

Zandtao Preface :- I am attempting to transcribe a series of talks on the Ariya Sacca by Ajaan Buddhadasa. On this page of my blog you can read as far as I have gone and listen to the remainder, or download the [current pdf](#) file. Original files are [here](#) at [Liberation Park](#).

1a	2a	3a	4a	5a	6a	7a
1b	2b	3b	4b	5b	6b	7b

INTRODUCTION TO UNDERSTANDING THE NOBLE TRUTHS

- 1

JANUARY 1989

(Audio file [Intro1a](#))

We are speaking today about the matter of the Ariya Sacca, the Noble Truths. But before we discuss them, we'd like to develop some understanding of certain things; in particular an understanding of what is meant by Buddhism. Consider this suffix "ism". If it means a certain viewpoint or a certain set of opinions or theories, if it means that kind of thing rather than direct realisation, direct spiritual experience, then that kind of "ism" isn't really what is meant, isn't really fitting with Buddhism. That's not what we mean when we use the word Buddhism.

Forgive us for saying so but actually this word Buddhism is one that westerners came up with on their own, and applied it, and it probably isn't the right word anyway since they probably didn't know what they were talking about."

And so this "ism" of Buddhism doesn't mean Truth, as far as we can tell this "ism" doesn't really have much to do with Truth; it's just one

point of view, one body of opinions, that a certain group of people put forward as what they believe in. But that's not what we're concerned with here.

And there is the word the Thais came up with themselves, *Buddhasasana* (translated as such in English). This word, *Buddhasasana*, unfortunately generally has a meaning or connotation that is too heavily leaning towards study, towards what's written down in the books (or written elsewhere). This word isn't really correct either, it doesn't really get to the proper meaning we should be looking for.

Then there is another word which to us seems to be most correct, it is a word we first used 45 years ago when we were invited for the first time to give lectures in Bangkok. It's the word *Buddhadhamma*. This word *Dhamma* or *Dharma* in Sanskrit (Taam धम्म in the Thai translation) has quite a broad extensive and profound meaning. It can mean path or way, just as the Chinese word *Tao* means path or way. *Dhamma* can mean duty and *dhamma* can mean truth or *sacca*. Since *dhamma* includes all these meanings then it is very appropriate, it is the most appropriate word to use for what is generally called Buddhism. So we suggest that we use the word *Buddhadhamma* as a principle for our study, the Buddha way, the Buddha Duty, the Buddha Truth, instead of these other words. We suggest the word *Buddhadhamma* as the most appropriate name for what we are discussing.

However if we'd like to go back to the Buddha's time we can use the word the Buddha actually used himself, the word that came out of the Buddha's mouth directly – and it wasn't any of these words *Buddhasasana*, or Buddhism or even *Buddhadhamma*, the word the Buddha used himself to refer to his teaching in the way of life he was showing people and the truth he was talking about – the truth he had

discovered, he used for all of this the word, Brahmachariya, the sublime way of life, the sublime spiritual life, the excellent spiritual life. Brahma means sublime, supreme, the highest, or it can mean excellent even perfect. And chariya means to behave, to act, to practice but in this context it has the important meaning of commitment. So we could call it the supreme commitment, the supreme way of living, the sublime way of life. This is what the Buddha called the Brahmachariya, this is a word worth our attention.

Therefore we will approach things as the Buddhist way of life, when we discuss the Noble Truths we will be looking at them in this way. This Buddhist way of life corresponds exactly with the Noble 8-fold Path which is the heart of Buddhism; this we will discuss later. Because this is something we have never heard of before, it's necessary we use the word "new"; we call it a new way of life. So when it's all new then the life we discover is a new life. So we will stress this point of "new life". When we say new it doesn't just mean strange or different, it means new in the sense "we have never seen it before", "we have never heard of it before", "we have never come across it before". To us it's entirely new, but really it's not new at all. It's been around for so long, we can't even say it's old. So when we say new it means new for us, new for those of us who are discovering it for the first time. And in this respect the real meaning of the "new" is "to be above and beyond all influence of good and evil". This is what will be truly new for us, to be above and to be beyond good and evil.

If we speak in Christian terms, especially as it is expressed at the very beginning of the Christian bible, then we would say to be above good and above evil. In Buddhism we could accept all of these, to be above all of those pairs of opposites, all of those dualisms where good is opposed to evil, positive opposed to the negative, yin opposed to yang, to be above all this is the meaning of the new life. You might have noticed that in the bible there is no place in the new testament where it

talks about being above good and evil but there is a place in the old testament, in the very first chapters of Genesis, it discusses being above all good and all evil. So we don't know if we should say this is a Christian teaching, or the teaching before Christianity or whatever, but it is a very important truth revealed at the very beginning of the bible:-

“Living a life above all of the power of good and evil.”

So let's use the term a “new way of life”, this is a term that should be acceptable to everyone. If we use this term “a new way of life” there doesn't have to be any conflict say with our parents who maybe hold to certain religions such as Christianity or Judaism. If we come to Buddhism in order to understand it as “a new way of life” then it is not necessary for us to convert or change our religion. If we follow a certain religion that's fine - we don't have to end that, we're just coming to the heart of a “new way of life”. This is something all of us can do, finding this new way of life that is beyond and above all good and evil. When we are above the power (of all good and evil) then nothing can shake the mind, nothing bothers the mind, nothing annoys it, and then one is free and life is truly new.

So let's talk about the new way of life. Those of us who come from the Judeo-Christian traditions, by discovering the new life that is above the influence of good and evil we will become truly Christian or truly Jewish whichever it is we follow. This new life will follow the instruction God gave to Adam and Eve at the beginning of the bible, where God told Adam and Eve not to attach to good and evil; if one attaches then one will die. To truly follow these instructions of God you will become a perfect Jew or a perfect Christian; this is done by discovering the new life.

For those of you who are still stuck on the word religion we should check on what this word actually means. The old definition that we can find in the Latin root of the word is the observations, practices or way of living that ties humanity to the highest thing. For many this means religion ties humanity to God, for many the highest thing is taken to be God, but if we use the word “religion” in terms of the Buddhadhamma then we have to understand that the highest thing is Nibbana (or the Sanskrit pronunciation is Nirvana). Everything we have said so far is to help us understand what is meant by the word “Buddhism”, or at least what ought to be understood by Buddhism. Really we don’t think this word is very appropriate, however it has been used so much, so often and for so long it is hard to avoid it. At least if we use this word because it is convenient, we will have a proper understanding that when we say Buddhism we mean that way of life which unites humanity with the highest thing, which unites the human being with Nibbana.

Since we have to use Buddhism because it is so common, we request that everyone understand its correct meaning; however all we can do is request this because we don’t have any authority to demand that you do so. In Buddhism there is no authority anywhere, nobody has the right, the copyright or the legal power to insist or demand that things be a certain way. In Buddhism all authority is with Nature; there is no authority resting with any individual, organisation or church, the only authority is in Nature. We just request for our mutual advantage and benefit that we understand Buddhism in the way we have been discussing it. In the words of the Buddha “I merely point the way you yourselves must walk the way”. This word “the way” here is very similar to the words of Jesus Christ “I am the Way”, but this is generally understood in a way very different, or with a meaning different from the meaning the Buddha used in saying “I merely point the way you must walk it yourself”. But we should be very careful to understand what is the meaning of “the way” that Christ was talking about. In Buddhism the Buddha is not “the way”, Buddhism or the Buddhadhamma is the way, and the Buddha is the one who points that

way out to us who haven't noticed it yet in order that we may walk it ourselves. In all the theistic religions it is said that the religion has been revealed to mankind by God, the religion is a revelation from God, but in Buddhism we don't talk like that. In Buddhism the Buddhadhamma is something that has been discovered here in this world, it has been discovered within Nature and then taught, explained and pointed out. So there is this difference in the way theistic religions and the way Buddhism speak, but really it is not a big deal, nothing to get excited about.





The important matter is whether the way can extinguish suffering or not, if it can get rid of suffering – end suffering, then that is all that matters. Whether the religion comes from up above in the kingdom of God and then it is revealed down here on earth or whether it is discovered here on this natural life on earth, either way if it ends suffering that is everything we need. So please don't waste any time arguing about where the truth comes from, whether it comes from God or whether we discover it for ourselves in Nature, there is no benefit arguing about such points. We should put all our attention, give all our interest and energy to discovering what the truth really is; and then finding out can this truth end all suffering? How can this truth end suffering? It is not so important where the truth comes from, but is it the truth? If it's the truth it will end all suffering. So this is the point that deserves our attention, the other matters can be left aside. There's no need to get into arguments and conflicts over such unimportant things. And so all the perspectives or approaches about God, for now we can put those aside and we can talk exclusively of the way in Buddhism or the way of Buddhadhamma. This is the truth in the way of life that has been discovered within Nature right here, and after that discovery the way has been pointed out, explained and taught throughout the years; so we will be talking about this, that which we can find for ourselves within Nature.

