

## Life That Doesn't Bite Its Owner, Part 6 of 6

### THE TRIPLE GEM IN BUDDHISM

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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](http://www.suanmokkh.org),

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

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

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Today, we'll talk about the Triple Gem in Buddhism. Why is it necessary to specify "in Buddhism?" The reason for this is because other religions also have something very similar to the Triple Gem or the Three Ratana. For example, in Christianity they have their Trinity and in Hinduism they have their Trimurti. Some of you might be wondering why did we wait to the very end to speak about the Triple Gem. Usually they talk about it from the very start, but there are certain reasons for saving it until the end. A reason for this is that there are two kinds of Three Ratana, there are two kinds of Triple Gem. There's the Triple Gem of those who don't know what they have directly experienced. They don't know what they're talking about. And there's the Triple Gem of those who know what they're talking about.

The first kind of Triple Gem is just the Triple Gem of words, where people repeat certain formulae like *Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*, *Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*, *Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*. They repeat this formula and do a little ceremony. This is the Triple Gem of myna birds or the Triple Gem of record players and tape cassettes. This kind of Triple Gem is where people are speaking without really having experienced and understood what it is they're talking about. The other kind of Triple Gem is the Triple Gem that comes after having studied and practiced the Dhamma until having come to a personal experience of the Three Ratana, and then speaking about the Triple Gem from that experience, from the understanding of that experience. So we'll be speaking about these two kinds now that we've gone through all the teachings of Buddhism. At this time we can talk about the Triple Gem from the point of view of having studied and understood the Buddha's teachings.

So when we register people who have newly taken up Buddhism, there is a need for this first kind of Triple Gem, the Triple Gem that isn't really understood by the people who take it up. Or for children, there is a need for this first kind of Triple Gem. There are various reasons why there has to be this kind of ceremony, and why many people need this kind of ceremonial entrance or registration way of showing that they are Buddhists, and it serves certain purposes. However, it won't be very beneficial unless it leads onto the second kind of Triple Gem – the Triple Gem that comes from understanding and experience. So after we have studied life, we have studied how to practice, and have practiced until understanding the teachings of Buddhism and understanding life to the point of understanding *atammayatā*, which is the highest Dhamma, and from this understanding one is truly able to quench Dukkha. Then from the ability to quench Dukkha, one knows, “Oh, this is what the Buddha is, this is who the Buddha is, and the Buddha has taught this Dhamma.” The Buddha is the one who has taught this Dhamma of understanding and practice that truly quenches dukkha, and the Saṅgha are those who practice that Dhamma. So then one knows the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha – the Triple Gem – in this way and then one speaks from this experience.

Let's look at the Triple Gem first in overview, in a comprehensive way. There are two kinds of Buddha. The first kind of Buddha is *sambuddha*, which is the Buddha who has been awakened through personal study and practice, totally, without needing to depend on the teaching of any other. And then there is *anubuddha*, who is the Buddha that has awakened after having benefited from the teaching, the advice, the guidance of someone else. Or, in short, the Buddha that knows by oneself and the Buddha that knows through studying with another. As for the Dhamma, there are three aspects: The first is Dhamma in the form that is studied, the Dhamma we study and learn about. The second is Dhamma in the form of practice. And the third is Dhamma in the form of the fruits of that practice – the joy or bliss that comes from practicing Dhamma. These are known in the *Pāli* language as *pariyatti-dhamma*, *paṭipatti-dhamma*, and *paṭivedha-dhamma*.

As you've been listening to these talks, that means that there is *pariyatti-dhamma*. At a minimum, there has been *pariyatti-dhamma* if one has listened and understood the teachings of the Dhamma. If, however, while listening one has set one's mind into investigating these things, one has thought about them, reflected upon them, and started to see the reality of these things within one's own heart and experience, then there is at least some *paṭipatti-dhamma*, the Dhamma that is practiced. This investigating with one's own mind is practice, and there may have been some of this. And then in practicing this way, if one has been satisfied by the understanding and realization that comes, if one has found some joy from the practice of Dhamma, then there is at least a little bit of *paṭivedha-dhamma*. So if one has been really listening and investigating, as while listening then there may have been some of all three aspects of Dhamma, even if just a little bit. While listening like this, it's possible for all three aspects of Dhamma to be there. Then as for these three aspects of Dhamma in completion or perfection, this requires that you continue studying, that you study through reading and through listening to explanations from others. And then thinking about what you have studied using reasoning to analyze and further understand what you have studied through listening or reading. Then we must continue our practice, to expand our practice, deepen our practice, such as with *Ānāpānasati*, as you've been learning about and experimenting with, to practice more and more deeply and completely until all the things that one studies are practiced within one's own heart. One directly works on these practices with them in one's own mind. As practice is deepened and

