Natural Cure for Spiritual Disease, Part 2 of 3

HOW TO PRACTICE THAT DHAMMA

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

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In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhadāsa gave regular lectures during the monthly international retreats held at Suan Mokkh and then Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage. Usually, Ajahn spoke in Thai and Santikaro Bhikkhu interpreted into English live. All Ajahn's teachings are now available on:
www.suanmokkh.org,
https://soundcloud.com/buddhadasa and
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I'd like to express my happiness at this second opportunity to speak with you. Last time, we discussed what we will get from Buddhism, from Dhamma. This time, we'll discuss the successful use of Dhamma, that is, how to live with Dhamma.

When speaking about Dhamma, we mean the understanding that we must put into practice in order to cure spiritual disease. When speaking about this practice, there are four important things (*dhammas*) to be understood.[6] These four things are *sati* (mindfulness, reflective awareness), *sampajañña* (ready comprehension, wisdom-in-action), *samādhi* (collectedness, concentration), and *paññā* (intuitive wisdom, insight). If you consider them carefully, you will find that you have fostered these four things through your practice of *ānāpānasati* (mindfulness with breathing).[7] Now, we must discuss in detail how to use these four dhammas. We'll consider them one by one.

Sati

Sati (mindfulness, recollection) is the quick awareness and recall of the things which must be recalled. It must be as quick as an arrow. We also can describe sati as a vehicle or transport mechanism of the fastest kind. This most rapid transport doesn't carry material things, it carries wisdom and knowledge. Sati delivers *paññā* (wisdom) in time to meet our needs. Through the practice of mindfulness with breathing, sati is trained fully.

Sampajañña

The second *dhamma* is *sampajañña*. Sampajañña is wisdom as it meets up with and

immediately confronts a problem, as it deals with and wipes out that problem – this is wisdom-in-action. It is only that wisdom specifically related and applied to a particular situation or event. Nonetheless, you may have come across a variety of translations for 'sampajañña,' which can be rather confusing. We recommend that you remember it as 'wisdom-in -action.' Even better, learn the Pāli word about which there is no doubt. The word 'wisdom' encompasses many meanings and understandings; we can't even begin to estimate its full content. However, the word 'sampajañña' is far more limited in its meaning. It is exactly that wisdom directly needed for the problem that confronts us now. Active wisdom isn't general; it is a matter of particulars.

The same holds for the word 'Dhamma,' which has an incredible variety of meanings, depending on how it is being used. When Dhamma is applied to solve a specific problem, event, or situation, there is a specific Dhamma particular to that situation. The meaning is limited to the occasion and its circumstances. In this case of Dhamma solving problems, the most precise and proper term is '*dhamma-sacca*' (Dhamma-Truth). Dhamma-sacca is the particular Dhamma called for by the immediate situation with which we must cope, be it the onset of spiritual disease or exposure to the germs of spiritual disease. It is the use of just the right thing in a specific incident or event.

We can compare Dhamma with the medicine chest in our house. In it we store a wide variety of drugs, pills, capsules, ointments, powders, and syrups for possible use. When we're actually sick, we must choose from among the many medicines the one that will be effective in treating our ailment. We can't take them all; we take just what is needed to cure our illness here and now. The same is true for Dhamma. Understand that there's an incredible amount of what we call 'Dhamma' and 'paññā,' but that we only apply a little bit at a time. We apply just that portion which can take care of the immediate situation. Know how to use the Dhamma, the paññā, which is exactly relevant to our situation and problem. The Dhamma or wisdom which controls that situation and problem is what we call 'sampajañña.'

Samādhi

The third *dhamma* of today's session is *samādhi*. This literally means 'well-established mind, properly-maintained mind, correctly-founded samādhi mind.' The Buddha gave the broadest possible meaning to samādhi when he defined it as "the single-focused mind (*ekaggatā-citta*) that has Nibbāna as its object."[8]

We can say that samādhi has three characteristics: *pārisuddhi* (purity), *samāhitā* (firmness, steadiness, stability), and *kammanīya* (activeness, readiness, workableness). Thus, when you want to know whether the mind is in a state of samādhi or not, examine it for these three qualities. See whether or not it is pure, stable, and active.