This brings us back again to the word “Dhamma”. Dhamma means Nature, it means the truth of Nature, natural truth, this is what we would like now to talk about; we would like to discuss the meaning of the word dhamma a bit. There is the word “dhammajoti”, joti means birth so dhammajoti means “born in Dhamma”, “born through Dhamma” or “born of Dhamma”. This is literally what is used in English to mean nature, everything that is born out of Dhamma. So Dhamma means Nature. But there is another word “Dhammada” (or in Thai ธรรมดา), it means ordinary, regular things all over the place. It can even be used regarding people when certain aspects of character are so common - ordinary in a person - they become habitual. We say that this person is ordinarily angry, or this person is ordinarily stingy, or this person is ordinarily afraid, meaning that they have this habit or that this is their character. So dhammada just means ordinary, dhammajoti means natural. Really these words mean the same thing, there is a bit of a literal difference, but when we say natural or when we say ordinary, it means the same thing. This is some of the meaning of the word “Dhamma”. The word “Dhamma” is so broad and extensive it takes a while to study it thoroughly, and so we need to give it some time. We understand that the word “normalcy” fits the word “Dhammada” the best so we can use the word “normalcy” on all levels, normalcy on the lowest level to the highest level. This is what we have meant by the word “dhammada”, this is an important meaning of Dhamma. So we can take the word “dhammjoti” or Nature as the meaning of Dhamma, and this meaning of Nature includes the sense of normalcy; so nature and normalcy we can take as the meaning of Dhamma.

This nature is what we will study further. The English word Nature probably does not fit exactly with the word, Dhammajoti, but we don't have any other word in English to use and the word, nature, is close enough – good enough. When we use the word, nature, please understand that the word includes everything, there isn't an ordinary nature and some super nature. In Buddhism we don't use the word, supernatural, we don't see that there really is such a thing. Supernatural

is just for people who haven't understood all of nature, and so they separate off the parts they don't understand and call it "super". But in Buddhism all of it is nature, whether it is super or not it is all Dhammajoti.

So now that we understand Dhamma is Nature this word, nature, can be analysed into 4 aspects:-

-  Nature itself
-  The law of nature
-  Duty in accordance with the law of nature
-  Results of that duty

All four of these are part of or included in the word nature or Dhamma. If one understands all these aspects of nature or dhamma, then it would be quite simple to understand the Noble Truths, the Ariya Sacca. Nature, all things, all nature, this is one noble truth, and the truth of nature is another noble truth that must be understood. And the duty in accordance with the law of nature, this is another duty we must develop and fulfil. Then the results of that duty, this is yet another noble truth to be realised, to be penetrated. All of these aspects of nature, of dhamma, that we have talked about are not something separate from the 4 Noble Truths. So understanding dhamma, understanding nature, will allow us to understand the Ariya Sacca, the Noble Truths.

(End of Intro-1a)

INTRODUCTION TO UNDERSTANDING THE 4 NOBLE TRUTHS - 2

(Start of [Intro-1b](#))

Let us repeat this again because it is of such tremendous value; if we understand these 4 aspects of nature, then we will have no trouble understanding the 4 Noble Truths, understanding life. There is nature, the natural law, duty in accordance with the natural law, and the results in accordance with duty. Just these 4 words we should be very careful to remember them and understand them – nature, law, duty, results. Please give these four words your careful attention. These truths of nature, all these meanings or aspects of nature, must be studied, must be learned right here. We can't learn about nature from books, from listening to lectures, from thinking, from philosophy, from speculation, from reasoning. None of these things will allow us to actually know nature in its various manifestations. But if we just study life itself, everything we need to know is right there. If we study the body, the body is part of nature, and this body is subject to physical laws, natural laws. The body is under the power of these various natural laws. And the body always has a duty to perform according to those laws. Then there will be a result according to that duty, either happiness or suffering, pleasure or pain, always arising depending on how the body performs its duty. So all four of these aspects can be discovered right here even in the body, but never in books nor in lectures nor by reasoning. The Buddha himself said that all the truths we need to know, everything we need to know, can be discovered here in this body and nowhere else. All the truths we must know can be found right here in this body, but it must be a living body. If the body is dead forget it, you can't learn very much from it.

But when the body is alive, when there's life here then all the truths can be discovered. When we mean alive there is the ability to experience, there is feeling, there is sensation, there is thought, there is perception. With this living body, feeling, experience, perception, thought, in that we can learn every truth that we need to know. The nature that we must discover in this body is not really different than the nature that's all across the universe, but the nature out there we don't need to study, we just need to study the nature within this body, the nature of all the

atoms, and the clusters of atoms, the various elements that are compounded together to make up this body. This nature in here is what we need to know, the nature all over the universe is a little bit too much.

Within this body there are various actions, physical actions and movements, there is speech, there is thought, memory, and all kinds of mental processes, all of these are included in the word nature, these are all included in the truth of nature that we ought to understand. We like to call it nama and rupa, or mind and body, so take a good look at it in nama, in mind, how many different aspects and processes are there going on, and in the body, rupa, how many different things are happening? All of these together are nature, are the pure nature of life that is to be understood.

Whenever there is nature there is the law of nature right there as well. In this body the body is always under the control, under the power of the law of nature; everything the body does is governed by the law of nature. And the mind is the same. Everything in the mind, all of the mind and its manifestations, are governed by the law of nature. The body is subject to physical laws, and the mind to mental laws. Wherever there is nature there is natural law. The mind specifically is subject to the natural law we call paticcasamupadda, dependent origination; the mind works like this and like this and like this. It doesn't work in another way, that's how things are, that's the law of the mind. So anywhere we find nature, there we can find also natural law.

There is this law of nature that things must be impermanent. If we observe the mind, for example, we will discover the law that all must be impermanent, constantly changing, unsatisfactory or oppressive, and not-self. We can see everything must arise through certain conditions, and then must cease – ceasing of conditions. This is the law of nature that we can find everywhere.

So in the law of nature there are two levels. The first level is that the law of nature is like this, not something else – it's like this. And then the level that things must happen according to the law of nature and there is no other way, the law of nature is like this and everything must happen in line or according to the law of nature. We need to look as carefully as we can until we see what the law of nature is like – exactly what it is like, and further to see that it controls us, forces us to be like this, forces things to happen like this. We must look until we see that we are completely under the power of the law of nature. If we look closely enough, carefully enough, to see this, then it is not at all difficult to understand dhamma. When there is this law of nature that controls us, forces things to be a certain way or things to happen in a certain way, then life must respond to that, human beings must respond to that, and that response is called duty (in Thai it is called naatii ^{หน้าที่} which translates as duty). In India even way before the Buddha, when people first became intelligent to understand this duty of life they called it dhamma, so the word dhamma is very ancient, going way back into the beginnings of Indian civilisation. They have known this word, dhamma or duty, this necessary response of life especially of the human being, to the power of the law of nature. We can't really say who the first human being was that came to understand this word duty or dhamma, but there had to be someone who observed nature very carefully until they realised there was this duty. Someone, somewhere, first understood the duty, and understood it so well that they saw that without doing this duty we must die. Since then this understanding of duty has been passed along, and it has developed until the time of the Buddha when the understanding of dhamma or duty was taken to its highest level and has not been improved upon since. This understanding of dhamma or duty has been developing with humanity for a long time, and it's the thing that must be done or otherwise we will die. So dhamma, or duty, is something we have to have, we must have dhamma in the sense of being the duty. If we ask “who established setup or laid down this duty?”, we can answer according to the various

approaches we already have. In the theistic religions then we must say that God established this duty, it was God who laid down the duty.

But in Buddhism we just say that nature, that dhamma, is what set forth or established this duty. Please don't fall into any arguments or start fighting about who established this duty. We, all of us, just need to study and come to understand this duty. For those who like to say that God is the one who laid down the duty it is fine, but we would suggest to you that in saying so one ought to understand that it is the law of nature that is God or what is meant by God here is the law of nature.

