

## Natural Cure for Spiritual Disease, Part 3 of 3

### BENEFITS RECEIVED FROM THAT PRACTICE

by Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

A Dhamma lecture given at Suan Mokkh on 11 February 1986

*In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhādāsa 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](http://www.suanmokkh.org),

<https://soundcloud.com/buddhadasa> and

<https://www.youtube.com/@buddhadasabhikkhu7829>.

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*email to: [suanmokkh\\_bangkok@bia.or.th](mailto:suanmokkh_bangkok@bia.or.th).*

I would like to express my delight in having a third opportunity to speak with you. In the first talk, we spoke about the way to study Dhamma. In the second talk, we spoke of how to practice Dhamma. Today, we will speak about the fruits and benefits of practicing Dhamma.

When we speak of the benefits of practicing Dhamma, we can divide them into two categories: first, a happy life free of problems, and second, the ability to use that life in the most successful and productive way according to our needs. Put another way, the two kinds of benefits are happiness and the appropriate use of that happiness for our needs. Together they can be called 'new life.' We receive new life from practicing Dhamma.

We will begin with the first benefit, the happy life free of problems. You must recollect, observe, and see the fact that this on-going process of life follows our instincts and proceeds under the power of these instincts, which we are unable to control. Because they are out of control, the instincts lead to things called 'defilements' (*kilesa*).<sup>12</sup> Before going further, we ought to examine the defilements until they're understood clearly, for they are bound up with all spiritual disease.

#### Defiled Control

When defilements arise, this life – in the language of Dhamma – is sorrowful, that is, *dukkha*. We have experienced over and over again the kind of *dukkha* that we're discussing. We've become so familiar with it that most of us consider it normal; we don't even think it's a problem! Let's learn to distinguish the difference between two kinds of life: life when the defilements are in control and possession, and life when the defilements aren't running the

show. We must understand both kinds of life. If you are unable to see and understand the defilements, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for you to practice and benefit from Dhamma. You won't know how to compare the life of defilement with a life free of defilement and see how different the two are. This is why I request that you try to understand the defilements as they arise in your own lives, even if they annoy you in the process. Study them and get to know them as they arise within you. The more deeply and completely you know them, as your insight into them grows, to that degree and no other, you will understand Dhamma and be able to benefit by Dhamma.

### **Deluded Obstructions**

The first *nīvaraṇa*, sensuousness (*kāmachanda*), is of the greed type and the second, aversion (*vyāpāda*), is of the anger type. The remaining three are of the delusion type. The third *nīvaraṇa* is sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), when the mind lacks energy and is weak, tired, groggy, numb, drowsy, or stupefied. When the mind is low in energy it lacks clarity, freshness, brightness, and alertness. There are many symptoms of the dull, shrunken, lazy mind that can be summarized as the lack of mental energy. This includes the dullness and sleepiness that follows from overeating. Hindered by *thīna-middha* (sloth and torpor), it is difficult to think, reflect, listen, meditate, or do anything.

The fourth *nīvaraṇa* is the opposite of the third. This hindrance, busyness and worry (*uddhacca -kukkucca*), is the agitation and distraction when the mind goes beyond its limits and is out-of-control. We can see it as a kind of nervous disorder. In your attempts to meditate, I'm sure that you have all come across this out-of-control mental activity. An example of restlessness and agitation is the inability to sleep at night because the mind won't slow down, won't rest and relax, but scatters itself in all directions thinking this, thinking that, thinking anything, thinking everything. Such unnecessary agitation doesn't allow the mind to get the rest and peace it needs. When the mind keeps running all over the world, keeps getting involved in everything, it is impossible to perform even a simple task like writing a letter.

Now we've come to the last *nīvaraṇa*, doubt (*vicikicchā*), wavering and uncertainty. *Vicikicchā* is uncertainty and doubt concerning the correctness and safety of things. It is being unsure about what is truly correct and safe. We lack confidence and trust in what is happening and what we're doing. Those who follow a religion that takes faith as the basic principle, faith in God or whatever, seldom have a problem with this hindrance. Those of us who follow a religion based in self-confidence, however, encounter doubt much more easily.