When we speak of the power or energy of samādhi, we mean the way the mind focusses all of its energy on a single issue. This is similar to the magnifying glass's ability to focus the sun's rays onto a single point so that a flame appears. Similarly, when the mind's power is collected into one focus, then it is 'one-pointed.' The mind that is samādhi produces a very powerful energy, which is stronger than any other kind of power. We can describe this highly concentrated mind in two ways. The first is *indriya*, which means 'sovereign' or 'chief.' The second is *bala*, which means 'power, force, strength.' Thus, we have *samādhi-indriya* and *samādhi-bala*, the mind that has sovereignty and is more powerful than any other

thing.

Samādhi must work together with wisdom. Samādhi is like a knife's weight and paññā is like its sharpness. For a knife to cut anything properly, it must have two things: weight and sharpness. A knife that is heavy but dull, like a hammer, can't cut anything and only makes a mess. On the other hand, a very sharp knife that lacks weight, like a razor blade, likewise can't cut through whatever it is we must cut. A knife needs both properties; the mind is the same. To do what it needs to do the mind requires both samādhi and paññā. You might wonder what it is that cuts — is it the knife's weight or its sharpness? If you can understand this, it will be easier for you to understand how Dhamma cuts through problems, that is, mental defilements. In the moment of sampajañña's activity, both samādhi, and paññā are working together with the speed of sati to slice through the problem. They're interconnected and, in practice, can't be separated.

Paññā

There remains only the last *dhamma* to discuss: *paññā* (wisdom, intuitive knowledge, insight). The meaning of this word is broad and includes much. Literally, it means 'to know fully,' but not everything that there is to know, only those things which should be known. Paññā is the full and adequate knowing of all things which ought to be known. Of all things that we could know, paññā refers only to those things which we need to know, the knowledge which is able to solve our problems. For example, it isn't necessary to know about atomic nuclei or outer space. We only need to know what quenches *dukkha* (spiritual disease) directly in our mind.

That which we should know is solely a matter of the quenching of dukkha. This statement agrees with the Buddha who said that he says nothing about other matters, that he speaks only of dukkha and the end of dukkha. There is a beautiful, meaningful quotation in the Pāli which we'd like you to hear:

> "Pubbe cāhaṃ bhikkhave, etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññāpemi, dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ."
> *Bhikkhus! In times past, as well as now, I speak only of dukkha and the utter quenching of dukkha.*
> (MN 22: Alaggadūpama sutta)

The Buddha didn't mention the future because it doesn't exist. As for the past and present, he taught only these two things.

Among the things we should know, we can talk of four important aspects of wisdom. The first topic I'd like to point out is the three characteristics of things (*tilakkhaṇa*): *aniccaṃ* (impermanence, change), *dukkhaṃ* (unsatisfactoriness), and *anattā* (not-self, selflessness). Detailed explanations of the three characteristics can be found in many different books. Today we will only summarize them.

Compounding

Aniccaṃ means that all compounded things are constantly changing. Please note that we're

speaking only of created, conditioned things. The uncompounded thing doesn't have the characteristic of aniccaṃ. Impermanence only applies to things that are produced through causes and conditions. As this term 'compounded thing' is important, you would do well to learn the original Pāli term, '*saṅkhāra*.' Saṅkhāra means 'to form, to compound, to concoct, to condition,' that is, all the myriad things are constantly conditioning new things. This is a characteristic or activity of all phenomenal things, such as these trees around us. Different causes have come together in them. New things arise, there is growth and development, leaves grow and fall, there is ceaseless change. Saṅkhāra is this continuous activity of formation. Anything which is conditioned into existence is called 'saṅkhāra.' That, in turn, conditions the arising of other things and those things are also called 'saṅkhāra.' Thus saṅkhāra are both things conditioned and the things which condition, both the causes and results of conditioning.

We can compare this endless compounding of saṅkhāra with the bricks in a wall. Each brick props up another brick and that brick props up another, which props up other bricks, and so on through the successive layers of bricks. Each brick is supported by some of the bricks, while it supports other bricks; it relates to them both as supporter and supportee. Thus, saṅkhāra has three meanings, both verb and noun. The first meaning, the verb, is the activity of forming, compounding, concocting. The second meaning refers to the things conditioned by that activity, and the third refers to the causes and conditions of that activity. The meaning of saṅkhāra is as comprehensive as this.

Observe the activity of conditioning; you will see it in everything. Without this fact of things being continually formed and ceaselessly forming other things, there would be no existence or life. There can be life or existence only through this constant conditioning and reconditioning. Yet, sometimes this conditioning is very subtle and we don't see it. It may even be hidden, as in a rock. There is perpetual conditioning happening within each rock, but when you look, your eyes may not detect it. Nevertheless, see the process of ceaseless conditioning in all things which exist.