In Buddhism this ("it is the law of nature that is God or what is meant by God here is the law of nature") is quite clear, that duty comes from this law of nature, that it is the law of nature that stipulates that if this duty is not done then we die. Without duty it must die, this is something we can observe anywhere we look. In people, if there isn't any duty then people die. Or in animals if there isn't duty then they die. Even in trees if trees don't perform their duty then they die. Even in the smallest living thing, even in a single cell, if that cell doesn't do its duty it dies. So from the simplest forms of life to the most complex, all life must have duty, without this duty life dies. This duty, this dhamma, is absolutely necessary, so necessary there's no questioning of this fact once we have observed it. Every cell in the body has its duty, and then when the cells gather together into groups each of these groups has its collective duty, so when the cells together form the blood, the muscles, the bones all of these have their duties, and if these duties are not performed then the cells die, the groups of cells die, the body dies. Groups of cells come together and form hands, feet, ears and all the parts and organs of the body, and each of these has its duty. If these duties are not done, if these duties don't exist, then each cell, group, part, organ dies. Life in all aspects, on all levels, from the basic little parts of the cell, and even the little ingredients of the cells – the atoms, nucleus and all that, the groups of cells, the organs that are collected

together to form a living being, a life, all of these must perform their duty. Life must do its duty or it will die. Without dhamma life dies, we cannot survive without dhamma.

Here we can distinguish two aspects or two levels of duty; there is the physical duty and there is spiritual duty. For the body and all its parts they all have their physical duty, their physical kind of duty. And then within the mind, in the mind's ability to know the truth, there is the spiritual duty.

Some people would also add mental – physical, mental and spiritual. But really what we call mental, all the mental processes, all the things psychology studies, all of these are connected with the body, closely associated with the body, concerned with the body, so what is generally called mental can be included in the physical. But then there is the spiritual which is distinct, so there are these two kinds of duty, the physical duty and the spiritual duty, both of these duties must be done correctly. If these two kinds of duty are not performed correctly then the living being dies. We need to pay attention to and study these two kinds of study and learn how to do them correctly. It's quite marvellous that the physical duty never stops, the physical duties have to be done constantly – all the time. When it comes to the mind the spiritual duty is different. Sometimes we can take a rest, sometimes it stops, spiritual duty doesn't have to be done constantly. There are these two kinds of duty for us to know, the physical and the spiritual, something that you have heard about already that is the Noble Eightfold Path. This is the spiritual duty and we will discuss this later when we discuss the 4 Noble Truths.

In Pali there is another word sammada. “Da” means state of being, and “samma” means correct, appropriate or proper, so this word means the state of being correct, the state of correctness, the state of propriety - of

rightness. Both duties must have this quality of rightness, this state of being correct, both the physical duty and the spiritual duty must have this quality of sammada, this state of being correct, and then life doesn't have to die. If both these duties are right then there is no death. When we say right or correct, then we ask right according to what, right in regards to what? We can say that the physical duty is right according to the things we need to get. Physically there are things we need, there are legitimate needs so it must be correct according to those needs. Or we could put it more simply:-

It must be right so that there is no death. It's right if we don't die, that is the physical duty.

The spiritual duty must be right regarding Nibbana. The spiritual duty has to fit with Nibbana, it has to be correct in terms of Nibbana – Nibbana to not die spiritually. There is physical death and physical survival, and there is spiritual death and spiritual survival. To be correct regarding Nibbana is to live spiritually. When businessmen are correct they get money, when politicians are correct they get power, and when Buddhists are correct they get Nibbana. Ask yourselves what you want. When you come to study and practice Buddhism, that means you ought to want the thing that Buddhism has to offer, and the only thing that Buddhism has to offer is Nibbana, the quenching of all problems.

This word Nibbana is a very difficult one to explain. Many of you have heard the word before, either the Pali word, Nibbana, or the Sanskrit word, Nirvana the same word in two different languages. Some of you maybe have even heard that Nibbana or Nirvana means death. Please be very careful to understand this important word correctly, we need to get the correct meaning of the word nibbana.

We can say that Nibbana is the quenching of everything undesirable, the quenching of everything inappropriate. Literally the word Nibbana

means “cool”. It’s a quenching of heat with the heat being quenched in the way that thirst is quenched with a drink of water so that there is coolness. We are talking specifically about mental coolness spiritual coolness, we are not talking about death. Actually death isn’t coolness, death is cold. If the body was cool that’s very nice. So coolness, nibbana, has nothing to do with death, it’s just a quenching of all heat, all problems spiritually.

Now we can come to the fourth aspect of the meaning of Nature, of Dhamma. It is the result according to how the duty has been done, the result in line with the way the duty has been performed. And the most complete and perfect result is simply nibbana, the perfect result is perfect nibbana, the cooling of all problems, of all heat, of all strife, of all suffering within the mind.

This is the result that Buddhism is offering specifically however it’s possible to speak on lower more mundane levels if we wish. We can use the word result in terms of money, for example, if our economic duty is done properly, or physical health, when those duties are done properly. And family security when those duties are done properly. And happiness when one does that duty correctly. These mundane, these ordinary worldly meanings of result can also be used. But the highest meaning of the result according to the doing of duty is nibbana. When all problems are quenched, the mind has no problems - no heat. We probably can use the word “grace” in this context. In Buddhism we talk only about Nature, but in the West (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) we can say that this is grace that comes from God. Here using the word result is something that comes straight from Nature, the result comes out of the law of nature if the way duty is done is according to that law. So we’re unable to use the word “grace” here. If we can put God aside for now and see that if the duty is done correctly the result will happen immediately – naturally. There is no need for any grace.

So now we are able to understand the four meanings of the word Nature or Dhamma. There is the body of nature, the law of nature, the duty according to the law, and the result according to the duty, all four of these together make up Nature. And we can take this to mean the ultimate truth or absolute truth of all nature.

So we've used up more than an hour to discuss these meanings of nature because if we understand nature in these ways it is quite easy to understand the Noble Truths. If we don't understand nature, if we don't take a good look at nature, it will be very difficult to understand the Noble Truths and most people will give up before they actually understand them. So we have taken the time to look at nature like this, look at the ultimate truth of nature because this is an excellent introduction to the Noble Truths. With this introduction it should not be difficult for us as we go on to explore the Noble Truths. So we've used up more than an hour, and that is all of today's talk with this introduction. We'll carry on later and for now we'll stop.

MEANING OF NOBLE TRUTHS - 1

(Start of [Meaning-2a](#))

Last time we spoke of some introductory matters regarding the Noble Truths, this time we'll speak about the Noble Truths, the Ariya Sacca, directly. Something of great importance that we must examine from the start are the words "Ariya Sacca" themselves. Most of you have only heard the words "Noble Truths", and for us there's still quite a bit of doubt whether or not the words "Noble Truths" are a sufficient and proper translation of Ariya Sacca. So the first thing we should do is look at these words.

The word “noble” could mean something like excellent, exalted, honourable or respectable, however the word “Ariya” has the meaning “to be without enemies”. So do these two words correspond sufficiently? When we speak of the Ariya Sacca we should understand “Ariya” in the sense of “being without enemies”. Here enemies is meant in the broadest sense, being free of things which aren’t right for us, things which are undesirable, so we’ll be looking at the Noble Truths in this way.

The Ariya Sacca includes within them paticcasamuppáda. Both aspects of paticcasamuppáda, the paticcasamuppáda which describes the arising of suffering as well as the paticcasamuppada or paticcadirota(?) which explains the ceasing of that suffering, both of these are included within the Ariya Sacca. The first two Noble Truths correspond to the dependent origination of suffering, and then the second two Noble Truths correspond to the dependent cessation of suffering. The Ariya Sacca include both kinds of Dependent Origination, the dependent origination of suffering and/or dukkha and the dependent cessation of that dukkha, both of these of course have to do with dukkha, it is purely a matter of dukkha and the ending of dukkha. So this is what the real meaning of enemies is – the real enemy is suffering or dukkha. From the beginning we should fully understand what is meant by dukkha. The Pali word, dukkha, might be unfamiliar to most of you, and even those of you who have heard it before may not understand all of its connotations and meanings. In Pali this word, dukkha, means much more than suffering. One level of its meaning is pain, simply pain and suffering. But the second meaning is ugliness, to be completely ugly – thoroughly ugly. And then the third meaning is to be absolutely empty of any substance.