becomes more and more complete, then there are the fruits of this practice which appear directly to the mind – the direct experience of the results of Dhamma practice. The more correct and complete the practices, the more complete the results will be. This means that there is the result of the quenching of dukkha. Dukkha is quenched and then there is the result that there is no dukkha in the mind. Some people like to call this ‘happiness,’ but it’s more proper to just call it ‘no dukkha’ when there’s no dukkha in the mind. This is the result of Dhamma practice, and as this state of there being no dukkha in the mind becomes more and more complete and perfect, then all aspects of the Dhamma are being completed on a higher and higher level. This is something for one to continue working on in all three aspects of continuing the study, continuing the practice, and continuing to receive the fruits, the benefits of practice.

This word *sukha* or happiness is quite ambiguous. Different people give it all kinds of different meanings. So to talk about happiness can be muddled and dangerous. For example, the happiness of a young child is one kind of happiness. We talk about how a child can be very happy with playing with little things like rubber bands or being given sweets and chocolates. Or one example is a child can entertain itself for a long time just swinging back and forth on the gate to the house, those swinging gates. A child can just go back and forth and play and entertain itself for hours in such a way. This is the happiness of a child, but you can’t find many adults who would find happiness in the same kind of thing. So if we talk about happiness, nobody quite knows what we’re talking about. And the Buddha himself didn’t talk about happiness. In the early days of his teaching, when various men would follow the path of practice that was taught, when they wanted to become *bhikkhus* or monks, what he said was then “come and follow the sublime life and make an end to all dukkha.” He didn’t say “come and follow this life for the sake of happiness,” but he said “come and live the sublime way of life in order to make an end of all dukkha.” This is what he said, just to end dukkha. This is the most correct way of speaking. It’s the most clear and unambiguous.

As we mentioned yesterday, there were people who took sex and sensuality to be Nibbāna, and then there were others who took the material concentrations, or the *rūpa-jhānas*, as Nibbāna, as for them the highest happiness. And then there were others who took the immaterial absorptions, the *arūpa-jhānas* as Nibbāna. And so people have taken all kinds of different things as Nibbāna and call those things ‘happiness.’ But these examples we’ve just mentioned are all just crazy kinds of attachments. They’re deceiving, they just trick people. They’re not true and genuine happiness but many people get caught up in these things and are infatuated by them. However, true happiness, if we’re going to say that there is a genuine happiness, we must say that it is the end, the complete and final end of dukkha. This is the true Nibbāna. And if anything is going to be called ‘happiness,’ this is it.

If we are going to understand the Triple Gem, we need to understand it both in terms of people language and in terms of Dhamma language. So we need to know the Triple Gem in terms of the understanding of ordinary people who see everything in terms of persons, in terms of egos. And then we also need to understand it on the highest level of Dhamma from having practiced and experienced things directly to understand the Triple Gem in terms of the highest Dhamma. To understand the Triple Gem or Buddhism or any religious teaching, we need to understand it in both ways. If we don’t have both levels of understanding, then our understanding is incomplete. In speaking in terms of people language, people like to talk about happiness. The ordinary

understanding of the man in the street, of ordinary people who don't have a very developed understanding of life, they're always talking about happiness. They take this as the goal of practice. This is what religion and everything is about, is getting happiness. But when we speak in terms of Dhamma language, the language that speaks about direct reality as it's found in the mind, then we talk only in terms of the final ending of dukkha, the quenching of dukkha. This is because for that ordinary man in the street, when they talk about happiness, it's not the final ending of dukkha. There are still various problems caught up with this happiness – it's the happiness that bites its owner. But in terms of Dhamma language, we see that the real goal, the final goal, is the end of dukkha.

When speaking in people language, one can only explain or talk about relative truths. One can only talk about truths which are conventional, which are incomplete, which are dependent or relative to various causes, conditions, and situations. However in speaking and explaining in Dhamma language, one speaks in terms of ultimate truth, about the truth that doesn't depend on anything, the truth that is complete and whole.