The best approach is to see the conditioning within ourselves. It's all happening within our bodies. We can see the conditioning here, we can see the things as they are conditioned here, and we can see the things which make the conditioning. By looking within, we can see all this saṅkhāra. There's the conditioning of the body-aggregate (*rūpa-khandha*); the conditioning of the feeling-aggregate (*vedanā-khandha*); the conditioning of *saññā-khandha* (the aggregate of perceptions, recognitions, and classifications); the conditioning of the thinking-aggregate (*saṅkhāra-khandha*); and, lastly, the conditioning of the consciousness -aggregate (*viññāṇa-khandha*). These five important groups, or aggregates, of human experience and their constant conditioning can all be seen within our living bodies.

Contact Points

Examine the transmission or contact points: now the eyes work, now the ears work, now the nose works, now the tongue works, now the skin works, now the mind works. One-by-one they perform their duties and do their work. When one functions, in that moment there is saṅkhāra. This is when, where, and how the conditioning can be observed. In the body alone, there is ceaseless conditioning and constant change. The cells die and new ones form such that before long they've all been replaced. Even these physical aspects of life fully exhibit saṅkhāra for in this body there are the six internal sense organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue,

body, and mind. They meet up with their external objects: forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental objects. When the sense organ interacts with the corresponding sense object – for example the eyes see a form or the ears hear a sound – there is immediate conditioning. A form is seen, a sound is heard, or an odor is smelled. We call this '*phassa*' (contact). It's the starting point for conditioning; a series of further saṅkhāra arises from it. The meeting of sense organ and sense object (such as ears and sound, or mind and mental object) conditions phassa. Phassa conditions *vedanā* (feeling: the pleased and displeased mental reactions toward the sense experiences). Vedanā helps to condition *saññā*, because perceptions and recognitions arise through the influence of feelings. What is felt to be pleasant or painful is recognized and classified. Saññā then conditions various thoughts and thinking, including emotions (*saṅkhāra-khandha*). This leads to doing this and doing that. Then there are the results of the actions, which lead to further thinking, which lead to further action, and so it goes. This is one example of what we mean by 'conditioning.' We see that this sort of conditioning goes on constantly, even in our own bodies. It never stops, never takes a rest, never pauses. It continues whether we're asleep or awake. This perpetual flux, this ceaseless flow, is the characteristic of aniccaṃ.

Dukkha-ness

When we clearly see the characteristic of aniccaṃ, it is easy to understand the second characteristic, *dukkhaṃ* – unsatisfactoriness, unbearableness, ugliness, worthlessness. If we want things to go our way according to our thoughts, we'll experience dukkha. When things change from what we like or want, we feel dukkha. In fact, they never really are what we want, because they never stop changing long enough to really be something. Thus, we have the problem that unsatisfactoriness (*dukkhaṃ*) is endless. It's so difficult to bear with all of this conditioning, amid all these shifting things. This is the characteristic of dukkhaṃ.

Looking closely, we see that we ourselves are impermanent, painful, and unsatisfying. The things that we love, that satisfy us, are aniccaṃ and dukkhaṃ. The things that we dislike are aniccaṃ and dukkha. There is nothing among all this saṅkhāra which is *niccaṃ* (permanent) and *adukkhaṃ* (satisfying, endurable). We must see aniccaṃ and dukkhaṃ within ourselves in this way.

When we see impermanence completely, when we see unsatisfactoriness fully – clearly and obviously – then we automatically see that all those things are *anattā* (not-self). They aren't permanent selves that we can call 'me.' Amid all the change and conditioning, there is no individual entity or eternal substance that can properly be called 'self.' Everything is anattā or not-self. Things exist; we are not saying they don't. What is, is; but everything that is, is not-self. We shouldn't misunderstand and think that we have a self (*attā*). There is only the flow of change. All this is the understanding or paññā regarding aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā.

Voidness

The second topic is the understanding (*paññā*) regarding *suññatā* (voidness, emptiness). When we see the three characteristics of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā, when we realize that all things are not-self, then we understand that everything is void of anything that has the meaning of the word 'self,' and is free of anything that ought to be called 'self.' This is the

meaning of suññatā. This single characteristic of voidness gathers together and caps the previous three characteristics.