So there are these three meanings included within the word dukkha. All three of these meanings correspond exactly with the word enemy, these are three aspects of being our enemy. As for pain and suffering it is

quite obvious how they are a kind of enemy. But ugliness that may not be so apparent how ugliness is our enemy. We can see that in every conditioned thing, every concocted thing, has a quality of ugliness to it. Without any exception even the things we want so badly such as wealth, happiness or beauty, even these things have a quality of ugliness to them because there is so much trouble, so much difficulty and hassle, involved in getting these things and maintaining these things that within them there is an inherent ugliness. So this is how the second meaning or second aspect of dukkha is an enemy because it brings us so much trouble. All the things that we find lovely and attractive, these things have tremendous power over us, and they have a tremendous pull. Things like wealth, power, fame, sex and beauty all these things we want so badly; we spend so much time and effort pursuing these things, there is this inherent ugliness in them that they bring us so much trouble, they make us so tired, they take up so much of our time. Although they seem so desirable, attractive and wonderful, all these things are constantly changing, they are absolutely unstable that they deceive us, trick us, they are never what they quite pretend to be. And so there is this quality of ugliness, in all conditioned things there is this impermanence and in that impermanence is this ugliness, this inherent difficulty and hassle involved with them. They are inherent enemies because of this ugliness, not because of the things themselves but because of the ugliness. If we look closely for ourselves we can see that the things we love the most are the things that torment us the most, if we look like this we can see quite clearly that these things are actually our enemies.

As for the third meaning we have that dukkha means being empty of any real substance. From the derivation of this word, kha can mean air or space – meaning in this case an emptiness – that there is nothing in there that we can hang on to that we can cling to. This quality of being empty of any real substance that we can hang on to, hold on to, this is an enemy as well. Take a look at this. When we fall in love with something that is empty of any real substance, how does that torture

and torment the mind? What kind of pain and suffering does that bring us? So this aspect, this emptiness of any substance, is dukkha – is an enemy.

So the word, dukkha, encompasses all three of these meanings, the meaning that it tortures and torments us, second that hidden within it is this profound ugliness, and third absolutely empty and void of any real substance, any true essence. These three meanings together mean much more than just the word suffering so we should be very careful to understand dukkha fully. Or if we want to use the word, suffering, we should understand suffering to mean all these three aspects of dukkha. So when dukkha has these three characteristics, these three aspects, then we can't help but call it undesirable. This dukkha is the thing that is most undesirable of all, all these aspects of dukkha are things that are undesirable in every way, absolutely thoroughly undesirable.

The word, ariya, means to go away from enemies or to escape from enemies so ariya is that which is truly desirable in all respects. Dukkha is that which is undesirable, and the ariya sacca are those things which are truly desirable. This is because the ariya sacca take us away from all these enemies. We told you the other day that all of Buddhism is contained within the ariya sacca. Sacca means truth or reality so ariya sacca means the truth that frees us from all enemies, the reality that allows us to escape from all enemies, that is from all suffering. The ariya sacca is the new life, the life that is completely free of all dukkha; this is how we should understand the words “Noble Truths”, the truths that free us from everything undesirable, everything dangerous.

What we've said so far should make it obvious that there is nothing pessimistic in talking about dukkha, as we have been doing. In fact, it's quite optimistic because the way we talk about dukkha is always with the sense of defeating it, escaping from it, being free of it, being

victorious over it. There's nothing frightening or fearful or depressing in speaking of dukkha in this way because we don't get lost in it and we don't give up to it, we just learn about it in order to be free of it. So there is nothing pessimistic about the Ariya Sacca. Rather it is optimistic because it shows us a way of living, it reveals to us the possibility, the potential, the duty to be free of suffering, and this gives us energy, courage and confidence to practise in order to be free of all enemies.

Next we'll look at the characteristics or symptoms of this thing which is called dukkha. The first characteristic is a very natural one, one that happens naturally for all living things. These are the characteristics of birth, decay, disease and death - birth illness ageing and death. These are things which happen naturally for all of us, and in these things there is no inherent problem. But there are many people who foolishly say birth, ageing illness and death are suffering, are dukkha, but this isn't really true. If we're trapped by our concepts of birth, ageing illness and death, then this is great suffering. But we can transcend birth, ageing illness and death, we can be beyond these natural conditions, and then they aren't any problem for us. We can turn them into problems if we are stupid but it is quite simple to not be any problems or cause any suffering for us. These are the first characteristics of birth, ageing illness and death which are for many people characteristics of dukkha. If you ever meet a Buddhist who tells you that Buddhism teaches not to be born, not get old, not get sick, and not die, then that person really does not know what they are talking about; they are just repeating words that they have heard from someone else or read in a book. They have never experienced the Buddhist teachings themselves. Most correctly we should say that Buddhism teaches that birth, ageing illness and death are no problem, these things are no problem for those who understand correctly. We tell you this in advance just so you won't be confused by certain things that you might hear from time to time. So we can summarise these aspects of dukkha by saying that the point of

these is to be free of the naturally occurring enemies that we call birth, ageing, illness and death.

Now we'll mention some of the symptoms or conditions of dukkha, we'll mention them one by one. First is sokha or sorrow, the second is bodhideva often translated as lamentation, a spiritual crying, the word dukkha, physical pain, the word domenasa which is mental pain or misery, upayasa which is grief or despair. These are some of the forms that dukkha can take, and the Buddha has listed them as examples, not an all-inclusive list, so there is sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental misery and grief. These help us to understand what dukkha feels like, the conditions of dukkha. Next are aspects of dukkha as far as they arise in craving (the naturally occurring kinds of dukkha. These are the dukkha that specifically arise from craving, from foolish desire. The first is experiencing things we don't like, having a craving for certain things we don't like is one kind of suffering that comes from craving. Then there is being separated from the things we love and like, this is another kind of pain and misery that comes from our craving. Then last is not getting the things we want. These three things, experiencing the unloved, being separated from the loved, and not getting the things we want, are aspects of dukkha arising from our foolish desires, our blind craving. So you are to work on this until you understand it for yourselves, experience – feel it for yourselves within, how experiencing the things we don't like, being separated from the things we do like, and not getting what we want, how all three of these are dukkha, how all three of these are enemies to us.

Then there is one more, the most profound of dukkha, which the Buddha said was the summary, which comes down to the bottom line of all dukkha, upadana. Upadana is foolish attachment, to grasp and cling to things foolishly and ignorantly. The Buddha said that in short all dukkha comes down to attachment in life, from attaching, grasping and clinging to life. Life can be analysed into 5 basic atoms or functions

- body, feeling, perception, thought and consciousness. These 5 aggregates of life or functions of life, if any of them collectively or individually are clung to then there is dukkha. The Buddha said in short that all dukkha is attaching to the 5 aggregates of life, the 5 functions of life. So we must beg all of you to do your best to understand these 5 khandas or aggregates, these are the aggregates of life, the states that make up life— body, feeling, perceptions, thoughts and consciousness; these 5 together make up life. Please do your very best to understand these, to see them clearly.

The first aggregate is rupa, often translated as form or more simply body. Rupa is all the physical, all the material parts of life, all the material components are rupa, sometimes we can say corporeal or bodily aspects. In the body there is a nervous system, there are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body meaning skin with the sense of touch, and the mind sense or the heart. This is the real meaning of rupa. In one sense it is just the superficial aspect of life, the lowest part of life, but it still requires great attention. It's very important because the body, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, this is the foundation for our life, and so is the basis of all dukkha. The word rupa has a very interesting meaning for us, it means something which breaks easily or something which is fragile, delicate. And also this implies that it breaks all the time, it falls apart ordinarily. This rupa can mean fragile, easily broken. If we go and take this rupa which breaks so easily, this very fragile body, as being I or mine, take a look and see how utterly foolish that is, how crazy it is, how insane, to take something which is always falling apart to be the self, to be I, to be mine. And then see what great suffering is involved when we take the body to be I, to be mine.