This uncertainty, non-belief, trustlessness, and doubt is about what one is, what one has, and what one is doing. For example, we may have doubts about our health, our economic situation, or even our personal safety. We may have doubts about the things we're involved with: 'Is it right and proper? Is it safe? Can I depend on it?' This doubt may often have to do with everyday concerns, but it can arise toward Dhamma (natural truth) as well. 'Is it really true? Is it of any use?' You might even doubt that there is such a thing as truth, have doubts about the way to realize truth, or lack confidence in your potential for awakening. If uncertainty about everyday things hinders us from using them correctly, how much more so when the doubt is about Dhamma. If we think, 'What if it's just words? How can I know it's true? This isn't taught at university,' then we won't be able to take advantage of and benefit by the Dhamma.

For Christians, vicikicchā may be regarding God, the Bible, or Jesus Christ. For Buddhists, doubt may concern the Buddha, the Scriptures, the Dhamma, or practice. When one has even the slightest doubt that everything is correct and that life is safe, then one is under the influence of this nīvaraṇa. Take a good, deep look inside and see that vicikicchā might exist in our subconscious all the time.

### **Unobstructed Life**

Together these five things are called the ‘nīvaraṇa.’ How is the mind when it is free of the nīvaraṇas? If the mind is free of all five hindrances, how is our mental life? Study this mind and know what it is like. Can we call such a life ‘new life’?

Here, freedom from the nīvaraṇa is called ‘new life.’ Further, new life ought to be free of the kilesa as well. Half-formed defilements are called ‘nīvaraṇa.’ Fully developed defilements are called ‘kilesa.’ To be new life, it must be free from the kilesas, too. We must now consider the kilesas in some detail. They can be known easily by the symptoms of the influence they have on the mind. These can be experienced easily and known clearly. It isn’t necessary, however, to know all the tiny details of the defilements. We just need to know the main symptoms. With electricity, we may not see the electricity itself and we may not understand it, but we can see its power, its influence, and its symptoms through various electrical appliances and equipment. Similarly, we may never see the defilements themselves, but we can learn all we need to know from their symptoms, from the influence they have on the mind. Their symptoms are many and varied, but we don’t have to discuss them all. We will talk about the most important ones, the ones that cause the most trouble in our lives.

### **Troublesome Love**

The first of these troublesome symptoms is love. When love arises in the mind, is anything lost? Is there something the mind must suffer and endure? Does it pick up any burdens or loads? I’m sure that each of us can understand this phenomenon, as all of us have had some experience with this thing called ‘love.’ Previously, we mentioned the meaning of *rogā*, a synonym for kilesa, as ‘something that pierces and stabs.’ Does love pierce? Does love stab? To know the answer, we need not look anywhere but within our own experience. So look and see for yourself. Other meanings of defilements are ‘things that burn’; ‘things that bind, fetter, and chain’; and ‘things that dominate and imprison.’ Do any of these meanings fit with the thing we call ‘love’? You ought to see whether it is a problem or not. Although many people consider love to be bliss, from the Dhamma point of view it is utter lack of calmness, that is, supreme disturbance. Examine it closely and realize for yourself whether or not love causes problems. Don’t take our word for it, but don’t believe all of the romantic propaganda of TV, novels, and pop music, either.

Ordinarily, the thing we call ‘love’ is conditioned out of ignorance (*avijjā*, not-knowing), the ultimate defilement. Although there may, only in certain situations, arise a kind of love that comes from wisdom or is governed by it, as soon as it is the mind of ‘love,’ it becomes a problem. It is no longer peaceful or joyful. Just by labeling it ‘love,’ it changes from wisdom to ignorance. The terrible dilemma of love developed from the instinct to preserve the species and reproduce. Take a good look at its effects. Can you see all the

problems it causes and the torments through which it drags us? Is it a burden? Is it an obstacle to peace, purity, and joy? At the same time, consider how well off we would be if free of this problem. Even non-sexual love, such as the love of our children, parents, and friends, causes us problems by destroying tranquility and happiness. Non-sexual love must be controlled just as much as sexual love. Otherwise, there is no peace. If we said, ‘Do everything as a lover would do, but do it without love,’ would you believe that it is possible? Could you act in such a way without any defilement?

