carefully and properly before acting. Only then will we qualify as being mature in our discernment.

These four practices open the way to a good bourn in the next life, i.e. in heaven, but even then we will still have to go whirling along the cycle of death and rebirth.

3. If we have strong onviction, we will be able to develop ourselves so as to go be and this to the level of the ultimate welfare *(paramattha),* ttaining the levels of transcendent virtue. This sort of virtue is something that all Buddhists should aim for. The prerequisites are two:

conviction and perseverance.

When we possess these qualities, they will serve as our tools

— regardless of whether we are sharp-witted or dull, men or women, people with many defilements or with only a few. Once we have set our sights, we should then develop two practices which form the path to *nibbāna* —

a. tranquility meditation: developing stillness in the mind;

b. insight meditation: developing discernment in the mind; gaining internal insight, seeing through to the natural condition of the Dhamma which lies within us.

The natural condition of the Dhamma is this: birth, momentary existence, disbanding — like a wave on the sea. When the wind blows, great waves rise on the ocean. The same holds true with human life: The natural condition of the *khandha* within us behaves like a wave. This is called the natural condition of the Dhamma.

Another condition, though, stays as it is, whether or not there are waves — just as the water of the sea, when there is no wind, is smooth, level and clear. This natural condition in the heart — a condition which does not take birth, does not change, is not annihilated and does not die, but simply stays as it is — lies within each and every one of us.

These two practices — tranquility and insight meditation — lead to the ultimate welfare, *nibbāna*. The two natural conditions lie within each of us. Those who know how to spread the Dhamma into themselves, teaching and counseling themselves, will attain well-being without a doubt.

B. The second category: Practice *(paṭipatti)*

Spreading the Dhamma by practicing it, without having to use words, simply behaving well so as to be an example to

others through one's behavior: This is an important factor in spreading the Dhamma. Our Lord Buddha, for example, was once staying in a forest with a following of 500 monks. As twilight fell, he rested, inclining on his right side, while the monks all did walking or sitting meditation. No one was talking. Everything was perfectly still. Just then, a group of wandering ascetics ame into the forest and, seeing this, were completely won over. They felt so inspired by the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha that they were willing to become disciples. Later, they were of great help in spreading the religion. This shows that good and proper practice is an extremely important force in spreading the Dhamma.

Not only human beings, but even animals are able to follow the example of others' behavior, as when a man with a crippled leg leads a horse with sound legs around on a tether: In no time at all, the horse will learn to walk with a limp. As the leader goes, so go his followers; as the mould is shaped, so are the items moulded. Good behavior is thus a way of spreading the religion which has a deep and telling influence on the hearts of those who come after. This is one of our true duties within the religion. Even if our defilements may be heavy and thick, we can still be of service to others in this way.

Thus in spreading the Buddha's teachings, it's not enough simply to get up and deliver a sermon. A person with discretion in teaching the Dhamma can convince others of its value in a variety of ways: by his manners, as already mentioned; or by *ādesanā-pāṭihāriya* — the marvel of knowing another person's thoughts; or by *anusāsanī-pāṭihāriya*

— the marvel of teaching that which, when put into practice, gives the promised results. All of these are means of spreading the Buddha's teachings.

C. The third category: Psychic Marvels *(iddhi-pāṭihāriya)*

In some areas of religious work, spreading the Dhamma is done via the mind — as, for example, when the Venerable Culapanthaka performed a psychic marvel which astounded those who saw, inspiring conviction, reverence and awe in their hearts. Those who had never before felt inspired by the Buddha's teachings suddenly became inspired because of those events.

Other instances were performed by the Buddha himself, as when he went to break the pride of the three Kassapa brothers. He went out in the rain without getting wet, did walking meditation in the flood without getting wet, which led Purāṇa Kassapa to abandon his stiffnecked pride — and when he had abandoned his pride, the Buddha was able to teach him the Dhamma. Purāṇa Kassapa and his followers saw the Dhamma appear within themselves, experienced the paths, fruitions and *nibbāna,* and proclaimed themselves followers of the Buddha. They were then of great help in spreading the religion.

Another example is when the Buddha subdued the bandit, Aṅgulimāla. As Aṅgulimala ran chasing after him, the Buddha radiated good will through the power of *jhāna,* causing the earth between them to rise and fall in great waves until Angulimala, tired from his running, called out in surrender. The Buddha then instructed him to the point

where he was so impressed and convinced that he was eventually able to make his heart attain the Dhamma.

There are many other examples of this sort by which the Buddha was able to proclaim the religion so that it has lasted into the present day. If we take spreading the Dhamma to be simply a matter of words, it wouldn't have been — and won't be — enough.

