



THE THIRD WISH TO LEAD THE WORLD OUT OF MATERIALISM

A Dhamma Lecture by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu (1906-1993)
on the occasion of his 80th Birthday, 27 May 2529 (1986)
at Suan Mokkhabalarama, Chaiya



The 114th Anniversary of Buddhadasa

The Third Wish: To Lead the World Out of Materialism

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Photograph: Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu delivering the lecture on 27 May 2529 (1986) at Suan Mokkhabalarama, Chaiya, from the Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives collection (Ref. K-252)

Note: Three Dhamma lectures were given by Ajahn Buddhadāsa, in the morning, afternoon and evening of his 80th 'Age Teasing Day' (birthday). Subsequently, they were all combined into the book 'The Three Wishes of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu.' What follows is the evening and final lecture.



THE THIRD WISH TO LEAD THE WORLD OUT OF MATERIALISM

Dear Buddhist and Dhammic friends who are interested in Dhamma, in the third delivery of my discourse, I will begin with the Third Wish as the topic of my talk. The wish is *to lead the world out of materialism*. It sounds uninteresting, but in fact it is a matter that deserves the greatest interest. It is materialism that has become our enemy, and it is even more harmful than anything else one could possibly conceive of, especially in this present age when materialism practically reigns over the world. The charm of materialism has a pull on the heart and mind of every human being on earth, and it forces us to struggle to get more of it until we become deluded, which is the reason behind the arising of selfishness as well as the factor that encourages the thriving of selfishness. The world is thus full of selfishness because human beings are contented with the ‘taste’ of material goods and have become more infatuated with it than any other tastes.

Learn and Understand the Word ‘Materialism’

Some of you may not exactly understand the word ‘materialism.’ Do allow me to elaborate a bit about this matter. I will make a comparison for the sake of easy understanding. It is just like a little mouse telling its mother that it had seen an animal that was most ugly, disgusting and fierce-looking. The little mouse dared not look at it for long. Then this little mouse saw another animal which it thought to be most lovely and worthy of its friendship. The most ugly and fearsome animal which the little mouse talked about was a hen, or a cock rather, with a cockscomb, while the most lovely animal that the little mouse was well impressed with was a cat! So, this little mouse had such a unique concept of ugliness and beauty. Its disgust for the cock and infatuation with the cat should be reversed. But the poor little mouse somehow felt that the giant (meaning the cat) was lovely and mistook the harmless cock as a dangerous giant.

People in this world are just like the little mouse – they get infatuated with or deluded by the ‘delicious taste’ of material things which will eat into or even devour even their own hearts, and yet as for the ‘delicious taste’ of Dhamma or a sublime mind, they regard it with



disgust and fear. For example, they fear Dhamma and they fear any 'Nibbāna.' People such as these are like the little mouse, not knowing what a giant is, and failing to know where danger lies.

Taking a close, good look, one can feel that materialism is something beautiful, lovely and enticingly attractive, but it has characteristics comparable to the case of a cat which gets involved with rats. As for the happiness of the mind or 'Dhammaism' (a self-invented word taken to mean the tendency to favour or love Dhamma), people tend to perceive it as something boring, disgusting and to be feared. There are people who even declare outright that they hate calmness as there is simply no fun in it – no jumping and no dancing is just no fun, so they also do not like silence. This is materialism which has an enticing power that can tempt people into delusion, and it has a 'delicious taste' that appeals to the natural and common feelings of the majority of the general populace.

People also learn to make changes just to increase the enticing power of materialism so that everything which appeals to the human senses is made doubly or many more times attractive or delicious: 'delicious' in the context of eyes-perception, that is, making things look even more beautiful than how they used to look; 'delicious' to the ears is making something sound pleasant to the ears; 'delicious' to the nose means improving the fragrance of odour to its highest quality; 'delicious' to the tongue points to the great pains that are taken to advance culinary skills to get the best tastes in food; 'delicious' to the skin means making whatever things possible to provide a comfortable feeling for the body skin or sense of touch. Thus, everything is being made, readjusted, or modified in every aspect to yield more attractiveness to the five aspects of material goods. People who are innovative and initiate these adjustment are shrewd opportunists who earn good profits, and so far there seems to be no end to this kind of material progress. Materialism is indeed the norm of the day.

In these modern days, people are simply infatuated with material goods and services. They buy the kind of things which are not really necessary in their lives and fill their houses with such unnecessary material things. Some go to the extent of borrowing money in order to be able to make their purchases of material goods, just to satisfy their whimsical demand for sensual pleasures. This kind of social behaviour, when overlooked, seems to be a trifling matter. However, when viewed closely, it is obviously a matter of serious and grave concern for it has become a problem that 'devours' humankind until we have lost that lofty part of our humanity, living mindlessly with no prospect for a bright and peaceful future, while at the same time worshipping the pleasures of the flesh and skin obtainable from all sorts of material goods and idolizing them as though they were our God.



Take a good look at all those students who are still filling the various academic institutions. They all cherish the hope of getting a good income in the future to ensure a high purchasing power so that they can buy whatever goods or services they want in order to satisfy the needs of the senses which have been 'set' on an ascending scale. Competition is ever on the increase, and salaries become insufficient to meet daily expenditures until one may resort to cheating or many corrupt practices and other related corrupt means. This is the impact of materialism. There is no peace and happiness in the world of today. Materialism is the 'destructive giant' that is capable of even destroying the whole world. We are, in fact, voluntarily digging our own graves by allowing ourselves to be deluded by materialism.