Next we come to the mental aggregates, the first one is physical, and the rest are mental. When we have bodies with nervous systems and the sense organs, then there will result certain mental functions, mental things, which are the mental aggregates. The first of these is vedana,

translated as feelings, but one must be very careful to understand the special meaning of vedana which is much more subtle than what many people take to mean feelings. Vedana is the very simple, though sometimes very powerful, feeling of pleasure or happiness towards certain sense experiences, or displeasure even pain (dukkha) regarding other experiences, and then there is a third kind of vedana which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, we can't really describe whether it is pleasant or unpleasant but it is a definite kind of feeling. These three kinds of vedana are not emotions, it's a very simple or even primitive kind of feeling, but they are very powerful and have a tremendous influence on life. But no matter what, all these vedana, whether pleasant or unpleasant or undescribable (cannot be described), all of them are concocted, they are impermanent things that have been concocted out of our basic sensual experience so there is nothing in them that we can really depend on. So if we attach to these very fleeting feelings as I or mine then there will be dukkha. This is the second aggregate, vedana. We ought to understand the vedana as the things that deceive us most of all, there is nothing that tricks us like the vedana. Pleasant feelings deceive us into falling in love, as soon as something is pleasant we like it and we fall in love with it. Things that are unpleasant deceive us into disliking, into anger, into hatred. And then the undescribable kind of vedana deceive us into worrying, doubting and wondering about that thing. So the vedana are things that are constantly deceiving us, this is how we ought to understand them. Once we see how the vedana deceive us and make fools of us, then we can see what enemies they are, and how they cause such suffering. These three kinds of feelings give rise, they stir up, or they trick us into the three kinds of defilements. The first kind of vedana, this satisfying, pleasing, nice feeling, this stirs up the first kind of defilement of raga, lust, or we can say lobha, greed. Greed and lust are towards these satisfying lovely kind of feelings so because of these pleasant feelings it makes us want to pull things in, suck things in. The second kind of vedana, the unpleasant, the disagreeable, the not very nice kind of feeling, this leads to the defilement of hatred, dosa, or anger, kodha; this unpleasantness or disagreeableness makes us want to push things away, knock them

away, even destroy them - kill them. And the third kind of vedana leads to doubt, to worry, to confusion where the mind runs in circles around whatever it is. If something has this undescrivable feeling, we really cannot say whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, then this really confuses the mind and the mind spins round and round whatever it is. The three kind of vedana lead to these three defiled reactions of trying to suck in, trying to knock away – to destroy, or spinning around in very confused circles. How the inherent dukkha of all this, the dukkha of sucking in, the dukkha of knocking away, and the dukkha of running around in idiotic circles, how these three conditions are our enemies is something that must become apparent to us. All the problems in the world can in fact be traced to the vedana, the tremendous power of the vedana to deceive us gives rise to all the problems that exist in this world. So these vedana are dukkha, there is tremendous ugliness in them, so we ought to observe them carefully in order to understand how the vedana are our enemies. This is the second aggregate of life to which we so often cling, the second enemy.

The next aspect of dukkha, the next enemy, is called “sanna”. This third aggregate can be translated as perception, but don’t just grab onto the English word; it’s important to understand how this works. One’s sanna is the result of vedana, or we can say vedana is the source of sanna. Whenever there is an experience, there is a feeling towards that experience, then there will naturally be sanna regarding that experience. Sanna is to regard the experience in one way or another, to regard it as something. This means it could be regarded as beautiful or ugly, it is a kind of discrimination the mind will naturally do towards anything that is felt. Once this happens, once the mind discriminates or perceives it as beautiful or ugly, as tall or short or whatever, then once this is done if it does firmly this becomes memory, that thing, that label - that discrimination, is stuck away in memory. And then every time we feel something, there is a regarding of things in terms of past experience and so we take this to be man, woman, dog, cat and so on, regarding things as this or as that; this is what sanna is about. Part of

sanna is memory but the important thing is that sanna regards things as something specific – particular. This is dukkha, an enemy for us, because it is always done under the influence of ignorance, regarding things as they really are but as they aren't. For example things that are dukkha are regarded as happiness, things that are impermanent, constantly changing, are regarded as permanent, and things which are selfless, not self, are taken to be self - are taken to be egos. And so because of perceiving things incorrectly, misperceiving them, sanna is a lot of dukkha and is our enemy. We ought to understand sanna as attachment. Sanna is very similar to attachment, because once we regard something as this or that, then we are generally attaching to it – it must be like this it must be like that. So every time we go and discriminate, and regard something as beautiful, ugly, pleasant, unpleasant, happy sad, then we go and attach to that, so with sanna there is almost always this attachment. And this becomes even clearer, when we see how so often we perceive things as being my husband, my wife, my this or my that; so this perceiving things in this way is basically the same as attachment. So we can see the dukkha of this of always taking things to be this or that, especially when it is taken to be mine or me. Then they become very heavy, they become enemies.

Meaning of Noble Truths 2

(Start of [Meaning – 2b](#))

Even regarding the earth as earth and the sky as sky isn't quite correct. We perceive them, we regard them in one way, but they don't really work exactly as we perceive them. They don't turn out as we perceive them. This is a lot of dukkha for us. We are always taking things to be a certain way, and they are never that way so this is a real problem for us. Sanna is very broad, we are perceiving things constantly but almost never as they really are. But no matter how much dukkha sanna is, it is

something we just have to have; sanna is something we can't do without. Sanna is necessary for our lives, to perceive as Mr A, Mrs B, Mr C, Mrs D, or to perceive this is Suan Mokh, or perceive things as America, Australia, England and so on, all this kind of perceiving things in this way, all this sanna, is necessary. But none of it is really true, none of it will have happened the way we have perceived it. So we must understand in this way, to see how the perceptions, how sanna can blind us, how it deceives us and tricks us, and how that is an enemy; how frightening all these perceptions are. A very simple example of the problem of sanna – the difficulty with sanna – is with our memories. We try hard to remember things, we try to store up and protect our memories, but then so often when we need to remember something we can't. This is how undependable sanna can be, what a hassle it can be, it is not the way we want it to be. We want to remember but we can't. This is a very simple example of the dukkha of sanna.

But sanna is really much more than memory. In fact the absence of sanna is not really memory, memory is more of a result. We remember the things we have regarded. First there must be this discrimination, regarding something as this or that – as man, woman, tall, short, good, bad etc. Once we discriminate and regarded it in this certain way then we store that as memory, but the real important thing to see is this discriminating, a kind of labelling, that is the essence of sanna. And we can never really depend on it. Things are never the way we regard them so there is always a kind of frustrating undependable dukkha to it all.

The biggest, most enormous kind of sanna, as well as the lowest most foul and despicable sanna, is that of atta-sanna, perception of self or regarding things as self (atta means self). This is the biggest problem, or this is the whole problem, of sanna, that we are always taking things to be self, perceiving things as selves, separate identities, and regarding them accordingly. We actually believe that I'm a self, this is self, that's a self, all these selves all over the place, and this becomes the

foundation for all the rest of sanna. Descartes came up with some line “cogito ergo sum” - I think therefore I am; there was nothing really original about this. Much earlier when mankind began to perceive things as self, then just to take the things that I did as self just because I think is to regard the thinking as self. So Descartes was just putting into words something that had been going on for thousands of years - regarding things as self. This is the whole problem of sanna, this is what makes it so heavy. This is how sanna can bind us, claw us and torment us because we are always regarding things as self. Mind and body, this is mental and material combination that makes up life. It can experience, it can feel, it can think without there being any need for any self. Please don't believe Descartes, because we think there must be an ego or self, that I must exist. It is a very natural process that the mind and body experiences, feels and thinks, it doesn't depend at all on any kind of ego or self. But because the way we do experience and think, because of the ignorance, we assume that there must be a self in there. And so we perceive things as selves, and this bites us, this causes all kinds of troubles and hassles on life. In fact there is no real self or ego there, so there is no need to believe what Descartes says. We shouldn't assume that just because we think there must be a self, we should look at thought and see how it really works before we make assumptions. Sanna is the third aggregate we cling to, the third kind of natural function that we turn into an enemy because of our own misunderstanding especially this misunderstanding of self that things are selves.

The fourth aggregate of life is called sankhara, in Thai สังขาร, in Pali sankhara. Sankhara, as the fourth aggregate, specifically emphasises thinking or thought, and we call it sankhara-concept, but the word, sankhara, has a very broad meaning. Sankhara means conditioning, and there are these three aspects to it. There is the one who conditions the conditioner - the causal aspect of conditioning, then there is the thing that is conditioned - the conditioned, the effect aspect of conditioning, and then there is the process of conditioning – the conditioning itself.