There are kinds of love which are Dhamma, such as *mettā* (friendliness, kindness) and *karuṇā* (compassion). Still, they must be correct if problems are to be avoided. *Mettā* and *karuṇā* can be defiled by distinctions, discriminations, and attachment, in which case they become *dukkha*, distressing. Not being able to love and not being able to love what we want to love are problems, are *dukkha*. All these are wrong. Even the love that isn’t directly defiled, love that has nothing to do with sex or sensuality, may be defiled indirectly when contaminated by ego and selfishness. Even the higher forms of love, such as *mettā* and *karuṇā*, must be correct.

In short, love is a problem, it isn’t peacefulness and joy. It must be regulated, or, if possible, abandoned. Then the mind will not be disordered. We must transform defiled-love into Dhamma-love. A life that can master love, that is above its influence, should we call that ‘new life’? I’m sure that each of you can find the answer.

## Anger & Hatred

Now we’ll talk about love’s opposite: anger or ill-will. When it arises, what is it like? For one, it’s another kind of fire that burns the mind. It stabs, imprisons, dominates, and fetters the mind. We all know anger very well; we know the many problems it causes. We don’t want to get angry, yet we do. We don’t want to be angry, yet we remain so. You know how disturbing anger is. If we can control it, how peaceful will that be? Ponder this, please.

The third defilement is hatred, which is different from anger, although both are forms of dislike or not-liking. When something ugly, dirty, or repulsive appears, we hate it. We can’t control ourselves, we just hate unattractive, hateful things. That’s how it is, because we can’t endure the cause of the hatred. Thus, hatred burns, possesses, and torments our mind. Now, think what it would be like if there was nothing to hate and nothing to love. No love and no hate – what blissful peace that would be! Just like the *arahant* (the perfected human being). The arahant is above the feelings of both hate and non-hate. The liberated mind has no problems with ‘hateful’ or ‘ugly’ things because there is nothing hateful and nothing not-hateful for that mind which totally fulfills Dhamma by fully realizing Dhamma. Don’t misunderstand that it is dangerous to be free of hate, that we need hatred to protect ourselves from danger. Hatred itself is the danger! It’s best not to hate, but we never seem to learn. Thus pitiful instances of hate continue in our world. White-skinned people hate black-skinned people. What’s the excuse for such a problem? We shouldn’t have problems like that. If we understand correctly, there will be no need to hate, and we won’t hate.

## Fear of Life

The fourth defilement is fear. Everyone is having this problem; we’re all afraid of something.

Fear comes from stupidity, from selfishness, from the craving of a self that desires things it can't have. So we fear! Nowadays, we have every possible kind of fear in this world of ours, especially the fear of nuclear war and annihilation. When we're afraid, we become helpless. When there is fear, we lose our mindfulness and wisdom (*sati-paññā*), and our ability to struggle with problems and protect ourselves. To be unafraid is much better.

Fear comes from the instinct of egoism. It is an instinctual necessity. When there is insufficient knowledge and wisdom, this instinct is impossible to control. Through the study and practice of Dhamma, necessary and sufficient wisdom is developed so that this instinct can be controlled and fear does not arise. Understanding and insight into *anattā* (not-self) allows us to be free of fear, helps us to uproot fear, and protects us from its future arising. All of you surely can see that fear has no use at all, that it always leads to dukkha. We ought to be able to do anything in the face of fearful and frightening things. Then we will be in a much better position to deal with those things and succeed in the business of living. If we must fight with an enemy, but cannot do it without fear, we are in no position to fight effectively. Our abilities will be weakened, our wisdom will be diminished, and our mindfulness will be slow. We will be defeated by whatever foe it is. Unafraid, however, we are able to use our wisdom, mindfulness, and skills in the degree needed to defeat that enemy. Face all frightening things fearlessly. A fearless life is of great use.

### Positive Defilements

There are many other forms of *kilesa*. Another is worry and anxiety about the things we love. In Thai and Pāli this is called '*ālaya-āvaraṇa*,' the anxious worrying and thinking about, longing after, dwelling upon, and missing of things we love. This is that spinning around of the mind when it can't stop thinking of beloved things. If the mind can't stop, this keeps it awake at night and causes headaches during the day.