Delusion in materialism leads to selfishness, which means 'to be concerned with one's own self-interests only.' It amounts to feeding our mental defilement with baits. The mind is a defiled mind, so it cries for baits to be fed to it, whereas a pure and clean mind needs no baits. It needs only some reasonable amount of small spiritual factors for it to survive, that is all. But if it were to be a matter of *kilesa* (mental defilement), the mind would need baits, more baits and even more baits, an endless chain of baits. Therefore, the 'delicious taste' of material goods nourishes our defiled craving, and this defiled craving is something felt within the mind. Hence, the mind itself is divided into a particular part which is pure mind and another part which belongs to *kilesa* (defiled desires), and which covers the rest of the mind. Many of us do not know how to make the distinction. Therefore, we get caught or trapped in our sense of attachment and become deluded to the extreme. There is no one to warn us or to persuade us that it is time to stop our crazy infatuation with materialism, and to be thrifty and reduce our senseless material consumption. There is simply no one to tell us to do just that; but there are many who encourage the pursuit of an ever-increasing materialistic inclination until the whole world is overflowing with materialism

In academic fields, research is done solely in matters concerning material things. In the field of invention and production research, it is also about material things. So material goods rule the world, and we do not know who is to be held responsible for this state of affairs. If we were to let God assume the responsibility, we do not know exactly where God is. We only talk about God, but we do not really know where He is. So, people who worship materialism more than God are thus turning their backs on God. The chapters in the holy texts of religions become impotent or of no significance. No one believes in them and no one bothers with them. Materialism has the advantage, and so widely has it spread that it rules over the world now.



Materialism Makes the World Simmering with Eating, Sensuality and Honour

Now just take a look around and think about this. What do we get from the progress made in material things? And what do we lose? The answer is we get carried away by an engrossing fun of the most delusive nature, and we lose our real peace of mind as a result. So the exchange is done. It is true that we get a lot of comforts, convenience and amusement from material things, but it is delusive – so delusive that it eventually turns us mad, and we lose all of our peace. The world will surely be simmeringly hot, baking hot until it bursts into flame or fire, not the fire that burns papers, but it is the fire which burns the deep inner mind that lies deeply within us. It is the fire of the mind and soul. See what the power of the so-called materialism is capable of. It can just light up the fire in our mind, a fire that is unbearably hot.

I have selected three words for special consideration: ‘eating,’ ‘sensuality,’ and ‘honour.’ This matter of eating is all a matter of ‘delicious tastes,’ not only just about food, but it is also about the ‘delicious taste’ of ‘baits’ of all kinds, waiting for us to eat or ‘get hooked’ on. Putting the mental or spiritual aspect aside, in accordance with nature, our human body needs only a certain amount of food just to survive. This refers to eating food in the literal sense, not eating baits. But mental defilement, or craving, or desire or whatever you may wish to call it, does not feed on this kind of food. It wants to devour baits which can stimulate the strong feelings of the nervous system. Thus, there are two kinds of eating: the physical body needs to eat food in the literal sense, and the mind, with its desires, needs to feed on baits that satisfy and strengthen the sensual feelings.

This matter about *kāma* (not *kamma* which is a totally different matter) or sensuality has become a matter that is different from pure reproduction. Nature dictates reproduction for a purely biological reason – to ensure the continuation of the species so that it does not become extinct; but human beings are not contented with reproduction for the sake of the continuation of the species.

They seek pleasures in consuming sexual baits and indulge in sexual pleasure (*kāma*) in an increasing intensity. Some people even look upon reproduction as undesirable and disgusting, but even so, most people still come under the influence of *kāma* which necessitates the implementation of birth-control.

Now we come to the word ‘honour.’ ‘Honour’ is not a matter of only the intangibles in relation to mind and consciousness. It is the tool which people want to have in order to use



it for seeking material gain. Generally people who have honour or rank keep the honour they have only to be used for seeking other material gains. It is not just honour for honour's sake, but rather it is a kind of 'honour' that implies a power to 'sweep' whatever material benefits or gains directly or indirectly into one's own hands or the hands of whomever it may concern. Looking retrospectively, we can conclude that we do have many problems indeed with regard to matters of eating, sensuality and honour.

Materialism Is a Big Problem

Now that everybody is more or less becoming a slave of materialism, what are we to do? The fact that many people simply cannot understand the core of their religion is because they have become too immersed in materialism. They are so busy struggling to get the 'delicious taste' of all those material things (and sensual pleasures too) that they simply do not care to make serious efforts toward mutual religious understanding. Even if a mutual understanding between religions could be reached, there is still the problem of every member of the entire world community becoming the slave of materialism. So there is yet a need to deal with this problem after all.

Now, just think about this: the spreading of Dhamma, or the truly right kind of religious teaching, has been a formidable task and has even failed rather miserably these days. What is the obstacle that obstructs or hinders the task? Looking superficially, we will see other insignificant causes, but a deeper and closer scrutiny will reveal the true identity of our enemy – materialism. Materialism has a strong hold on the mind of most people in the world. The influence is so great that people simply become obsessed with their pursuit of material goods and sensual comforts and pleasures until they simply cannot be bothered about taking an interest in religions or Dhamma. Therefore, if this 'monster' of materialism cannot be killed, the world will have to put up with living in an ever-increasing suffering that will never end. If the world could be led out of materialism, there would be peace and happiness, but now it is simply impossible to get rid of materialism. The irony is that in spite of the realization that materialism is unhealthy for human spiritual development, people are still very much attracted to it. It can capture the hearts of more people than any other thing can. It seizes the hearts and souls of almost all of us, making this world addicted to the 'delicious taste' of material goods.