So now let's look at the Triple Gem as it's understood in people language. There's the Buddha. In people language, these are all understood in individual terms, in personal, egoistic terms. For example, the 'Buddha' in people language means a certain historical individual, a certain person who lived in India 2,600 years ago. And then the 'Dhamma' is the teaching, the words of that person. And the Dhamma in people language is also those words that have been written down in books and even those books themselves in the cases that store those books, and the sound of people reading those words written down in the books. And then the 'Saṅgha' of people language are men and women who put on the saffron robes and walk around with shaved heads. These are the Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha of people language. Or if we speak on a lower level, the level of a child's understanding, the Buddha are those Buddha images sitting in the temples. The child takes this to be the Buddha, and the Dhamma are those fancy ornate cases of books that hold the Tipiṭaka, the scriptures. And then the Saṅgha is anybody wearing yellow robes, anybody who puts on some yellow is Saṅgha to a child. This is the Triple Gem on the lowest level as a child understands them.

Now the Triple Gem in Dhamma language is somewhat different. The Buddha in Dhamma language doesn't refer to that historical personage who was born, who had a human body, who wandered around from place to place in India 2,600 years ago. That's not Buddha in Dhamma language. In Dhamma language, the Buddha is a certain quality in the mind of that person. There's a certain quality of understanding Dhamma in the mind, of knowing Dhamma, of awakening to Dhamma in the mind of that person. This is what is that quality of understanding Dhamma, is Buddha in Dhamma language. And then the Dhamma isn't those words written down in books, or the sound of somebody reading or teaching about what's written in the books, but the Dhamma is the meaning that in those books that can quench dukkha, the meaning, the truth in those books that can genuinely quench dukkha. This is the Dhamma of Dhamma language. And then the Saṅgha isn't those people dressed in yellow. The Saṅgha is the ability, the virtue within the minds of those people that is genuinely able to quench dukkha, the genuine, the actual quenching of dukkha within those people. That is the Saṅgha of Dhamma language. So in Dhamma language, it's just Dhamma, Dhamma, Dhamma. There's the Dhamma of the Buddha. There's the Dhamma in the Dhamma, and there's the Dhamma of the Saṅgha. And so in

Dhamma language we're just talking about Dhamma in the form of Buddha, in the form of Dhamma, and in the form of Saṅgha. This is how it has to be in Dhamma language.

Most people only know the Triple Gem in the ordinary way. We even have to say that as far as we can tell, especially the *farang* – the white Europeans, which we include the Americans, and Australia (Excuse us for having to speak in this way) – but it seems that in particular the *farang* only know the Triple Gem in the way that the Buddha is that certain man who walked around in India more than 2,000 years ago and that the Dhamma is just this religion, this Buddhism, this certain religion, which has its own kind of authority of its own, with which it can disagree and argue with other religions, and then the Saṅgha is a certain kind of beggar who walks around begging for food. It seems that most people only understand the Triple Gem in this rather crude way. So it's necessary for us all to understand the quality or virtue that is in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. If we don't know this deep quality or essence within the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, then we won't have a correct understanding of the Triple Gem. So we must find out for ourselves what this quality is that is in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. Then we will understand the Triple Gem correctly.

So we have to emphasize, we have to point to the mind – the *citta*, the mind-heart – and take this as the guiding principle. And so the mind that knows truth, this is Buddha and that ultimate truth, which is known by the Buddha, this is Dhamma, that ultimate truth that the mind can know is Dhamma. And then Saṅgha is that mind which is looking around struggling to find the way to quench dukkha. This is the Saṅgha. This Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha depends just in the reality of the mind, doesn't depend on any external appearances. And this Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha can be found in each of us – it's something that each of us can find for ourselves within ourselves. To make it very short and clear, please remember these words: The mind that understands is Buddha, that understanding is Dhamma, and the struggle of that mind to quench dukkha is Saṅgha. These are the real Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha, the one that all of us have more or less. In each of us, there is some understanding, there is the quality of understanding, there is that which is understood, and there is the struggle to get free of dukkha. In each of us there is some degree of Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha. Please get to know this Triple Gem. This is the deepest Triple Gem – the true Triple Gem that is of most benefit and value to us. This is the kind of Triple Gem that you have within yourself, the kind of Triple Gem that you can genuinely have with you. The other kind is just the Triple Gem that's scattered and spread all over the place outside of us. So we ought to know, understand both of them.