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Thus, spreading the Dhamma is done in three ways:

A. By deed — showing others the Dhamma through the example of one's behavior; being correct and gracious in one's words and deeds; keeping restraint over one's senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, feeling and ideation so as to be an inspiring example to those who see.

B. By word — teaching and explaining the Dhamma out loud, giving rise to understanding and inspiration in those who hear.

C. By thought (psychic feats, *manomayiddhi)*. When one has seen through the power of intuitive understanding that a person is ready to receive the Dhamma, one should spread thoughts of good will, dedicating the fruits of one's merit to that person. This way of spreading the Dhamma can be done both in public and in private, with those who are near and those who are far away. It can help certain human and

divine beings, and inspire conviction in those whose dispositions lie within the net of the Dhamma, all without having to say a word.

This has been termed 'anointing with the waters of benevolence.' The good will which lies in the heart is like a cooling current. Wherever this current is directed through the power of a radiant heart, it can draw other beings, both human and divine, to become inspired to develop the qualities of their hearts in line with their varying dispositions. Even if we have yet to meet them, and have simply heard news, we can still cause their hearts to become cool and refreshed, contributing to their welfare and happiness. Spreading the Dhamma in this way is beneficial both to us and to others. To be able to do this, though, we must first give rise to sufficient quality in our own hearts. If the quality isn't there yet, then build it, and dedicate it first of all to those to whom you owe 'kamma debts'. Spread this goodness to fill the body. Spread this goodness to fill the mind. This sense of fullness is what is meant by rapture *(pīti)* — i.e. full of what is wholesome and worthwhile. Goodness fills the heart, refreshing it with what is wholesome. When goodness fills the body and mind, it is like water filling a tank or saturating the earth. Wherever the earth is saturated with water, there the trees and vegetation flourish. But if we don't have enough goodness within, we're like a tank without any water: No matter how far the faucet is opened, only wind will come out. The coolness of wind and the coolness of water are two very different things. The coolness of wind can cause trees to wither, and can send dust clouds flying, but the coolness of water is useful in many ways: It

can be used to wash clothes, to bathe the body, to drink or to sprinkle on the ground, nourishing plants and softening the earth. Not only that, it can also give a deep sense of refreshment. In the same way, people who practice the Dhamma, even if they don't speak a word, but simply spread thoughts of good will, can be of great benefit to people at large. This is termed *'mettā-pāramī'* — the perfection of benevolence.

Thus when goodness arises within us, we can work for the welfare of others even when we sit with our eyes closed, perfectly still. But it's the nature of ignorant people to believe that such a person is simply saving his own skin. They haven't looked deep inside.

The teachers of the past thus made a comparison with thunder and rain. Some people can teach others, but they themselves have no inner goodness. Such people are called *thunder without rain.* They can cause others to feel awe and respect, but can give no sense of cooling refreshment. Some people are like *rain without thunder.* They rarely speak, but spread thoughts of good will, dedicating their merit to others. They have received their own full measure of inner goodness and so can give goodness and inspire conviction in the hearts of others even when simply sitting still. Those who find peace and calm in the shelter of such an influence will, in turn, feel the highest form of respect. Some people are like *rain with thunder;* and others, *rain with thunder and wind to boot:* This, for those who are able, is the best of all. Such people, after having developed their own inner goodness, are able to teach others, spreading the Dhamma by thought, word and deed, giving results in many ways:

People who are stubborn and fixed in their opinions will be able to soften in an instant, just as giant trees bend before the wind. At the same time, teachers of this sort can be an example to others through their behavior and the kindness of their hearts, feeling no envy for the goodness of others, but only compassion, providing the shelter of mental peace to all sorts of people. This is the way to spread the Dhamma fully and completely, causing the religion to prosper in the true and proper way.

The field of spreading the Dhamma is extremely important. Those who practice it will get results in two ways:

1. By knowing how to use authority — the power of the mind — so as to be of benefit.
2. By knowing how to use compassion — the goodness of the heart — so as to benefit their fellow human beings, with no need for power of any sort whatsoever.

Only those who can act in this manner are qualified for the Department of Spreading the Dhamma.

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When the duties of all these departments are fully observed by a community, a group or an individual, they will help the religion to prosper and thrive. But as long as we are unable to fulfil these duties, the establishment of directives for each of the various departments is meaningless, and can lead, I'm afraid, only to the disappearance of the Buddha's teachings, as happened in India. This is why I have asked

to explain our organization and duties so that we will all be thoroughly acquainted with them.