For those who want to propagate Dhamma or religion, it is most important that they must be able to discern the problem posed by materialism. It is the most realistic and harmful obstacle to the propagation of religion as well as to the hope of a future lasting peace. Therefore, you all are left with this problem to contemplate.



To all of you who are here to receive the delivery of this Dhamma discourse, do look at your own selves properly and ask yourselves a question – why is it that we simply do not like Dhamma? Well, allow me to supply you with an answer – it is because we have become so infatuated with the charm of materialism, even though on the surface we may not like to admit it. In fact, in reality, there is hardly any room in our mind for such a ‘dull’ thing as Dhamma or religion. Once I asked a guy, ‘Do you wish to attain Nibbāna some day?’ He replied, ‘Yes, I would love to,’ but when I told him that there would be no *ramwong* (a kind of Thai dance) in Nibbāna, he shook his head to show that he did not want Nibbāna any more because he liked *ramwong* very much. He must have imagined that in the ‘city of Nibbāna,’ the *ramwong* there would be even more fun than the normal ones here. So, observing carefully, you will see that there is something like this in almost everybody. While claiming to wish for Nibbāna, the moment someone says there is no ‘delicious taste’ in Nibbāna, a change of heart occurs. See how firmly materialism has seized the world. Are we to let this situation prevail until our death, or are we to help solve the problem by getting the world out of materialism?

We Should Not Be the Slaves of Materialism But We Should Practice in Accordance with ‘Dhammaism’

I feel that there is a necessity to hold on to us humankind to prevent all of us from becoming the slaves of materialism; that is, at least let there be some human beings who can manage to resist the charm of materialism and become firmly intent on propagating Dhamma. Well, let me take this opportunity to speak about Dhamma or ‘Dhammaism.’ Materialism and spirituality are a pair of opposites, but to be excessively engrossed in spirituality is also a kind of extreme attachment and would be as harmful as the extreme clinging to material things in materialism. Thus, one must take a middle position between the spiritual mind and the material goods as well as all the sensual pleasures to be derived from material possession, which means one must be able to control both the spiritual mind and the material things. Let there be some form of harmony between the two. It would be a right kind of ‘control,’ just fine for both sides. This right and proper way of conducting oneself is called Dhamma or Dhammaism.

Do not be mistaken that the escape from materialism must necessarily be followed by the attachment to spirituality. It is not necessarily so. Both are open to extremism. The right thing to do is to be in the middle, and it is called Dhammaism. The word ‘Dhamma’ is an important word which must be properly understood.



Now, we still do not have a widespread Dhammaism because materialism has been pulling all the people away. Real spirituality, unlike materialism, fails to attract people in general. It attracts only some people or some groups of people who are fatuous or misguided in the matters of spirituality or mind, and that is only a small number of people who may end up being hermits, ascetics or forest nuns in a wood or forest, posing no problem to anybody or any country. However, to live a life-style of extreme austerity in a forest is of no apparent benefit to anyone. What actually poses a big problem to the world as a whole is no problem other than the problem of materialism.

Life is composed of two things: on the material side, it is the body, and on the spiritual side, it is the mind. Between these two, there is something that tells truth or the right truth which leans neither to the physical side nor to the spiritual side. It is Dhammaism.

We Ought to Know the Meaning of Materialism

Now we are to consider this matter of materialism in particular in the status of its being an evil enemy to humankind. Those of you who have never known the meaning of this word will come to understand it somehow, for the word ‘materialism’ is rather ambiguous.

The first and foremost meaning is ‘the state of getting infatuated with and deluded in the ‘delicious taste’ of material goods.’ People worship the ‘delicious taste’ of material things because it is understandably an easy thing for anyone to get committed to. Babies born out of their mothers’ wombs find it easy to get ‘addicted’ to the taste of material things, beginning with the milk of their mothers for example, right up to more sophisticated food as they grow older. There is simply no need for anyone to teach them. Babies or children will learn by themselves. Not many days after their births, babies learn by instinct to like whatever things that taste delicious to them. Materialism begins to have power over them. Children grow up with delusion about material things. As they get older and older, the *āyatana* (the sense organs) such as the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind have an even higher capacity to spur them toward the ‘addiction’ and delusion in the ‘delicious taste’ of material objects in every possible way. The children have become victims of those devils (*māra*) and monstrous giants of materialism which take them away to worship the ‘delicious taste’ of material goods.

Even though we may not be materialistic to the extent of becoming intensely deluded in sensuality and material goods, the convenience and comfort which material things can offer is enough to persuade us to become worshippers of materialism, so that all we want is only material comfort, not necessarily a more profound form of sensual delight, but some look



specifically for the latter. Thus, there are two kinds of materialistic pleasures in all, and most people come under the power of such materialistic inclination. One group of people sinks deeply in the 'delicious taste' of sensual pleasures material objects can offer, while another group simply yearns for conveniences and physical comforts such as an air-conditioned room or a nice car for convenient and comfortable traveling. Then they all become contented and later, much deluded, by their material possession.