The meaning of 'suññata' is better, broader, easier, and more useful than any other word to take as a principle of practice and life, but only if we understand it on the Dhamma level, in the language of *sati-paññā* (mindfulness and wisdom). It should not be misunderstood through materialistic interpretations, such as 'nothing exists' or that 'all is a void.' The Buddha pointed out that such nihilist views are one extreme of wrong understanding. Suññatā isn't nihilism or a nothingness. All things exist, yet are void and free of anything that could be called 'self.' Thus we say that everything is void, which is the meaning of 'voidness' in the language of Dhamma. If we see voidness, it includes seeing aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā also. We don't need too many things, the three can be untidy. Just one – voidness – is enough to prevent the mental defilements.[9]

When we see voidness in the things that we love, we don't love. When we see voidness in the things we hate, we don't hate. Consequently, there's no love and no hate, no liking and no disliking, no happiness (*sukha*) and no dukkha. There is just centeredness, living quietly and freely in the middle. Such is the fruit of truly seeing the voidness of things. If we don't see the voidness of all things, we will love some things and hate others. While love and hatred remain, the mind is enslaved by attachment to the things loved and hated. With full penetration of suññatā, the mind is free and no longer a slave to those things. True freedom is voidness.

Suññatā is a synonym of Nibbāna. Nibbāna is supreme voidness. When the mind realizes voidness, there are no defilements. When there are no defilements, there is no heat. When there is no heat, there is Nibbāna, which means 'coolness.' Thus, when there is suññatā, there is coolness, Nibbāna. Lord Buddha said, "You should always view the world as something void of *attā* (self) and *attaniya* (belonging to self)." This is the second aspect of paññā.[10]

The Law of Nature

The third topic I'd like to mention is conditionality (*idappaccayatā*), which means:

> *Because this is, this is; because this arises, this arises; because this is not, this is not; because this quenches, this quenches.*

These conditions are called 'idappaccayatā,' the law that things happen according to causes and conditions. We can also call it dependent co-arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) because idappaccayatā and paṭicca-samuppāda are the same thing, the same principle of wisdom to be studied, seen, and understood. You will see that everything in the world is constantly flowing, that all the world is in continual flux. It is a profound and complex matter. Many books treat it in great detail, particularly when it's described in terms of dependent co-arising. As we don't have much time today, you may need to consult some of those books.[11]

Thusness

Now, we come to the fourth and last topic: *tathatā* (suchness, thusness). 'Merely thus,' 'just

such': everything is such as it is and in no way different from that thusness. This is called 'tathatā.' When tathatā is seen, the three characteristics of aniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ, and anattā are seen, suññatā is seen, and idappaccayatā is seen. Tathatā is the summary of them all – merely thus, only thus, not-otherness. There is nothing better than this, more than this, other than this, thusness. To intuitively realize tathatā is to see the truth of all things, to see the reality of the things which have deceived us. The things which delude us are all the things which cause discrimination and duality to arise in us: good-evil, happiness-sadness, win-lose, love-hate, etc. There are many pairs of opposites in this world. By not seeing tathatā, we allow these things to trick us into believing in duality: this-that, liking-disliking, hot-cold, male-female, defiled-enlightened. This delusion causes all our problems. Trapped in these oppositions, we can't see the truth of things. We fall into liking and disliking, which in turn leads to the defilements, because we don't see tathatā.

What we must see constantly and deeply is that good is a saṅkhāra and that evil is a saṅkhāra too. The pleasant and unpleasant feelings, sukha and dukkha, are both saṅkhāra. Getting and disappearing, losing and winning all are saṅkhāra. There isn't anything which isn't a saṅkhāra. Thus, all things are the same – tathatā. All things are just suchness, just this way, not otherwise. Further, we can say that heaven is a saṅkhāra and hell is a saṅkhāra. So heaven and hell are tathatā – just thus. Our minds should be above heaven and above hell, above good and above bad, above joy and above dukkha in all respects. Tathatā is the fourth area of understanding or paññā, the wisdom that must be developed to a sufficient degree. We must study reality on both the physical-material level and on the mental-spiritual level, until our knowledge and wisdom is adequate, natural, and constant.

Now we know these four dhammas: sati, sampajañña, samādhi, and paññā. Next, we must know how to apply them so that they will be correct, successful, and beneficial. The question, now, is how to use Dhamma, or Buddhism, in our everyday lives.