So these three aspects, the interconnected interrelated aspects of sankhara:- the conditioner, the conditioned and the conditioning. Whenever there is a living body with feeling and perception then there will be all three of these aspects of conditioning going on all the time. But what is the real, the most important aspect for us is that when this conditioning is happening it is constantly conditioning thought, all kinds of thoughts and ideas, so sankhara has a very broad meaning – it applies everywhere. But here we are using it in a more limited sense – sankhara-khanda, that whenever there is life, feeling and perception there will be this conditioning of the mind, this stirring up, this concocting of the mind which is essentially the conditioning of thought. Then once this thinking takes place we go and regard it as being self - being I, we think about things in terms of I. We think that I am, I exists. So this is the fourth enemy, the fourth thing that bites us. It is quite pathetic in a way that in Thailand, and maybe other countries as well, the word sankhara is only understood as meaning the body. For many Thais if they say the word sangkaan (สังขาร), they just mean the body. This isn't completely wrong but it is not very correct either. Sankhara in the broadest sense includes the body, but there is much more to it than that. But to think that sankhara is just the body is to miss the most important aspect of it. We can understand sankhara in terms of things being stirred up or the creation and dissolution of things. Things being created, then they dissolve, this arising and passing away of things is the essential process of sankhara. A word that can help us understand this is the word “conceive”. Conceive we use when we conceive thoughts. But we also use it when the sperm fertilises the egg, and then a new physical life is conceived. Sankhara can be understood as this, the starting of new things, the giving birth to new things, so because of all this sankhara, thought is constantly formed in the mind, and then this constant activity of sankhara keeps the mind spinning around, keeps it very busy, and that can be a lot of dukkha. For the ordinary Thai in the street, in the colloquial usage of the word sankhara, if we say we put out the sankhara it means to die. In English we would say to pass away, they would say to stop sangkaan, to put out the sankhara –meaning death. But this isn't what it really means. To put out or to

quench or extinguish the sangkaan means to just stop all the conditioning and concocting of the mind. Concocting is very tiresome, very troublesome, it doesn't allow the mind to have any peace. To extinguish this concocting of the mind has nothing to do with dying, if we understand it correctly. When all that sankhara, conditioning and concocting, is going on, the mind can never be at peace, but to extinguish that is very cool, very peaceful very open and free. So the sankhara, this concocting of the mind, this is the fourth aspect of life which can cause us so many traumas.

When this concocting, sankhara, is going on, then it is never peaceful. But we should understand here that when we talk about sankhara like this we mean the sankhara that is the result of ignorance. When things are misunderstood there is a concocting of the mind that inevitably leads to dukkha. When this ignorant concocting of the mind, when this sankhara ceases, then there is great peace, there is a very calm and spacious joyfulness, and so a very common saying in Thailand “สงบเสถียรของ sankharas ที่มีความสุข” (wrong phrase) the calming of the sankharas is bliss, the calming of the concocting is happiness. Whenever this concocting of the mind through the power of ignorance calms down - quiets down, then there is joy. If that concocting gets stirred up again through the power of ignorance, then the joy disappears and there is dukkha. There is another phrase:- sankhara parama dukkha, concocting is the supreme torment. This stirring-up, this concocting, spinning around and grinding of the mind is the ultimate dukkha. But always understand that this concocting comes from ignorance and misunderstanding, if there is correct understanding there is no sankhara; the mind is not concocted. There are just natural processes of life taking place, and that is not what we mean by sankhara. If in addition to the natural life processes which can include thought, there is stirring-up, there is busy, concocting of the mind then there is dukkha. This is the fourth aggregate. At every funeral ceremony in Thailand, at every kind of ceremony - funerals memorial services etc., the monks always chant “stop the concocting and there is happiness, the supreme

happiness”. This is repeated over and over again, the average Thai hears this hundreds of times in their lives - it is being repeated all over the place, but unfortunately it has almost no result. People are hearing it all the time – “stopping the concocting is supreme happiness”, but it is quite pitiful that nobody seems to hear or listen. It’s like playing a flute for rhinoceros, or playing a flute for turtles, it just never gets through. So please give adequate attention to this sankhara, this concocting of the mind, whenever this happens there will be dukkha and life will not be at peace. This sankhara is inevitably the result of ignorance, if there is correct knowledge or understanding this sankhara, as we’re using it here, will not happen. It’s only the result of ignorance, of looking at life stupidly, then this concocting of the mind takes place. Whenever the mind is concocted by ignorance, there will occur all kinds of foolish thoughts, and so all of this becomes an enemy for me. When the mind has been concocted then the me exists, I exist, and all this concocting is a problem for me, it’s my enemy. So we ought to be very careful about it all.

The next and final aggregate is called vinnana, in Thai they call it winnan (วิญญาน). This can be a tricky word because it has been given many different meanings. Many Thais think winnan means spirit, and this is related to the Hindu definition of vinnana, which existed before Buddhism, and this definition meant soul or spirit that spun around within many births, within many reincarnations. In pre-Buddhist thought, the thing that they thought would leave this body when it died and be born in another body – be reincarnated, that thing was called the vinnana. That’s not the understanding of Buddhism, that’s not what vinnana means in the Buddha’s teaching. In Buddhism vinnana is the thing or function that causes consciousness of various things. Whenever there is consciousness of something it happens through vinnana. There are six kinds of vinnana – eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind vinnana. Whenever we are conscious of anything through eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind, that is through the functioning of vinnana. It’s the very basic knowing or consciousness or awareness of

something – of anything. There are two levels to this. The first is when the eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body receives some stimulus and there is consciousness of this stimulus; that is the first level of vinnana. Then mind-consciousness knows the meaning of that stimulus. Then it is known directly in the mind. First there is the outer-sense kind of consciousness, consciousness of the senses being stimulated by this thing, and then there is mind-consciousness which knows the meaning of it. This leads to the feelings towards the thing, vedana, then the perceptions and all the sankhara that we have talked about. This is the fifth aggregate, and it is happening everywhere, wherever there is consciousness of anything there is vinnana. In Thailand the Hindu teachings came here first, way before Buddhism came. When the Hindu or Brahmanistic teachings came, they brought this idea, this teaching, of vinnana in the sense of the soul or spirit that inhabited all kinds of things, not just people but trees and rocks – all over the place. All things had this spirit, and when the body died, that thing died, vinnana would go to be reincarnated. This is a Hindu teaching which existed in Thailand long before Buddhism came, and it was very firmly and deeply implanted in the Thai religious culture. So later when Buddhism came, everybody already had this Hindu understanding of vinnana, and so many people have been unable over the centuries to understand the Buddhist teaching of vinnana. It must be understood in light of the central teaching of Buddhism, anatta, that is that in life there is no self, no soul and no spirit in the Hindu sense; Buddhism denies that there is any such thing (self, soul or spirit). So the meaning of vinnana is the reaction when a sight, sound, taste whatever stimulates the respective sense organ, and then there arises this consciousness. So we must discriminate between the two kinds of vinnana, the Hindu teaching that came first and the Buddhist teaching that came later. If we don't discriminate between the two, we will be very confused.

In the Buddhist scriptures, in one of the discourses of the Majjhima Nikaya (MN 38 <https://suttacentral.net/en/mn38>), it is recorded how one of the monks who had been staying with the Buddha had confused

this issue of vinnana. This one monk was named which means the son of the fisherman; his name was Sati the fisherman's son. This monk had the opinion or the understanding that just this vinnana thinks, speaks, dies and goes to be reborn somewhere else. He was going around saying this, that it was vinnana that thinks, speaks and is reborn somewhere. Some heard him say this, they reported this to the Buddha, and the Buddha called Sati in for a little talk. The Buddha asked

“what is your understanding of vinnana?”. The monk told him and the Buddha basically told him that you've got it all wrong. In this teaching, the Buddha's teaching, vinnana is something that arises right here as a reaction to stimulus of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Whenever there is a sense stimulus, there arises vinnana. According to this monk vinnana was some everlasting thing that was always there, and this is directly against what the Buddha was teaching. These were quite strong words of the Buddha to show that this monk, who had been living with the Buddha, had got such an important point completely wrong. It was a bit embarrassing for that monk, and he became very depressed. This shows that even people living with the Buddha himself had trouble and could confuse this point of vinnana. What's very important is to see that vinnana is not some lasting substance as it is understood just about everywhere - this is the common understanding, but that vinnana just arises, it is just awareness that arises with the stimulation of the senses. In many religions, just about all religions such as Hebrew that existed before Christianity or you can find it in Greek philosophy and all over the place, you find teaching of the spirit or soul, in fact for most of you sitting here there is probably this kind of understanding of belief in a self, in a spirit or a soul of some kind. Everyone is free to think as they wish, but please don't bring that idea into Buddhism. Don't apply the word spirit or soul to the word vinnana in Buddhism. Vinnana is merely the basic consciousness or awareness of the sense-stimulus. Because if we confuse this issues it will be very, very difficult for us to ever understand religion. This whole question of vinnana, and all the very many interpretations given to it, make it very difficult for us to really understand spirituality. If we don't understand

vinnana correctly, then it is impossible to ever quench dukkha, we will always be tormented by dukkha as long as we misunderstand vinnana. If we take this vinnana to be some kind of spirit, then it will be like some kind of ghost that will keep haunting us - tormenting us. It's necessary if we would like to free ourselves of dukkha to understand - to find out - what vinnana really is, how it really works. But for most of the time it is deceiving us – tricking us, and we are constantly taking vinnana to be I. This quality of awareness that is with us right now, we are identifying with it for the most part - I see I hear I smell I taste I touch I know. All this attaching to vinnana is a very deep-rooted habit, and this habit turns vinnana into an enemy. It makes vinnana bite us, makes us suffer.