People generally seem to know only about the beauty of material objects and do not know about the beauty of the mind. They know the value of material things but are ignorant of the value of inner virtues of the mind. Thus, they do not understand when they hear such utterings like these: Dhamma has beauty in the beginning, it has beauty in the middle and in the end. Those people simply cannot understand. Even the monks and the novices fail to understand those verses, let alone the ordinary householders and Buddhist followers. It is because people have a mind that knows only about material things and the comforts and conveniences to be derived from them. Hence, they see no pleasure in Dhamma and never care to develop a liking for it. In fact, some people actually chant those verses every day, but they pay no interest to the meaning of what they chant. The Buddha reminded us with these words: *"May all of you spread the Dhamma, proclaim the Dhamma, and let there be beauty in the beginning, in the middle and in the end."* Now, do our Buddhist preachers know about the beauty of Dhamma at the beginning, in the middle and in the end or not? If the answer is 'no,' how are you going to make such a proclamation?

Now we come to matters concerning various rules and principles. The regulating of rules and principles, the writing of historical records, and the making of anything to be evidence, are all done based on material objects because people concerned in such matters know nothing about the spiritual mind. Therefore, a lot of books or texts and various regulations which have been written or set up are mostly matters associated with only material objects, and then the conclusion is that the task is completed, the highest point has been reached, and there is nothing beyond this. Historical records in particular, are being done in this ridiculous way. All historical facts are being based on material evidence, and nothing of the spiritual side is being involved.

Philosophers who define the 'truth' of nature or the universe, or whatever it is, also have their definition of truth based on matters relating to material objects, which is superficial. Even in matters of the mind or Dhamma, no truly profound definitions have been offered, and yet people adhere to those principles blindly, believing them to be the right principles whose legitimacy is based on material evidence or scriptural records. This is an even heavier indication of materialism until in the end there arises the overall viewpoint that material



goods lead the mind in accordance with the principle of dialectic materialism. This dialectic materialism is a concept of materialism which comes up with reasons to prove that material goods or objects lead the human mind, just like the communists who adhere to the belief that when material objects or goods are in abundance and good, everything else will be good too. Nowadays, do we not see that material goods lead the mind all along, only to be sunk in the mind? In fact, the mind is sunk deep under heaps or piles of material objects. Materialism leads the world in this way. Those people claim that in all developments in this world or universe, material objects lead the mind. When material objects are fine, the mind is fine. This is a principle that goes against natural law. It is deceptive, most deceptive, but then they still manage to find their own reasons to prove their point until everybody believes them, and they join hands in developing material objects. So materialism will rule the world someday. Even the communists used to think of reigning over the world through development in the material fields.

As for the principles of Dhamma, it is just the reverse. Through Dhamma, one is able to discern fact or truth, that it is the mind which leads the material objects and not the other way round. The thinking process will have to take place before any material object will arise and be what it has to be accordingly. The mind is the tool that leads the body to healthy growth because it is the mind that makes the right choice for the body. When the body is healthy, it helps to improve the mind in return. In a body that is healthy, the mind will also be healthy. This is quite true, but if asked what leads what, material goods or the spiritual mind, the answer, according to Buddhist teaching, is that it is the mind that makes the right choice for the body. Therefore, it leads all the material objects. The mind needs to be set right first, and only then will the material objects be properly used or beneficially utilized. This should be a discernable point.

Therefore, we have to develop the mind first and then direct it to the right and proper usage; then the material objects and the mind will find themselves in their proper places. Thus, the notion that material objects lead the mind is in itself an aspect of materialism.

The materialists are convinced that development depends on material things, and so they set material progress and development as their main target, and the results have been abundant and satisfactory, but this is not in congruity with the fact that the mind leads the material things. In reality, it is the mind that decides which kind of development should be allowed to be launched so as to benefit the society. Clearly, the right kind of material development depends on the right perception of the mind. However, what actually happens nowadays is that people are more concerned with material gains than moral ideals. They are more interested in the 'delicious taste' of material objects and so they claim that progress



depends on material things. This is pure materialism. Satisfaction from material consumption leads the mind to seek for even more material objects, and the world is flooded with the development of those material things until all human beings become slaves of materialism. This is what we call 'true materialism.'

They worship materialism as an 'ideology' that helps and ensures survival and regard it as something supreme, beginning with the worshipping of the 'delicious' or pleasure of sensuality, or they hold on to all the established rules and principles that seem to place materialism in the position of a God. Thus, materialism is the God of this world of blind delusion.

We live in an age when material goods have become a matter of vital significance that leads and develops the mind. The mind is so influenced by material development that we come to worship the material objects as God, as well as the codes or principles associated with them.

Life Must Have Both Material Objects and Spirituality

Let us get to know the characteristics of this thing called 'materialism' in every possible aspect. We have to know the way to solve our obsession with materialism. We can begin with perceiving things from the right perspectives. Life must have both material objects and spirituality. In the language of Dhamma, they are called *rūpa* (form, visible objects) and *nāma* (mind). Life simply cannot be just a form or a visible object (*rūpa*), nor can it be just a mind (*nāma*); it must be composed of both object and mind (*rūpa + nāma*). Therefore, we need to have the right management in both matters of material objects and mind. If we hold on to only one side, all things would go wrong. The world, taking it as a whole, also consists of objects and mind. The development of the world is being conducted in the manner of mind leading the material objects. It is the minds of human beings that decide what we are to do with the world we dwell upon, and so far our mind has been leading us into developing our world into what it is today. Obviously, it is the mind that leads the material world. Should it be the reverse, the consequences would be very much on the negative side. In sum, be it an individual human being or the world as a whole, each cannot do without both material objects and spirituality. We must have the right knowledge about both matters.