For example, when you are practicing according to *Patīccasamupāda*, when you are practicing to have mindfulness and wisdom at the moment of sense contact, then right there, right in that can be found the genuine Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha. In understanding how we must practice, in understanding what must be practiced, that is Buddha. And then that knowledge, the understanding of how to practice and then the practice according to that knowledge, that is Dhamma. And then that mind which practices, that is the Saṅgha. So in any situation like where we're bringing mindfulness to each sense contact according to the principle of dependent origination, right there, we have got all three of the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha, complete and whole.

There are some words that we should consider in regards to this matter. There are the words “to understand,” “to know” and then there are the words “to reach” such as in when we say *Buddham saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*. *Gacchāmi* is to go to, to reach the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha as refuge. And then there is “to have,” to have the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha genuinely. And then the words “to be” – to be the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. So we have these different words. What does it mean to know the Triple Gem? And then what is it like to reach the Triple Gem? How does one reach the Triple Gem, then what is it to have the Triple Gem, and then what is it to be the Triple Gem, for the mind to actually be the Triple Gem as we just explained? We need to understand these words: “to know,” “to reach,” “to have,” “to be.”

For the most part, most of us only have the Triple Gem that is a bunch of names, just the recitation of these different names: Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha. This is the Triple Gem that most of us have. We don't have any deeper understanding or experience of them. We just have the Triple Gem of children, which isn't exactly fitting for a mature adult, but for the most part, all we have are these words that we recite. Even most Buddhists are like this, just repeating these words without really having the reality behind the words within them. The Triple Gem of a child may not be something that an adult can actually take as refuge. When we take the Triple Gem as our refuge, it ought to be one that we can genuinely depend on. The Triple Gem of a child – where the child just has some belief in these words and bows and praises or whatever to these ideas and images – that may have some value as a refuge for a child. But as adults we have a responsibility to find a more complete and true Triple Gem. We have to practice until finding a higher and complete Triple Gem that we can genuinely take as refuge, that we can truly depend upon. So, in short, you've got knowledge of what to practice, you've got this understanding of what needs to be practiced. And then there is the knowledge itself and then there is the practicing, the struggling, the working to get free of dukkha. So then within you there is the Buddha, the Dhamma, and Saṅgha altogether.

And you ought to know about the big Triple Gem – the Triple Gem of the universe that extends throughout the universe and applies everywhere. There is the knowing, the knowing of what needs to be known, what needs to be understood, and there is this understanding, the knowledge that genuinely quenches dukkha, and then there is the mind seeking, working its way out from dukkha, practicing to quench all the dukkha. This is the big Triple Gem. It applies everywhere in the universe. You ought to get to know the Triple Gem in this way also.

In all living things there must be this Triple Gem. For example, even in the trees – now they'll criticize me for saying this, but that won't stop me from saying it anyway – but in the trees there is the need to know how to survive. And then there is the knowledge, the instinctual knowledge of how to survive. And then the trees actually put this into practice and survive. So although they may criticize me for saying it, the Triple Gem can be found in all living things, even in trees.

When we speak in people language, we say that there are three gems – there are three of them – but when we talk in Dhamma language, we say that there is one whole, that the Triple Gem is one. If one is still separating the Triple Gem into three different things, then one still doesn't understand the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. But if one has understood them, one sees that they are one, because if you take away any of the three, then they all disappear. One can't just have one or the other or two. One has to have all three together to have the Triple Gem. And

so, we say that they are one. One must have them all together. This is why they're called 'triple,' not the three gems, which is the understanding of children, but the Triple Gem, which is one, where you can't miss any of them. These are all mental qualities, these are not physical qualities.

If they're mental qualities then we can have them with our own minds, but if they're physical material things, there's no way you can bring them into your mind. If the Buddha is a certain human being who once lived, there's no way you can have that Buddha in your mind. Or the Dhamma – those books. Or the Saṅgha – all those men dressed in yellow. There's no way you can have these in your mind. But the genuine Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha is this one Triple Gem, which is mental and so one can have the genuine Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha in one's mind. One ought to know this Triple Gem – the one that one can actually have within oneself. So in one mind, there is all the Triple Gem together. There is the knowing, the understanding that the activity of mind that knows and understands. Then there is the understanding, the knowledge itself, that which the mind knows. And then there is the action – the activity of putting that knowledge into practice – the struggling, the fighting against dukkha. For the one who understands the Triple Gem, one will see the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha together in one single mind. In that mind there is the knowing, there is that which is known, and there is the struggle to quench dukkha all together in one single mind.

I'm sorry, the translating of his words is a bit difficult. When we talk about the Buddha, unfortunately in English the word 'knowing' can both be a noun and a verb, and the same with 'understanding.' So to understand, to know is the Buddha. The understanding, the knowledge is the Dhamma. Please don't confuse the two.