Another *kilesa* is envy. This happens instinctually on its own. It happens in children without their being taught. Envy is a huge problem for the one who feels it, but it isn't any problem for its object. The first feels dukkha, the latter doesn't.

Finally, we come to possessiveness and miserliness. If this grows too strong, it becomes jealousy, especially the sexual kind. This is yet another form of selfishness. It often takes place in marriages. The husband doesn't want his wife to talk with other men; the wife jealously worries that another woman will steal her husband away. We are all familiar with that pain and suffering.

These are six examples of defilements. There are many more which we could bring up, but we are limited by time. Nonetheless, these few examples are enough to illustrate our point: if we are free of every symptom and condition of defilement, how healthy, well, at ease, happy, and peaceful will we be? It's up to you to discover what this is like, yet even now you ought to be able to imagine its value. The mind that is totally free from all symptoms of these defilements is a totally new way of living. This peace and freedom, this coolness and bliss, is one meaning of new life.

### Making Use of New Life

Next, we'll discuss a second meaning of new life. We must be able to skillfully use this new way of existing – that comes with freedom from defilements – to meet our needs. The first aspect of applying the new life is making the mind joyful at any time. For example, through successfully practicing mindfulness with breathing (*ānāpānasati*), it is possible to have genuine happiness at any time, in any place. Because of the proper development of mindfulness with breathing, we have influence and mastery over the mind. We have instant happiness as we need it.

This second aspect of using the new life is that fully practiced Dhamma can help the sense organs – eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind – to perform most efficiently, as if they were 'divine.'<sup>13</sup> By this we mean only that they have more ability and effectiveness than is ordinary. The eyes are more effective than ordinary, the ears are more efficient than ordinary, the nose and so on are more capable than ordinary, as if they were 'divine.' Divine (*dibba*) simply means 'beyond ordinary.'

### Mastering Experience

A third aspect of new life is the ability to control experience, that is, the mind, so that it is always in a state of correctness. This type of mastery has three aspects: regulating the *vedanā* (feelings), regulating *saññā* (perceptions, recognitions, classifications), and regulating *vitakka* (thinking). Mastery of *vedanās* means preventing them from conditioning defilements, as well as not experiencing any unwanted feelings.<sup>14</sup> *Saññā* – recognizing, evaluating, classifying things as this or that – can be controlled so that it doesn't lead to *dukkha*. Controlling *vitakka* (thought conception) is to control the thinking so that either it is correct or there is no thinking at all. Feelings, perceptions, and thinking can be mastered because there is Dhamma.

Eating delicious food provides an example of the first kind of mastery. If the food is delicious, we become stupid or crazy over it through our delusion about deliciousness. When there is enough Dhamma, we can control the feelings that arise toward that delicious food. Then, we aren't deluded by the deliciousness, we don't eat more than we should, and we don't make any problems out of it. We see it all as 'just thus, merely thus,' rather than with foolishness and delusion. The delicious food doesn't defeat us, it isn't our boss, and it doesn't make us do anything stupid. We don't force it to be not delicious. If it's delicious, it stays delicious, but the deliciousness can't control us. We control the deliciousness so that it doesn't force us to do something wrong or foolish.

We can see most easily that people throughout the world today are slaves to deliciousness. Much time is spent making delicious things which serve no other purpose than to excite desire and craving. Then, we compete for those things. Finally, we divide up the world in attempts to control those things and fight endless wars, only because we have lost control of and are slaves to deliciousness. The words 'Satan' (the Christian Devil) and 'Māra' (the Buddhist Tempter) represent our stupidity regarding deliciousness. We need to know that the feelings (*vedanās*) can be managed.

Now let's talk about the control of *saññā* (recognition, classification). Previously, we couldn't remember things well or recall them correctly. From now on, we'll have an excellent memory and clear recollection. Through the mastery of *saññā*, mind won't fall into false distinctions and misperceptions, that is, the ones that punish us with *dukkha*. For example,

saññā can be controlled so that we don't identify and regard things as being male and being female. Thereby, we're free of the problems that arise from masculinity and femininity. The mind remains cool and calm. Mastery of saññā means controlling it so that it is always correct. Correct means that it causes no dukkha.