Everyday Use

How are we going to use them in our daily reality? A quick answer is that we must live through these four *dhammas*. We must use these four dhammas correctly to face all the situations and problems that arise each day. Whenever there arises a situation which can lead to problems or dukkha – such as the eyes seeing a form, the ears hearing a sound, or the mind thinking a thought – we must have *sati*. Sati realizes that something is happening and recalls the *paññā* relevant to that event. Sati immediately transports the necessary wisdom to that situation in time to deal with any possible problems. Mindfulness comes first.

That wisdom applied to the experience is *sampajañña*. Delivered on time by sati, wisdom -in-action deals with the immediate situation. Then, in the very moment when sampajañña goes to work, the power and strength of *samādhi* gives force and energy to wisdom so that it can cut through the problem. To the degree that there is samādhi, to that degree wisdom-in-action will be able to solve the problem. Paññā acts as the warehouse of accumulated knowledge and insight which sati draws upon to deal with the sense experiences.

When these four dhammas work together in this way, we'll see that we are most intelligent in that moment. We are so clever because we're able to encounter the situation right then and there without any problems arising. We don't become enslaved to the

meanings of any of the pairs of opposites. This is the liberated life, which is peaceful and cool. It's the best thing human beings ought to get.

To summarize, we must have sufficient paññā, must use sati at all times, must apply sampajañña correctly and sufficiently, and must apply samādhi properly and in adequate strength. Together these four dhammas are sufficiently and correctly used in every situation that may arise with us. This is the answer to the question: how do we use Dhamma successfully?

I hope that each of you will try to use these four dhammas in your lives. Nothing else will justify the time, effort, and expense which you have spent in coming here. I hope that you don't leave here in debt, but that you make a profit out of your stay.

Footnote

- [1] In Buddhist terminology, there is no real distinction made between heart and mind. The intellect and the emotions are not seen as being polar opposites. Rather, it is all *citta*, which can be translated 'mind,' 'heart,' 'mind-heart,' or 'psyche.' We use these terms as synonyms.

- [2] Here, Dhamma is both natural truth and the knowledge of natural truth which enables us to end the disease, that is, *dukkha*.

- [3] Here, study is not just intellectual learning. It involves thinking, investigation, training, experimentation, and direct experience, with emphasis on the training and experience

- [4] Ajahn Buddhadāsa makes a clear distinction between philosophy and science, as he understands the two terms. By the former he meant mere theoretical speculation devoid of practical application, while the latter can be directly experienced and personally verified through practice. In short, the difference between mere thinking and wisdom.

- [5] Some translators render these lines "*this ... that ...,*" but the Pāli original explicitly repeats "*this ... this ....*" We leave it to the reader to reflect why.

- [6] The most basic meaning of the word '*dhamma*' is 'thing' or 'phenomenon.' Here it has the sense of 'quality' or 'virtue.' You will find, however, that it has many meanings, levels, and ramifications. See the Glossary, for a start.

- [7] The system of meditation generally taught at Suan Mokkh. See *Mindfulness With Breathing*, by y Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu (Wisdom Publications, Somerville, MA: 1996).

- [8] '*Ekaggatā-citta*' should not be confused with '*ekaggatā*.' Although both may be rendered 'one-pointedness,' they are used in different contexts. The latter term refers to a factor of *jhāna*. The former term refers to the 'mind with a single purpose or object.'

- [9] *Kilesa*: disruptions and contaminations of the mind's natural peacefulness and radiance. They are discussed in Chapter III.

- [10] For more on *suññatā*, see Ajahn Buddhadāsa's *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree* (Wisdom Publications, Somerville, MA: 1994).

- [11] See Ajahn Buddhadāsa's *Practical Dependent Origination* (Dhamma Study & Practice Group, Bangkok: 1992) and *Under the Bodhi Tree: Buddha's Original Vision of Dependent co-Arising* (Wisdom Publications, Somerville, MA: 2017).

- [12] *Kilesa* is usually translated 'defilement.' We use it both in a general sense, covering all the aspects and levels of things which dirty, pollute, or tarnish the mind, and in a specific sense, limited to the most noticeable aspect of defilement, the selfish thoughts and emotions such as lust, anger, fear, worry, laziness, and envy.

- [13] Divine Eye and Divine Ear are believed to be results of highly perfected mental

concentration (*samādhi*). They're commonly viewed to be magical, and the foolish may meditate solely to gain these powers.

- [14] Please note that feeling (*vedanā*), here, does not mean 'emotions.'