So now we know these three things well enough. Let's now look at the word Ratana, or gem. How are these three things properly called 'Ratana'? The word Ratana comes from the words "to be satisfied" or "that which delights or satisfies" or "to be delighted, to be satisfied." And so the word Ratana means "that which delights, that which satisfies." This is the meaning of the word Ratana. Now, how do they satisfy? How do they bring this satisfaction, this delight? To find out, we must look at the qualities of these things. The Ratana are gems and we all know that the highest, the most valuable kind of gem is the diamond. And as we talked about earlier, the diamond is the special gem that cannot be cut by anything but it can cut everything. Having this gem that is a diamond that cannot be cut but which can cut anything, this is one quality that makes the Triple Gem truly satisfying. We all know that the diamond is the gem with the highest value, the highest price. It's the most satisfying and delightful for its owner, but that's a material diamond. Here we're talking about a spiritual diamond, and the spiritual diamond is the understanding that can cut away all problems, that can cut through all problems and end them completely. The other day we talked about the *vajira-dhamma*, to have this diamond, this spiritual diamond. And when one has this spiritual diamond, then there is *vajira-citta*, the diamond mind. And with the diamond mind, there is *vajira-jīvi*, the diamond life. Having this diamond, this diamond mind and the diamond life, this is the truest meaning of the word possession, or property. This is the real spiritual treasure that one can have. Having this highest understanding, which is a diamond, and then this gives rise to a diamond mind and a diamond life, this is the correct meaning of the Triple Gem.

Some people say that the highest treasure is Nibbāna, but that's really still talking about the same thing. To have Nibbāna is the same as having the *vajira-dhamma*, this diamond which we have been talking about. This highest treasure is to have a life that is completely clean and utterly pure, a life that is calm in the most profound way, a life that is clear and lucid and radiant, a life that is light because there are no burdens weighing upon the mind, and a life that is free, free from all bondage. Having this kind of life is the highest treasure, whether we call it a 'diamond' or we call it 'Nibbāna' or a 'Triple Gem' or whatever. It's somewhat amusing that this is the thing that you are all looking for, even though you don't know yet that's what you're looking for. It's kind of funny, isn't it, looking around all over the place without even knowing what it is you're looking for? But this New Life, which you're looking for is nothing other than this Triple Gem. So, the story of the Triple Gem ends like this, existing with the Triple Gem or even being the Triple Gem, this is what it all comes down to. If one has come to this point where one has life which is the Triple Gem, where one's life is one with the Triple Gem, then one has completed one's duty, one has fulfilled one's responsibility in life. One has carried out, has lived according to the very basic fact that life is something that must be developed, which must evolve, and if one is one with the Triple Gem, then one has fulfilled this truth.

Please remember the fact which we have pointed out a number of times that life exists in order to develop. The meaning, the value of life, is that it can and must develop. If we understand this, then we do whatever we can to develop life to the highest level. But if we don't develop life, then life is meaningless, valueless, worthless. So we should understand this fact and then do it. If one doesn't, then one's life has no value. But if one sees that life exists for the purpose of being developed, then one must develop it and in that development one's life has meaning and value.

There's a very simple principle that you ought to remember. There is something that this life ought to receive and one should receive it. If one doesn't get this thing, then one's life is a waste, it's utterly meaningless. In Thai we say that one has wasted one's birth. One has wasted one's birth if one doesn't get this thing. So it is that we have been born into this life in order to meet the highest thing that a human being can find, and this is the Triple Gem as we've been discussing it. But don't forget that here when we say the words, "the best thing," when we use the word 'best' like this, this best has nothing to do with positive or negative. But this is just the way words are; we have to use the words we've got and they're kind of tricky, slippery little things but we do the best we can. When we say 'best,' we mean that which is beyond all positive and negative. This best thing has nothing to do with the positive or negative.