Now let us get to know even more deeply into the whole matter. Be it a material object or the mind, it is only an element (*dhātu*) of nature; it seems such teaching is found only in Buddhism which stresses that everything is a natural element, be it on the *rūpa* side (form or visible object) or the *nāma* side (spiritual side), including all the states of being or actions



and reactions such as happiness, which is considered as an element itself, and even suffering too is an element. There is nothing that is not an element. Even Nibbāna itself is a natural element, but it is the kind of element that is *asaṅkhata*, which means it cannot be conditioned or embellished. It is a truly free natural element, but even so, it still remains an element in accordance with nature or natural laws. As for the other things apart from Nibbāna, they all succumb to the conditioning of *saṅkhāra* (bodily, verbal, and functioning factors). In short, they are subjected to conditioning or embellishment.

So far as I have been learning and noticing, it seems the teaching concerning everything being an element in nature is only found in Buddhism. It is a unique aspect of Buddhist teaching – everything is merely a natural element, be it susceptible to conditioning or not subjected to conditioning. Be it *saṅkhāra* or non-*saṅkhāra*, which is Nibbāna, it still is just a natural element.

To remain sensible and sane, we just have to make sure that we are not overcharmed and overcome by material objects, nor should we dote on spirituality excessively because both material objects and spirituality are simple elements in nature. Thus, we can discern *tathatā*, or the trait of being ‘just the way it is’ in all of them. Those which are subjected to conditioning or embellishment (*saṅkhata-dhātu*) react and ‘struggle’ according to conditioning or embellishing factors, while those that belong to *asaṅkhāra* (that cannot be conditioned) need not strive to react to anything at all, but they just stay firmly in place, forever unshaken no matter what the circumstances are since the mind is already in a state of true liberation, not having a ‘self’ to get attached to. This is what we call ‘to know to the end of the depth of matters which we ought to know,’ insofar as this matter of material objects and mind is concerned. In addition, we also come to know of a third matter which is neither material object nor mind. It is Nibbāna.

Nibbāna transcends embellishment or conditioning; it does not embellish or condition anything and it is not subjected to any embellishment or conditioning too. It simply cannot be embellished. It is a state of mind that ‘transcends the normal mind’ to become a truly liberated mind in which no embellishment, conditioning, or manipulation can take place. Thus, we actually know more than what other people know, for they only know about the body and the ordinary, mundane mind, whereas we know something more and higher up, that is, Nibbāna, which is to be the tool used for halting and extinguishing the charm of the body and mind.

Having known the matter of the mind and materialism to this extent, it would be easier for us to get to know the ways to eliminate the power of materialism. If we were to know only



one side, say, the mind, for instance, it would not be balanced. It would be a knowledge with an imbalanced base, thus rendering it impossible for us to get to the real truth for we still do not know enough about the material objects. If we know only about the objects, our knowledge is again inadequate and imbalanced since we still know too little about the mind. Thus, we would not be in a position to reach the Dhamma of true liberation. The Dhammic truth of survival is the truth of true liberation. It comes from the right and complete knowledge that includes the knowledge about material objects and the mind, as well as the knowledge which transcends these two items, being neither material objects nor mind, and comes to be known as Nibbāna. Having learned to this extent, we now know all that is to be used for tackling the difficult issue about materialism. When both the right knowledge concerning the material objects and the spirituality are combined together, it becomes a matter of Dhamma or Dhammaism. Dhammaism is thus a matter of right knowledge of both materialism and spirituality.

However much we know, and if we know only one side of the story, it will set nothing right because it is a one-sided knowledge. Even if we were to know more about the material objects than what we do know now, it still will be of not much help in solving our problems; but of course, it may help us to invent and produce even more surprising and wonderful material things for us to use such as these days when we are coming into the age of the existence of strangely wonderful products relating to such matters like space or atoms until we have such a wonderful machine like a computer, which works wonders. There are many more wonderful inventions yet to come, more wonderful than the previous ones, but they are, after all, just a matter of material objects – products of only a slice of all human knowledge. They alone cannot solve all our human problems.

We Must Be Interested in Turning Life into Dhamma

We should have a complete knowledge of things which concern our lives, both in the material fields and spiritual spheres. If knowledge were to fill a circle, this circle must consist of two portions: one for knowledge concerning material objects while the other is knowledge concerning spirituality. We must have both portions of the circle, which means we know well about matters relating to material objects as well as matters of spirituality, and also matter, which is above or beyond material objects and spirituality. It is a system of Dhamma used as perfect knowledge in eradicating foolishness from the mind and also lifting the mind above all the delusion and evil charm of material objects.



As such, we must be interested in this thing called Dhamma. Dhamma is the 'state of being right' with regard to both material objects and the mind. It reflects whether a material object, for example, is ethically sound or wrong.

It is our duty in particular to practice or to act in accordance with this duty until it becomes a normal thing for us to lead a life of Dhamma, or to have Dhamma as the guiding principles of our lives, because right practice in relation to the physical and mental system will lead to the right perception and conduct with regard to material objects and Dhamma or spirituality.

Therefore, bear in mind that the word 'Dhamma' implies 'the state of being morally or ethically right' on both the material side and the mental aspects of the systems of life. Above and beyond this right system of material objects and mind (spirituality) is a 'state of being right in all respects' in other words, it is the 'state of ultimate rightness.' If we were to be so ultimately right to this extent, what problems could there be then? We would be able to solve our problems by having Dhamma as our lives, not only material objects or the mind.