This is why I requested earlier that you try your best to know – to understand - these 5 khandas. If we don't understand the 5 khandas then there is no way we can understand Buddhism. If we haven't got to know the 5 khandas Buddhism will always remain a mystery to us. It is absolutely essential that we start to understand them, otherwise we will keep taking them to be self – keep taking them to be I. Sometimes we cling to these 5 aggregates as I - and sometimes as mine, we cling to them as self or as belonging to self. Sometimes I am the body - sometimes it is my body, I am these feelings - sometimes it's my feelings, I am the perceptions - sometimes it's my perceptions, like this. Whenever we regard any of these khandas, any of these aggregates of life as I or mine, when we take them to be selves or belonging to selves like this, then it bites the mind, it inflicts dukkha on the mind. So it's crucial to understand these 5 khandas. If we really understand them – if we really see them as they are, we will see that they are not self, that none of these khandas or any combination of them or anything outside of them can be taken as I or mine. Only by knowing the khandas thoroughly can we understand Buddhism. Until this happens this will create endless problems for us, we will keep grabbing onto various aspects of life as I or mine, that will bite, and that turns life into our enemy.

And so this is why the Buddha said “.... (Pali)”, “if we speak concisely the five aggregates that are attached to are the essence of dukkha”. In short all dukkha comes down to these 5 aggregates when we cling to them. This means that the essence of dukkha is attachment, or the Pali word is upadana, whenever there is upadana in any of these 5 functions of life then there will be dukkha. He used the word “pancha” which means 5, “upadana khandas” – the aggregates of clinging – the aggregates that are clung to – attached to. This is the essence of all dukkha. “....” All dukkha comes down to these 5 khandas that are clung to. The key word here is the word upadana, it is not so much the aggregates themselves, but this upadana. In Buddhism this can be a tricky word to understand so we will give the best definition we can of this. Upadana is to regard something according to the power of ignorance, whenever we regard something under the influence of ignorance that will be attachment - that regarding things through ignorance. This is attachment, and as soon as there is this regarding things ignorantly – foolishly or stupidly, then there must be dukkha.

The matter of the dukkha ariya-sacca isn't finished yet but the time is up so we will continue tomorrow.

Noble Truth of Dukkha -1

(Audio file [Dukkha3a](#))

We will be speaking about the matter of dukkha which we didn't finish yesterday. Allow us to emphasise that the special issue or the most important point in Buddhism is the one about atta and anatta, or self and not-self. If the 5 khandas, the 5 aggregates of life, are mixed up with upadana – with grasping and clinging, then there will be dukkha. If the khandas are seen correctly as anatta then

there won't be this dukkha. So all dukkha can be summarised as grasping and clinging at the 5 aggregates of life.

Now there are two things here that we should observe. First if there is just the mere khandas, just the khandas by themselves, without any attachment or upadana, then there is nothing tormenting about that, there's no dukkha experienced regarding them. However there is a quality or characteristic of dukkha within the 5 khandas, this is an important thing to understand. Because each of these 5 khandas is impermanent, unstable and constantly changing, that has a quality of dukkha to it, however this quality of dukkha does not torment. However if there is grabbing or clinging to these 5 khandas, then because of that attachment these 5 khandas will be a torment for the one who grabs at them, whoever or whatever is grabbing at them, or we could say their owner will suffer because of that grasping and clinging. But if it is just the 5 khandas then there is no experience of torment or suffering there is just the characteristic of dukkha that is inherent in all conditioned things. For example with the natural conditions of birth, age, illness and death, these in themselves are not inherently suffering. When nothing is attaching to birth, age, illness and death as my birth, my age, my illness and my death, then there is just the characteristic of dukkha in birth, age, illness and death, but as soon as something grabs on as my birth, my age, my illness and my death, because of that upadana then birth, age, illness and death become a source of torment and suffering. So birth, age, illness and death are not in themselves suffering but they do have this characteristic of dukkha. So if we are stupid enough to take them as I or mine, then this becomes suffering for the owner of that birth, age, illness and death. For then those naturally occurring conditions of sorrow, lamentation, pain, misery and grief are not necessarily suffering for one, only if these are not taken as my sorrow, my lamentation, my

pain, my misery or my grief, or they are not identified with as I am the sorrow, I am the lamentation, I am the pain, I am the misery or I am the grief. If this doesn't happen then they are just naturally-occurring things, and they do not torment – they do not cause suffering. But they do have this quality of dukkha. If one is foolish enough to take them as me, as mine, then they become a source of suffering. The suffering arises not from the things themselves but because this me gets involved – this me or mine that gets caught up and messes up these natural things. With the kinds of dukkha which arise from craving we experience things that we don't like, we are separated from the things we love - we like, and we desire things and don't get them. These are the kinds of dukkha that come from craving - from thirst, but notice in all of these things there is me. It's me that has the experiences that I don't like, it's me that is separated from the things that I love, it is me that has desires and doesn't get what I want. It's because the attachment comes into all this that these are suffering for the mind, because of that craving attachment always gets involved and so we attach to the experiencing, we attach to the separation, we attach to the non-getting, this is always dukkha for us; because of that craving there is always this attachment to it. If there was no “we” to experience, no “I” to experience, no “I” to be separated, no “I” to not get what it wants, there wouldn't be any torment – any pain – for the mind.

For example if we're with someone who is our enemy and then we think my enemy, then there is a lot of dukkha involved. If we meet someone who is our enemy but we forgot this person was our enemy, then there is no dukkha because there is no “my enemy” – no problem. Or with people we love, when we are thinking of “I love this or that or this person”, then there will be dukkha with the separation from (this or that or) this person. But if we have forgotten that we love this person or thing, then there is no dukkha

involved. Or not getting things we desire, this is only dukkha because of the “I” that desires. Because the “I” comes in, the mind comes in. There is the experiencing of what we don’t like, the separation from what we love and the not getting what we desire. It’s because this “I”, this mine, comes in; this experiencing what we don’t like, this separation from the beloved, this not getting what we want, these all occur because of attachment - this sense of I and mine, the feeling that things are I or mine, has arisen. Just if we meet my enemy that is suffering, or if we just hear the name of my enemy then that is suffering. Even to read their name in the newspaper that is suffering in the form of anger, hatred or aversion – or something like this; it makes the owner or person attaching suffer. If there’s no sense of this I or mine, then none of this occurs; there is just this quality or characteristic of dukkha. The thing itself, that person in themselves, is not suffering but it becomes suffering - the person becomes suffering because of the mind, the “I” or mine gets involved. Because of the attachment there is the mind or the owner experiencing suffering, but just the thing itself has only the characteristic of dukkha – and nothing more.

Let’s take another look at these 5 aggregates starting with rupa - the body or the bodily system. This body is just a bunch of processes or physical functions, and in the body there is constant change, there’s instability, there’s decay. So there is a quality of dukkha, but it’s just the body. The body is dukkha in itself or for itself, but that’s all that’s happening. If something does something to the body, it is just something happening to the body. But if attachment arises and it becomes my body, then it’s no longer something happening to the body, it’s something happening to me. This is where the suffering arises. For example, if a knife cuts a finger we don’t just see it as a knife cutting a finger, we always experience it as a knife cutting me. The knife cut me, not just

something happening to the body but something happening to me. Because the attachment, the I, the ego gets in there, it becomes suffering for the owner of the me and mine.

The body has a nervous system which is used to pick up or sense stimulation from the outside world. It's just a nervous system that functions in certain ways, it's just part of the body. We never see the nervous system as just part of the body - as just a nervous system; we don't see it as the nervous system picking up the stimuli or as sensitive to the stimuli, it's always my nervous system. I am aware of the stimuli, I am the one sensing things. It's not the nervous system seeing, hearing and so on, it's always I, I, I ... And so the sense activity becomes suffering, the central experience, the activity of the nervous system is turned into suffering.

If this sense of ego, this I and mine is too strong, it can be really ridiculous - it can lead to a kind of hysteria. For example, a child was scratched by a thorn and no blood came out in the least - there was just a scratch with no blood, but the child fainted. Another child was scratched by the thorn and thought nothing of it - just a scratch. But the first child, because of the sense of ego, thought it was going to die. There was really nothing there but because the attachment was so strong, the child thought it was going to die and fainted. The other child thought nothing of being scratched. This is an example when this ego is strong - too strong, it can lead to insanity. This is an example that happened to us. When I was young I was playing with a friend at the garbage pile. My friend picked up a paper that had some red ink on it. When he saw the red ink on his hand, he thought it was blood, and he went running home to his mother thinking he was going to die. I'm going to die, I'm going to die. The actual physical situation was just some red ink on the

hand, but because of ego coming in - because of attachment, it was turned into a lot of suffering.