Let us remind you again and stress that mindfulness with breathing is a tool or instrument that will cause you to receive this thing. *Ānāpānasati* is a way of development that develops both the mind – or mentality and spirituality – at the same time together. When we say that *Ānāpānasati* develops the mind, we mean that it develops certain mental qualities and strengths, mental abilities, so that the mind is always able to know, always ready to know and receive the truth, the highest thing. And then when we say "develop spirituality," this is having and living with that highest thing so that life has no problems, no suffering. So develop both the mind – or mentality – and develop spirituality together so that one is always ready to receive the highest thing, and that one has the highest thing together. You've all come a long way to get to Suan Mokkh and it has cost you a lot of money as well as effort. In coming here then you must get something truly commensurate with all the time and effort in difficulties you've expended. If you don't get

something that's appropriate, then we could say you've wasted your investment or you've made a great loss. So please find out what this highest thing is. Find out this best thing that you ought to get, and then get it. Only in this way is your time, effort, and expense justified, and only this way do you recoup your investment. There's a saying that if one doesn't use one's money and energy and time efficiently, if you don't use it in a proper way so you get a proper return on your investment, then Yama – the god of the dead – will clunk you over the head and slap your face. So be very careful that in all your expenditures, all the money you spend and all the time you put into things, make sure that it's being done in order to get the highest thing, the best thing that you can find in life. Otherwise, Yama, the god of the dead, will slap you silly and clunk you a few good ones over the head. Yama means 'dukkha,' that if one doesn't practice correctly then there is dukkha, one suffers, one is in pain. So, if one doesn't practice correctly, Yama – or that is dukkha – will slap you around left and right until you learn your lesson.

Let us repeat again that this is an art. This is the most artistic thing that one can do. One may have to put some time and effort into it. This highest supreme art, but if you're willing to make the investment, the payoff will be worth much more than everything you put into it, if you act really willing, honestly willing to put in the time, the effort that it takes to practice this art. So we can point out once again that to practice *Ānāpānasati* correctly is the most artful, the most artistic thing one can do. You ought to practice this art as fully and completely as you can in order to reap the benefits from it. This art has the tremendous value that it can wipe out the feelings of 'I' and 'mine,' of 'self. This art of *Ānāpānasati* has the ability to completely wipe out the instinct of 'self,' so one is no longer is dominated by this conditioning of 'I' and 'mine.' This art is one that you ought to appreciate in this way. If you can see it in this way, then you will not have much difficulty in putting this art into practice. So it's truly a gem, this art is truly a gem because it has such a wonderful and exalted value. There's another word we can describe this with, although it's a bit strange for many – the word *lokuttara* that this is above the world, beyond the world, or supramundane. This art and its value is one that transcends the world. Beyond the world means being beyond the feeling, the awareness of self, to transcend the ego and self. This world is dominated by ego. In this world there are just all kinds of foolishness and stupidity indulging in all kinds of positives and negatives and living always in terms of ego, and this brings on tremendous suffering, heaviness, and bondage. Being above the world, beyond the world, is to be free of all that. And don't forget that having *atammayatā* itself in the mind is the highest thing. With this understanding, then one is no longer foolish about anything in the world. One is completely beyond the power of positive and negative, so nothing can trap one, nothing can burden one, nothing can cause any problems for one. So one ought to find and develop this understanding and then protect *atammayatā* within the heart so that one's life is free of all problems and all dukkha. Don't forget *atammayatā*. If one has *atammayatā* with one all the time, then one's life will be complete. If there is *atammayatā* in the mind, it will call upon the Triple Gem. The *atammayatā*, this understanding, will gather together, will collect the Triple Gem so that one has the genuine Triple Gem. If there is *atammayatā*, it won't be the Triple Gem of children or of fools who don't understand life, but it will be the real Triple Gem that has the highest value and meaning for our lives. By this, *atammayatā* will protect, will nourish that Triple Gem so that we have it with us, the genuine Triple Gem all the time.

And our last request is that you not just have this Triple Gem for yourself, not just have this Triple Gem for your own benefit and welfare of your own life, but develop it sufficiently and

completely enough that you have some to share with others. This is to make one's duty in life complete – to have solved one's own problems and then be able to help others solve their own. So please don't just keep the Triple Gem to oneself. Develop it enough so that one can share it with one's fellow human beings and help them to solve the problems of their lives. This is to fulfill one's highest duty, the higher duty, in life. If we really love our fellow human beings, there's nothing better that we can do for them than helping them to have the true Triple Gem. And when everyone has the Triple Gem, there won't be any problems left in this world. When all the problems disappear, there will be peace. Peace will naturally arise, so peace, genuine lasting peace, will be the result in this world when everyone in the world has the Triple Gem. And when the whole world is at peace, when our whole world is full of peace, then the story is complete.

And now that this story is over, we'll end today's talk. Thank you for being very patient listeners yet once again, and we hope that all of you will receive the highest benefits from your patience and effort. So we close today's meeting at this time.

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