Hence, we must have Dhamma, the state of being morally and ethically right regarding both material objects and spirituality, together with whatever it is that is above and beyond material objects and spirituality, in order to collectively form the principles that are to become the system upon which our lifestyle is based. A new word is born, anyway. It is *Dhammajīvī* in Pāli; in Sanskrit it is *Dharmajīvana*. It means 'having Dhamma as one's own life.' Just this word alone is enough to make all material objects or materialism flutter away and disappear into thin air, and it will also shoo away whatever mad or fanatical spirituality that lurks around, and so what remains behind is Dhammaism – the right truth.

When our life is composed of Dhamma, it is just a matter of time before we will reach the truth of all things and phenomena and realize that they are just elements of nature. Being elements of nature, they do not have a 'self' or an entity for us to cling to, and hence do not deserve to be regarded as highly desirable. This perception is a way out of materialism.

Take Dhamma as the principles of life, or even better, take it to be life itself; do not take material objects as your life, like some foolish people who say, 'Oh! This car is my life!' or 'Drinking is my life!' So take life from Dhamma. Make Dhamma your life, or turn your life into Dhamma. Behave or practice according to Dhamma and you will not go wrong. The word 'Dhamma' has a most excellent meaning which everyone ought to commit to memory. It is a system of right practice for humanity in every stage of human development and is meant for the benefit of ourselves and others. That is the thing which we call Dhamma.



Dhamma was born out of our knowledge of nature – knowing the complete facts of nature which include: knowing nature itself, knowing the laws of nature, knowing the duty according to the laws of nature, and knowing the consequences which arise from the implementation of the laws of nature. There are five things to be known about Dhamma. The third – the duty in accordance with the laws of nature – is the Dhamma itself. It carries a meaning which has to be known and understood before any other meanings of Dhamma. It reminds us of our duty to do whatever is right according to the laws of nature.

Knowing nature well, we will not senselessly take anything from nature, to lay claim to it as our own. Knowing the laws of nature will help us know the way to restrain whatever traits of nature within us which lean toward the more undesirable side – things which are in the body and mind, elements, aggregates of consciousness or feelings and whatever such things there may be. It also helps us to know our duty in accordance with nature as to how we must perform our duty. That sort of nature will not lead to problems and suffering.

The duty in accordance with the laws of nature is something which can quench suffering. Of all the teachings in Buddhism, there was nothing more emphatically preached than this matter about the duty in accordance with nature – something which we have to perform rightly if we are to overcome all the suffering.

In the Abhidhamma, there is a word, *cetasika*, which sticks together with the word *citta* (the mind). There is no need to separate it from *citta*. It knows well about matters of the body, the mind, and even Nibbāna; but in the Abhidhamma that people have been learning or teaching, there is a separation of *cetasika* from *citta*, ending up with four matters of *rūpa* (object), *citta* (mind), *cetasika* (mental concomitant factors) and Nibbāna (Nirvana). However, as I have mentioned, it is not necessary to separate *cetasika* and *citta*, the mental factors and the mind. After all, the mind and the mental factors are so intimately connected that they are normally taken as one, and with that, we are still able to understand well the matters about the body, the mind, and Nibbāna.

There is also some teaching concerning *dhātu* (elements). *Rūpa-dhātu* is the element with a form, or in short, it is simply an object. (Visible form); *arūpa-dhātu* is an element with no form but is an object (such as wind), and *nirodha-dhātu* is Nibbāna which is not included in or considered as *rūpa* or *arūpa-dhātu*, visible or invisible element. Nevertheless, it is an element.

If we have learned and know about the state of *dhātu*, element, in this manner, how could we possibly become deluded in material objects? Just think about it: knowing all about



material objects and mind and even Nibbāna, which is beyond all conditioning, means we could eliminate the folly of getting deluded and attached to material objects or lopsided spirituality and ideology. In reality, true Buddhists are not likely to become materialists for they are not stupid enough as to fall under the power of materialism because they know about the truth or the Dhamma or Dhammaism, which is meant for restraining both material objects and the mind.

Buddhist Principles of Practice Create a Life of Dhammaism

Now we come to Dhammaism or ‘the state of being morally sound and right.’ When speaking in the context of actual practice, the Buddha taught about *aṭṭhaṅgika-magga* – the Noble Eightfold Path, which is a matter of ‘rightness’ or doing the right things. There are altogether eight aspects, hence eight paths to this important matter. All the eight paths are grouped together to form a single big path (*magga*) called the Eightfold Path (*aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*). If we have the right knowledge with regard to matters of material objects, the mind and Nibbāna, we will be able to implement all eight aspects or paths rightly and with ease. A complete practice in the Eightfold Path leads to *Dhammajīvi*, or a life that is Dhamma itself, or having Dhamma as life, or having a life that is morally right in eight aspects: Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) – to be right in opinion, thinking, view, knowledge, belief or whatever it is which is an opinion or view that is right. When the view is right, the intention will be right too. This is Right Thought. And there will be Right Speech, followed by Right Action, then by Right Livelihood. And there is action on the mental side, which is Right Effort. And there is Right Mindfulness, as well as Right *Samādhi* (Right Concentration).

Look into these eight aspects. There is moral rightness in all of them, be it in matters to do with material objects, matters of the mind, or matters transcending the mundane sphere. Matters relating to material objects are just simply a worldly matter; they will somehow remain in the world. If it were to be a matter of Nibbāna, it would be something supramundane (*lokuttara*), which means it is above and beyond the ordinary mundane world. So now we have to get to completely know all these matters of the mundane and supramundane worlds.