Afterword

The talks which comprise this book were the first of many series of talks Ajahn Buddhadāsa gave during the monthly meditation courses held at Suan Mokkh over the last nine years of his life. Subsequently, the themes of these three talks were expanded upon in greater detail. Recordings of most of these talks, as well as transcripts, are now available on-line at www.suanmokkh.org. As we are able, these will be edited for future publication. For more on the subject of Spiritual Disease, see *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree: The Buddha's Teaching on Voidness* (Wisdom Publications, Somerville, MA: 1995).

For more about mindfulness with breathing (*ānāpānasati*), the system of meditation generally taught at Suan Mokkh, see *Mindfulness with Breathing: a Manual for Serious Beginners* (Wisdom Publications, Somerville, MA: 1996).

Glossary
A guide to Ajahn Buddhadāsa's use of terms

Anattā, not-self, the fact that all things, without exception and including Nibbāna, are not-self and lack any essence or substance that could properly be regarded as a 'self.' This fact does not deny the existence of things. Rather, this insight realizes that nothing can be owned or controlled, nor be the owner or controller, in any but a relative, conventional sense. Its purpose is practical rather than ideological.

Aniccaṃ, impermanent, not-lasting, transient (or *aniccatā*, impermanence, flux, instability). Conditioned things are ever-changing, constantly arising, manifesting, and ceasing. This is the first fundamental characteristic of conditioned things.

Anusaya, tendencies: familiarity with defilement. When a defilement occurs, it makes the later occurrence of a similar defilement more likely. The more these underlying tendencies build up, the more we react to experiences in defiled ways. Sometimes the pressure is strong enough for something to escape even without an external provocation, that something is called a '*nīvaraṇa*.'

Arahant, worthy one, one far from defilement, one who has broken the wheel of birth and death, one without secrets: the mind totally and finally free of greed, anger, and delusion; void of 'I' and 'mine'; which has ended *kamma*; which is unaffected by *dukkha*. The *arahant* should not be regarded as a 'person' or 'individual.'

Ārammaṇa, sense objects: sensible phenomena discriminated and perched upon by sense consciousness (*viññāṇa*), which thus establishes itself.

Ariya-sacca, noble truth, ennobling realities: truth which frees one from all enemies (*ari*), namely, defilements and *dukkha*. Usually expressed in the fourfold formula: the fact that *dukkha* happens; the truth that there is an origin of *dukkha*, namely, *taṇhā* (craving); the truth of the quenching of *dukkha*, by quenching craving; and the truth of the practice leading to the quenching of *dukkha*. Although the traditional formula is fourfold, "Truth is but One, there is no second."

Attā, 'self,' ego, substantial soul, [Sanskrit, *ātman*]: the instinctual feeling (and illusion) that there is some 'I' who does all the things to be done in life. Through ignorance and wrong understanding this instinctual sensibility is identified with and becomes 'ego.' No personal, independent, self-existing, free-willing, lasting substance or essence can be found anywhere, whether within or without human life and experience, not even in 'God.' (Cf. *anattā, idappaccayatā,* and *suññata*.)

Avijjā, ignorance, not-knowing, wrong knowledge: the lack, partial or total, of *vijjā* (correct knowledge) regarding the things that need to be known (e.g., the four noble truths, *suññata, tathatā*), as well as knowing things in the wrong way, i.e., as permanent, satisfying, and self. The most original cause of all *dukkha*. Without Dhamma practice, ignorance grows into increasingly wrong knowledge.

Ānāpānasati, mindfulness with breathing in and out: the only meditation or *vipassanā* system practiced and taught by the Buddha, it covers all four foundations of mindfulness and perfects the seven factors of awakening, leading to liberation. Ajahn

Buddhadāsa considers it the best way to realize *suññata*.

Citta, mind, heart, psyche: that which thinks, knows, and experiences. In a more limited sense, citta is what 'thinks,' can be defiled by *kilesa*, can be developed, and can realize Nibbāna. Although we cannot know citta directly, it is where all Dhamma practice occurs.

Dhamma, thing, phenomenon, nature, natural thing, virtue: all things, mental and physical, conditioned and unconditioned, are dhammas.

Dhamma, truth, nature, law, natural truth, duty, order, 'the way things are': this impossible to translate word has many meanings, the most important of which are nature, the law of nature, our duty according to natural law, and the fruits of doing that duty correctly according to natural law. (See *paṭicca-samuppāda*.) Also, teachings pointing to Dhamma.