Controlling vitakka is to control thought. Whenever there is saññā of something, it invites thinking according to the meaning of that saññā. So we think; and we think a lot. If it isn't controlled, the thinking goes wrong and dukkha is born. Thought is skillful when kept to ways that are correct and beneficial: thinking along the lines of leaving behind sensuality, of not harming or injuring others, and of not troubling anyone, even unintentionally. If we want more than that, we can stop thinking altogether. For example, if we will enter *samādhi* (focused non-distraction) or *samāpatti* (attainment of deep levels of concentration), we can stop the thinking totally, in all respects. We are able to control vitakka, that is, we can think when we wish to do so and not think when we wish not to. Or we can think only in the ways we ought to think. Then, nothing wrong happens and there is no dukkha. This is what is meant by mastering vitakka.

### **Removing the Womb of Defilement**

A fourth, and final, aspect of this mental mastery is the direct control of the defilements themselves, which is to control dukkha and prevent its arising. When there is enough Dhamma, and when Dhamma is practiced sufficiently, clinging (*upādāna*) can be controlled. This control prevents attachment to 'good' and attachment to 'evil.' With no attachment or clinging, there is no dukkha. We won't let upādāna arise, and then the concept of 'I' (egoism), which is the womb of defilements, isn't born. Without the concept of 'I,' there will be no defilements. Once the defilements can be controlled, they are finished. This is the last good result, a fourth kind of mastery, the control of clinging, which automatically controls dukkha.

In these ways, life is mastered and used wisely, so that we reap all the appropriate benefits. Such is the new life of peace, coolness, and bliss. For example, we have the ability to be happy whenever we need to be. We have such splendid sense organs – eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind-sense – that they can be called 'divine.' Then we can control the feelings, perceptions, and thinking. Finally, we control clinging so that it never again arises. Thereby, all problems vanish! There isn't even the slightest, most remote chance that the defilements will arise or that there could be dukkha. With these capabilities, life is maintained in the most skillful way, and we accomplish whatever must be done. If you look honestly, you'll know within yourself that this is the new life in its complete meaning: the highest, supremely new life. This is what you'll receive from the correct and successful application of Dhamma.

The first thing is for you to study Dhamma, the second is for you to practice Dhamma, and the third is for you to receive the fruits of practicing Dhamma. Look at these clearly and carefully consider their benefits. Each of you must be fully self-reliant in doing so. It's up to each of you to realize the meaning, way, and benefits of practicing Dhamma.

### ***Thank you***

Finally, I'd like to express my joy that you have begun to study, practice, and receive the Dhamma. And one last time: thank you. Thank you all for coming to this place, for

making use of it, and helping to make it beneficial. You don't have to thank us for anything, but please allow us to thank you.

### Footnote

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> Here, Dhamma is both natural truth and the knowledge of natural truth which enables us to end the disease, that is, *dukkha*.
- <sup>3</sup> Here, study is not just intellectual learning. It involves thinking, investigation, training, experimentation, and direct experience, with emphasis on the training and experience
- <sup>4</sup> Ajahn Buddhādāsa 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.
- <sup>5</sup> Some translators render these lines “*this ... that ...*,” but the Pāli original explicitly repeats “*this ... this ...*” We leave it to the reader to reflect why.
- <sup>6</sup> 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.
- <sup>7</sup> The system of meditation generally taught at Suan Mokkh. See *Mindfulness With Breathing*, by y Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu (Wisdom Publications, Somerville, MA: 1996).
- <sup>8</sup> ‘*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.’
- <sup>9</sup> *Kilesa*: disruptions and contaminations of the mind’s natural peacefulness and radiance. They are discussed in Chapter III.
- <sup>10</sup> For more on *suññatā*, see Ajahn Buddhādāsa’s *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree* (Wisdom Publications, Somerville, MA: 1994).
- <sup>11</sup> See Ajahn Buddhādāsa’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).
- <sup>12</sup> *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.
- <sup>13</sup> 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.

- <sup>14</sup> 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 Buddhādāsa 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 online at [www.suanmokkh.org](http://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 Buddhāsa'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 (*sāṅkhāra*). 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’;

*viññāna-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 (*viññāna*). 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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III. NEW LIFE:

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