If comparisons were to be made, the mind is one those of things that deserves much pity. It comes with life. Born out of a mother’s womb, it knows no inkling whatsoever. It knows not which way to go. Now when anything comes into contact with it, it will just pounce upon that thing and grab whatever value or worth the thing offers, and the first thing which it grabs is the ‘delicious taste’ of whichever material or sensual object it happens to pounce upon. Thus, the mind begins to err and become deluded and silly. Thus, it has to receive its



punishment corresponding to its foolishness and delusion, and it suffers on and on, until it gets so fed up that it begins to see the truth, realizing that it can no longer put up with the situation and decides that it must change.

So the mind will turn round to study the facts about Dhamma, practice according to the principles and attain Nibbāna in the end. Thus, the mind is said to have emerged from materialism, from objects or body, from matters of the mind to a voidness which is Nibbāna. One who is able to do just this is considered to have reached the most supreme level of humanity, with no delusion, no attachment to, and no sinking in materialism and lopsided spirituality or ideology.

Therefore, do be interested in matters of Dhamma, especially in the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the way out of problems and sufferings. To speak in an even broader scope, it is the way out of the world – out of every kind of influence that exists in the world, out of the things which have influence over the mind and the world, which for the most part in this present age is no other influence than that of materialism. Yes, it's the way out of the power of materialism! This is the last thing which will help solve our world's present problem of why there is an increase in human suffering. Actually, the trouble is that we tend to develop the material side of our lives until we increasingly turn ourselves into slaves of materialism, and the whole world is following suit. It is most ridiculously ironical that the whole world is cooperating in the development of material objects to entice and delude the entire world's population in senseless attachment to material goods. The whole world sinks in the delusion and burns in the scorching heat of materialism, and it may spread to the world of the devas or even *māras*.

Stop the Delusion and Attachment to Material Objects, and Do Learn about Dhamma or Dhammaism

Therefore, do not be contented with delusion or paradise, divine gifts, devas or whatever things there may be. If those things are the delusive tools of sensual pleasures, then they should be regarded more as a matter of madness. Now, think carefully about the 'heaven' which people normally talk about. Based on conventional concepts, heaven seems to be a place full of delusion in materialism. Those communists, being good opportunists as they have always been, take it as an excuse to attack religions as being mad and delusive, something which they rejected. Even the communists rejected the notion of heaven being a place full of an abundance of material objects, where 'materialism' seems to prevail. How could we Buddhists, who are not communists, come to love the things that those communists detest? They reject the materialistic concept of what a heaven would be like



more for their own ideological or political reason, but we Buddhists have to reject materialism because it is not conducive to the well-being of our spirituality.

In the end, we have to withdraw or uproot ourselves from materialism. Bear this in mind: one has to depend on one's own self. Even though the Buddha taught us the way of practice for withdrawing from 'self,' He could not do it on our behalf. We have to do it by ourselves. All the Buddha could do was just show us how to do it. It was just like showing someone the way or the path to go somewhere; if that person would not walk, even the Buddha could not help. "The Tathāgata has shown the way and yet no one wants to walk the way, so what is there to be said then?" so asked the Buddha. There is someone to show the way and yet there is no one to walk that way, so what else is there to be done or said?

Let us learn and get to know about the harmfulness and evil charm of materialism that delude people until they get sunk in heaps of material objects. This charm of materialism torments the mind by stimulating people's desire, driving them into committing all sorts of *kamma* (action), and then they simply have to receive the fruit of the *kamma* committed. Having received the fruit, more desires or mental defilements arise which lead to further committing of even more *kammās*, and the whole process goes on and on in an endless chain. This is the condition of 'sinking in materialism' for the sake of *rūpa-dhamma* (material pleasures) and *arūpa-dhamma* pleasures (non-material pleasures); but the seeking of non-material pleasures is very much less frequent than the love for material pleasures, so we will not talk about it. *Arūpa-dhamma* (immateriality), *arūpa-jhāna* (absorption of the immaterial sphere), and *arūpa-sukha* (formless pleasures) are not matters (and factors) for the elimination of suffering. It has to be Nibbāna that can actually be a factor for the quenching of suffering for it stays above the power of material objects in all respects.

Quickly learn about this aspect of truth, and then the loathing for materialism will begin to take root, enabling one to discern the abuses and harmfulness of materialism. The more one realizes the harm of materialism, the more one will loathe it, and in the end, the mind will turn toward the opposite direction, that is, towards Dhammaism or Nibbāna. When there is contentment or real happiness, true peace and calmness, one will begin to loathe materialism to the extent of not wanting even just to touch it as though it is something so filthy that one even refrains from using one's own foot to poke it for fear of getting contaminated. The loathing has assumed an intensity because one has realized the real happiness which emerges from a true knowledge of Truth.



Buddhists Should Learn and Practice in Order to Get out of Materialism

Let me tell you this – do try to be the right kind of Buddhists. It helps to turn you into one who knows (the truth), who is awakened (from ignorance) and who ‘blooms’ (with joy). Know all that is to be known about materialism, the mind, the material objects and Nibbāna. Wake up from ignorance (avijjā). Be free from the oppression of all those material things and you will bloom with joy or delight, bloom by the power of Dhamma that never fades. But we use the word ‘bloom,’ which is the manner of the action of flowers. Flowers are most beautiful when they are in full bloom, so bloom like flowers do. However, when there is blooming, there must be fading and withering because after all, it is a matter of material objects which are susceptible to changes and decay; but in a mind which has Dhamma as a thriving, living force, the ‘blooming’ is one that never fades. This is the meaning of Nibbāna.