Dukkha, distress, anguish, suffering, misery, ill-being (or *dukkhatā*, unsatisfactoriness, imperfection): the spiritual dilemma of human beings. Etymologically, *dukkha* can be translated 'hard to endure, difficult to bear'; 'once seen, it is ugly'; and 'horribly, wickedly void.' In its experiential sense, *dukkha* is the quality of experience that results when the mind is concocted by *avijjā* into craving, clinging, egoism, and selfishness. This feeling takes on many forms – from the crudest to the most subtle levels – such as disappointment, dissatisfaction, frustration, agitation, dis-ease, and despair. In its universal sense, *dukkhatā* is the inherent condition of unsatisfactoriness, imperfection, and undependableness in all impermanent, conditioned things (*saṅkhāra*). To fully understand the meaning of *dukkha*, one must realize that *sukha* (happiness, bliss) is also *dukkha*. Nibbāna (i.e. *suññata*) is the only thing which is not *dukkhatā*.

Idappaccayatā, conditionality: everything is conditioned by and depends upon other conditioned things. This applies to how things arise and how they fall apart. Ajahn Buddhadāsa considered it to be the 'Buddhist God.'

Khandha, aggregates, groups, bundles: the five subsystems or basic functions which constitute the human being. These groups are not entities in themselves; they are merely categories into which the functional aspects of our lives can be analyzed. None of them are 'self,' 'of self,' 'in self,' or 'my self'; they have nothing to do with 'selfhood' and there is no 'self' apart from them. When they cling or are clung to, the five are known as the *upādāna-khandha* (aggregates of clinging, clinging together bundles). The five are:

> *rūpa-khandha*, form-aggregate, particularly the body, its nervous system, sense receptors, and sense inputs (the world);
>
> *vedanā-khandha*, feeling-aggregate: the dimension of pleasure and pain accompanying almost all experience;
>
> *saññā-khandha*, recognition-aggregate: the discrimination, labelling, and evaluation of sense experience;

saṅkhāra-khandha, thought-aggregate: thought processes and emotions, including volition, desire, attachment, and 'birth';

viññāṇa-khandha, consciousness-aggregate: the basic knowing that distinguishes something within each of the sensory fields (visual, auditory, etc.), creating a sense 'object.'

Karuṇā, compassion: wanting to help due to awareness and understanding of dukkha, both one's own and that of others. One of the 'divine dwellings' through which we outgrow egoism.

Kilesa, defilements, impurities: the harmful thoughts and emotions that tarnish, dirty, and pollute mind. These reactive passions are merely passing clouds that obscure mind's natural luminosity. While the three primary categories of *kilesa* are greed, hatred, and delusion, they proliferate with endless creativity.

Manussa, human being, high-minded being: a mind above the ebb and flow of worldly conditions.

Nibbāna, coolness, quenching: the Supreme, the ultimate reality in Buddhism; the purpose and meaning (*attha*) of Buddhist practice and highest potential of humanity. Nibbāna manifests when the fires of craving, clinging, defilement, and selfishness are cooled. When they are thoroughly cooled, Nibbāna manifests perfectly, totally, timelessly. Not a place, for Nibbāna is beyond existence and non-existence, not even a state of mind, for Nibbāna is neither mental nor physical, but a *dhamma* the mind can realize and experience in this life.

Nīvaraṇa, hindrances, obstacles: disturbing moods and mental qualities which interfere with the mind's task, whether worldly or spiritual. Half-strength defilements, they arise from the tendencies toward defilement built up through carelessness and need not be triggered by outside objects. To overcome them, correct *samādhi* is needed. The traditional list of five are sensuousness, aversion, sloth and torpor, restlessness and distraction, and doubt.

Paññā, wisdom, penetrating insight, intuitive understanding: correct seeing, knowing, and understanding of the things we must know in order to quench *dukkha*, namely, the four noble truths, the three characteristics, dependent origination, and voidness. The various terms used for 'knowing' are not meant to express an intellectual activity, although the intellect has its role. The emphasis is on direct, intuitive, non-conceptual comprehending of life as it is here and now. Memory, language, and thought are not required. Buddhist tradition considers *paññā* to be its characteristic quality rather than faith or will-power.

Paṭicca-samuppāda, dependent co-arising: the profound and detailed process of conditions that concoct *dukkha*. Due to ignorance, and dependent on sense organ and sense object, there arises consciousness (*viññāṇa*). These three things working together are contact (*phassa*). Upon this ignorant contact, there arises feeling (*vedanā*), craving (*taṇhā*), clinging (*upādāna*), becoming (*bhava*), birth (*jāti*), decay and death (*jarā-maraṇa*), and all the forms of *dukkha*.