It will be ideal if each individual can observe the duties of all four departments; and, to be true to the Dhamma, each of us should regard all of these duties as his own personal responsibility. If we pay attention only to the directives and rules, we will be deficient in our duties, and the establishment of the various departments will be a waste of time. All the thought and consideration devoted to our welfare will be fruitless.

Thus we should use our authority and inner virtues in observing our duties firmly and properly for the sake of the good order of the religion.

If I were to explain things at length, there would be much more to say; but I will stop for the time being with this condensed discussion of the main points at issue, which should be enough to serve us as an adequate guide.

If there is anything in any way wrong or defective in what I have written here, I ask the reader's forgiveness.

Peace.

Glossary

The definitions given here are based on the meanings these terms have in Ajaan Lee's writings and sermons.

apalokana-kamma: This and the following terms — *ñatti-kamma, ñatti-dutiya-kamma,* and *ñatti-catuttha-kamma* — refer to procedures to be followed in settling the communal business of the Sangha.

attha: Sense,. meaning, aim, result.

avijjā: Unawareness; counterfeit knowledge.

āyatana: Sense medium. The six inner sense media are the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and intellect. The six outer sense media are their respective objects.

bhagavant: An epithet for the Buddha, commonly translated as 'Blessed One' or 'Exalted One'. Some commentators, though, have traced the word etymologically to the Pali root meaning 'to divide' and, by extension, 'to analyze', and so translate it as 'Analyst'.

dhamma: Event; phenomenon; the way things are in and of themselves; their inherent qualities; the basic principles underlying their behavior. Also, principles of behavior which human beings should follow so as to fit in with the right natural order of things; qualities of mind they should develop so as to realize the inherent quality of the mind in and of itself. By extension, 'dhamma' is used also to refer to any doctrine which teaches

such things. Thus the Dhamma of the Buddha refers both to his teachings and to the direct experience of the quality of *nibbāna* at which those teachings are aimed.

dhātu: Element; property; the elementary properties which make up the inner sense of the body and mind: earth (solidity), water (liquidity), fire (heat), wind (energy or motion), space and cognizance.

jhāna: Meditative absorption in a single object, notion or sensation.

kamma: Acts of intention which result in states of being and birth. '*Kamma* debts' are the moral debts one has to others either through having been a burden to them (the primary example being one's debt to one's parents) or from having wronged them.

khandha: Component parts of sensory perception: *rūpa* (sense data, appearances); *vedanā* (feelings of pleasure, pain or indifference); *saññā* (labels, concepts, allusions); *saṅkhāra* (mental constructs or fabrications); and *viññāṇa* (cognizance, the act of attention which 'spotlights' objects so as to know them distinctly and pass judgment on them).

magga: The path to the cessation of suffering and stress. The four transcendent paths — or rather, one path with four levels of refinement — are the path to stream entry (entering the stream to nibbāna, which ensures that one will be reborn at most only seven more times), the path to once-returning, the path to non-returning and the path to arahantship. *Phala* — fruition — refers to the mental state immediately following the attainment of any of these paths.

mala: Stains on the character, traditionally listed as nine: anger, hypocrisy, envy, stinginess, deceit, treachery, lying, evil desires and wrong views.

nibbāna *(nirvāṇa):* Liberation; the unbinding of the mind from greed, anger and delusion, from physical sensations and mental acts. As 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, the property of fire exists in a latent state to a greater or lesser degree in all objects. When activated, it seizes and sticks to its fuel. As long as it remains latent or is extinguished, it is 'unbound'.)

pāṭimokkha: The basic monastic code, composed of 227 training rules.

puñña: Inner worth; merit; the inner sense of well-being which comes from having acted rightly or well, and which enables one to continue acting well.

puññakkheta: Field of merit — an epithet for the Sangha.

saṅgha: The community of the Buddha's followers. On the ideal level, this refers to all those, whether lay or ordained, who have reached at least the path to stream entry (see 'magga'). On the conventional level, it refers to the Buddhist monkhood. In Thai, it also refers to the central administration of the Thai monkhood, and to any individual monk.

vinaya: The monastic discipline. The Buddha's own name for the religion he founded was 'this Dhamma-Vinaya', this doctrine and discipline.

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If anything in this translation is inaccurate or misleading, I ask forgiveness of the author and reader for having unwittingly stood in their way. As for whatever may be accurate, I hope the reader will make the best use of it, translating it a few steps further, into the heart, so as to attain the truth at which it points.

The translator

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sabbe sattā sadā hontu
averā sukhajīvino
kataṃ puññaphalaṃ mayhaṃ
sabbe bhāgi bhavantu te

May all beings always live happily,
free from enmity.
May all share in the blessings
springing from the good I have done.