Delusion in material objects can be compared to a kind of sickness of the mind. It amounts to worshipping material objects as God. This is an illness of the mind that lacks *Sammā-diṭṭhi* (right view), and what exists is false view, which is the cause for the developing of sicknesses. Kill false view and destroy ignorance. That will be the cure for the illness. The reliance on the Noble Eightfold Path – the Middle Way – to kill false view and destroy ignorance is the prescription for curing the illness.

However, should anyone refuse to admit that he or she is now suffering from this sickness of the mind, then there is no room for further talks. If we can see that we are at this moment suffering from this kind of illness, sinking in the ‘delicious taste’ of all conditioning factors and experiencing pain because of ignorance and false views, we must not hesitate to kill the causes of the trouble, and the sickness will be cured. The best way to ‘kill’ is to lead a life of Dhamma. Adopt the central theme of Dhamma, which is a system of right practice for humanity in every stage of human development meant for the well-being of all, as the one single definition to be scattered and re-defined into eight aspects forming the Noble Eightfold Path. This is the way out for all living human beings who want to get out of materialism.



**We Must Practice Dhamma as Dhammajīvī,
Only Then Will Life Be Free from Materialism**

We have a great intention to pull humankind out of the power of materialism, so we have to propagate enough Dhamma in a proper way so that our fellow human friends may know and practice it and adopt it as Dhammajīvī – or Dhamma as a way of life. This is my third wish – to pull the world out of materialism by promoting Dhamma and a right education. The normal academic knowledge alone will not do in the absence of Dhamma. Even if there is Dhamma, it still will not work if there were to be no actual practice. So we must help to the best of our ability to promote the knowledge and practice of Dhamma and to make sure that people know how to make use of Dhamma to pull the world out of materialism.

To pull the world – which part is to be pulled? How to pull this huge mass? No, that is not the way to do it. To pull all the people in the world out physically or literally? No, that is not the way too. The right way is to pull the mind. Pull the mind of each and every individual out of materialism. Who is able to help pulling whom then? Well, everyone should pull his or her own self (or mind) out of materialism. This is based on the principle that ‘God helps those who help themselves.’ Therefore, the way we can help is to enable each and every individual to have access to the knowledge of freeing oneself from materialism. Help to propagate enough of this knowledge to those who are about to be able to pull their own mind out of the infatuation with material objects. At least it helps to restrain their own mind, preventing it from being swept away by the power of materialism.

Let this message be my reward to you all who have given me a present by coming here to listen to the propagation of Dhamma by the authorities of our Buddhist religion, who come as ‘ambassadors of Buddhism’ or ‘ambassadors of Dhamma.’ They will go out to spread the knowledge so that it is scattered widely among human communities in order that every human being knows how to pull his or her mind out of materialism. In sum, it is an act of pulling the world out of the power of materialism, fulfilling in every respect my intention which has been set up as a wish to pull and help the world get out of the power of materialism.

I beg cooperation and support from all of you for your help in this plan of trying to pull the world out of materialism. There is nothing better and more valuable than your cooperation. May you all strive toward the goal. It will be the highest cooperation of all. When the world is free from the power of materialism, there will be no more disastrous or seriously bad crisis left in it. If we were to be still under the power of materialism, we would be bound to be selfish, thus paving the way for greed, hatred and ignorance to flood the entire world.



Defiled craving or desire would rule the world and suffering would prevail everywhere because of the power of materialism which has the characteristic of appearing lovely, just like the little mouse which perceives the dangerous cat as something lovely to be much adored, while at the same time looking upon the majestic cock with a red cockscomb as something ugly to be feared and not to get near to. The mother rat must tell the little mouse: 'Oh, dear child, don't be silly! Ugly and fearsome is the face of the cock, but danger it has not; lovely and pleasing to the eyes is the face of the cat, but beneath it lies your untimely death. Do not be deluded by it, oh dear child!'

Now, let all of us be the little mouse which has received the right and full instruction from its mother, and does not become infatuated with the cat – something that can bring death to it. We are merely ordinary people who are rather ignorant, just like the little mouse. As soon as we have the knowledge and understanding in Dhamma, we will move beyond that state of ignorance, become a clever mouse, be free from the power of the cat, and know how to distinguish between friend and foe. In our present case, apparently materialism is our enemy in full, and Dhamma is our true friend in the fullest sense of the word 'true.'

Do place yourself on the side of a true friend. You will have the Buddha as a *kalyāṇamitta* (true friend) who points the way of Dhamma for you to tread, which is the middle way that would lead you safely through all the problems and suffering in life. According to the findings in the Pāli Canon, the Buddha mentioned the Noble Eightfold Path as the refuge by which humankind may get out of all of their problems and suffering. Treading this Eightfold Path, we will not have any danger or crisis to harass us in our journey through life.

May you all attain some knowledge and understanding in this matter and conduct yourselves properly. That would be amounting to pulling the world out of materialism. This is all I want to say about the Third Wish.

So now all the three wishes have been presented explicitly in full and true perspectives. I beg cooperation from each and everyone of you to make a successful and beneficial fulfillment of my Three Wishes. May you all join hands to make the fulfillment and accomplishment of these three wishes a success, and the resulting fruit will arise for you all to enjoy for it is not meant for me alone. Do help to turn my three wishes into a success and the fruit will be reaped by each and everyone among you all.



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May you give your cooperation until the end of it in this manner: may everyone reach the core of his or her religion, may there be mutual understanding between religions, may there be no conflicts, and may everybody be out of the power of materialism.

With this much having been said, I beg to end my discourse for today.

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