Phassa, the meeting and working together of sense organ, sense object, and sense consciousness (*viññāṇa*). When a sensual stimulus makes enough of an impact upon awareness – that is, has 'meaning' – to draw a response, either ignorant or wise, beginning with *vedanā*.

Sampajañña, wisdom-in-action, functional wisdom, ready comprehension, clear comprehension. While *paññā* (wisdom) is developed, or 'stored up,' through introspection and insight, *sampajañña* is the immediate and specific application of wisdom to, and into, a particular situation or experience. While *paññā* understands that 'everything is empty free of self-existence,' *sampajañña* understands that 'there is no self in this.' All understanding relies on mindfulness for its appearance, recall, and application.

Samādhi, concentration, collectedness, unification of mind: gathering together of the mental flow and secure establishment of mind. Proper *samādhi* has the qualities of purity, clarity, stability, calmness, readiness, and gentleness. Its primary characteristic is non-distraction. The supreme *samādhi* is the singleness of mind (*ekaggatā-citta*) that has Nibbāna as its sole concern. In a broader sense, *samādhi* can be translated 'meditation,' meaning development of the mind through the power of *samādhi*.

Saṅkhāra, concoction, conditioned thing, fabrication; concocting, compounding, conditioning. As a verb, *saṅkhāra* is the endless activity of concocting and change in which new things arise, manifest, and cease. As a noun, *saṅkhāra* are transient, created things acting both as the products of the concocting and the causes of ever new concoctions.

Saññā, recognition, classification, evaluation, perception: once mind has made contact (*phassa*) with a sense object and then feels it (*vedanā*), e.g., as pleasant, a concept, label, or image is attached to the experience. *Saññā* involves recognizing similarities with past experience and discriminating the value of the object.

Sati, mindfulness, attention, awareness, recall, recollection: mind's ability to notice and observe what it's doing and feeling, and how it's reacting. *Sati* is the vehicle and transport mechanism for *paññā*; without *sati*, wisdom cannot be developed, retrieved, or applied. *Sati* allows us to be aware of what we are about to do and is characterized by speed and agility.

Sati-paññā, mindfulness and wisdom: *sati* and *paññā* must work together. *Paññā* depends on *sati*, arising through mindfulness of life's experiences and applied to present experience through mindfulness. Without sufficient wisdom, mindfulness is misused.

Suññata, emptiness, voidness: all phenomena are empty and free of anything that is properly 'me' or 'mine.' Nothing substantial and independent can be found in conditioned phenomena. *Suññata*, is intended as a practical tool for investigating experience and the futility of clinging.

Tathatā, thusness, suchness, just-like-that-ness: neither this nor that, the reality of non-duality and the interdependence of seeming opposites. Things are just as they are (void and dependently originated) regardless of our perceptions, likes and dislikes,

suppositions and beliefs, hopes and memories.

Tilakkhaṇa, three characteristics, three marks of existence: inherent features of all conditioned things, namely, the facts of impermanence (*aniccatā*), dukkha-ness (*dukkhatā*), and not-self (*anattatā*).

Upādāna, clinging, attachment, grasping: to hold onto something foolishly, to regard things as 'I' and 'mine,' to take things personally. Not the things attached to, but the lustful-satisfaction (*chanda-rāga*) regarding them. The Buddha distinguished four kinds of *upādāna*: attachment to sensuality, to views, to precepts and practices, and to words concerning self. (To hold something wisely is *samādāna*, undertaking.)

Vedanā, feeling: the mental response to or affective tone of sense experience (*phassa*), the realm of pleasure and pain. Feeling comes in three forms: pleasant or agreeable (*sukha-vedanā*), unpleasant or painful (*dukkha-vedanā*), and indeterminate, neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant (*adukkhamasukha-vedanā*). *Vedanā* is a mental actor. Sometimes, however, a looser sense of the term is used regarding physical sensations. This primitive activity of mind is not equivalent to far more complex emotion.

Viññāṇa, consciousness: knowing sense objects through the six doors (eyes, ears, etc.). The most basic mental activity required for participation in the sensual world (*loka*); without it there is no subject-object experience.

Vitakka, thought conception, thinking.

Vicāra, experiencing a thought-object or theme.

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