In the rupa-khanda, the body aggregate, there is constant change, constant transformation. That's just what's happening to the body, that's just the body, and there's no suffering involved in that change, that decay whatever. But when we give it the meaning, if we buy into the meaning that is I or mine, then that change or decay of the body is suffering or torment for the one who attaches. The body itself is doing its natural thing but if ever this deeper meaning is given to things then that deeper meaning of I, of mine, is upadana and is inevitably suffering (it doesn't matter whether it's I or mine or both of these - the sense of I and the sense of mine). The body itself is not suffering.

Or we can talk about vedana-khanda, the feelings aggregate, feelings that are pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings, and feelings that are hard to determine. We never see the feelings as just a mechanism of the nervous system that has certain survival value, we can never see it this way. It always has to be I feel – I feel pleased, I feel displeased, my pleasure, my displeasure, my happiness, my pain. We aren't able to see it as merely a natural process of the nervous system, the vedana are things that just happen of themselves. We are unable to do that, we are always taking it as I or mine. We take something natural and ordinary and give it extra meaning, and this causes suffering. This attachment turns the feelings into a problem, we make all kinds of difficulties out of them; the feelings in themselves, the vedana in themselves, are no problem, because of this attachment, this I and mine, there is suffering - because of them. This I or mine is not real, it's not true, it's an illusion, but it's something that we feel so because we

feel this I and mine the feeling becomes suffering. But it doesn't have any real reality. There's no real I and mine there. With these feelings there's something that we give meaning to, and because of that meaning we take them to be I, take them to be mine. Sometimes our foolishness leads to a direct identity with pleasure, with pain and with that hard-to-determine kind of feelings. Other times stupidity takes the form of taking these things to be mine, my pleasure, my pain and so on. This I and mine is an illusion - is not true, but because we feel it and it's not true then there is suffering arising from it.

Then the next two khandas, sanna-khanda and sankhara-khanda, work in basically the same way. There is perception and then this is taken to be "I perceive", or it can be attached to as my perception. Then this becomes suffering. Things are perceived in a certain way then that is attached to, taken to be true, real and clung to. And this clinging is attachment. Then there is conception, things are conceived in a certain way. There is thought conception, things are thought of in this way or that way. Then there is attachment. There is I who conceives, the conceiver or thinker, or my thoughts, my conceptions and my ideas. Either way there is an illusion here, but we don't see the illusion we think it is actually true. The illusion of sanna and sankhara occurs, and it's attached to as I, as mine, attaching to the perceptions and conceptions. Then we have the result of that illusion, because of this attaching as I and mine there is suffering. Sanna-khanda and sankhara-khanda are turned into suffering by attachment.

Or with the fifth aggregate, vinnana or consciousness. If we take vinnana to be some kind of self or soul or spirit as in the Hindu belief, then that will always be suffering; to take vinnana to be a

self or soul will always lead to suffering. But if vinnana is realised as just being the consciousness of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and mental objects, if vinnana is known as just this consciousness, this direct this knowing of the sense objects then there is no suffering. If I comes in and turns it into “I am conscious” or “my consciousness” then we have gone back to that soul or spirit or self or whatever and that brings suffering. And then all kinds of problems happen, life becomes a mess because of this I, mine, self, soul ego or whatever we want to call it.

As we said earlier Thailand has received a lot of influence from India - especially in religious matters, so that Hinduistic or Brahmanistic teachings came to Thailand before the Buddhist teachings came. So way back when – we don’t know exactly when, the teachings came to Thailand about a certain kind of vinnana, which is what in English we call a spirit or soul - in Sanskrit it is often called the atman which is a kind of spirit or soul. And what was taught was that there is this vinnana – vinnana, this spirit, and it has a centre place - sometimes it is said to be in the heart, and the vinnana rests there. When an object comes to the eye the vinnana runs out to the eye in order to see it, or when a sound comes in vinnana runs to the ear to hear this sound, the vinnana is always going out to these different things. But it is always the same vinnana, it is some kind of soul or spirit. When we go to sleep this vinnana is said to leave the body and go wandering around, and when we wake up this vinnana comes back. If the vinnana doesn’t come back we cannot wake up, if we are unconscious the vinnana goes off but we don’t know where. This is what has been taught in Thailand before Buddhism came. In Buddhism there is none of this, it is just the momentary consciousness at the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body or mind-sense; this is all that is meant by vinnana. But so many people have received this older teaching from India,

that that is what is understood so words like vinnana are taken to be spirit or soul, some eternal substance that is knowing all these things. This is what has happened in Thailand, this kind of belief in vinnana has occurred. To put it bluntly it is completely a matter of ignorance, it is a complete misunderstanding to attribute consciousness to some soul or spirit as has happened for so many people in this country.

Exactly what the situation is in Europe we don't know, you probably haven't received these same kind of influences from India. But maybe things aren't so different because in European languages we still find words like soul, spirit and self; so it's possible the same kind of misunderstanding is common in the West as well as here. If vinnana is conceived or understood or felt to be some kind of self or soul or spirit or lasting substance, then that is not the Buddhist teaching – that is a Hindu teaching or something else. But if vinnana is understood, seen to be a momentary flash of consciousness in relation to some sense object, then that is the correct teaching in true Buddhism.

If vinnana is attached to in the first way as being I or mine - as being some kind of self, then that is inevitably suffering. If vinnana is understood - seen correctly, then there is no suffering; there is just that momentary consciousness arising and passing away. This is what Buddhism teaches. Please be very careful to understand this point correctly because many people are careless and confuse the two, and then don't know what Buddhism is and don't know what other religions or other philosophies are saying. Because of everything we have discussed so far, true Buddhism teaches to remove the sense of I and mine from the 5 khandas. Please listen to this carefully - write it down if you've got paper, this is what

Buddhism is teaching, the genuine teaching of Buddhism – and if anything contradicts this it is not Buddhism. Buddhism teaches to pull out that sense of I and mine, to pull it out of the 5 khandas - to remove the sense of I and mine from the 5 khandas. There are just the 5 khandas, there is just life occurring naturally, without any upadana - without any I or mine - making life heavy making life into a problem. Removing the sense of I and mine from the khandas, this is the heart of Buddhism, this is the central teaching of the Buddha.

We'd like to take this opportunity to speak straightforwardly and directly, and say something that ought to save you a lot of trouble, time and even money. Most of you, if not all of you, have been deceived by a bunch of books which have been given such silly names as Buddhism in Thailand, Buddhism in Burma, Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Buddhism in Tibet, Buddhism in China, Buddhism in Japan, and even Buddhism in America. There are all these books that are deceiving people trying to talk about something that doesn't even really exist. Any of these books that are talking about Buddhism in Thailand, Buddhism in Sri Lanka or Buddhism who knows where, they are just talking about some illusion; they are not talking about Buddhism at all. If we buy these books and believe what they are telling us, then we'll never figure out what Buddhism is. Because all these books are just a bunch of crazy cultural practices from whatever country it is, just the things the Thais do, the crazy things the Tibetans do and now the crazy things they do in the West, and these things have very little if anything to do with Buddhism. It's a bunch of ceremonies, a bunch of beliefs, a bunch of superstitions, it's all kinds of stuff. If you buy a book on Buddhism there is no need to stick the words in Tibet, or in Thailand, or in Burma on the end of it. If it's a book about Buddhism it will talk about only one thing, removing attachment

from the 5 khandas. This is the nucleus of Buddhism. The rest of that stuff that they fill up these books with, and rip off the unsuspecting public with, is just a bunch of superficial cultural stuff. It is not Buddhism, it's just who knows what. So you can save yourself the time and trouble, there is no need buying any of these books and wasting our time with them.

We've taken some times ourselves. The same goes for the superficial distinctions between Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana and Zen Buddhism. To the superficialist or the western scholar, they seem to be different things but if it's Buddhism it's all just one thing. There's only one Buddhism, Buddhism cannot be fragmented into these different things. So if we can we would like to point this out to save everyone a lot of trouble. Real Buddhism is just one removing attachment, getting rid of the I and mine from the 5 khandas or regarding the 5 khandas.

Noble Truth of Dukkha -2

(Audio file [Dukkha3b](#))

For those of you sitting here who are interested in going to study Buddhism, please take notice that there is no such thing as Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, Vajrayana Buddhism, Zen Buddhism and all that stuff. There is just one real Buddhism and this is just pulling that I and mine out from the 5 khandas so that there is just the khandas – removing this I and mine out from the khandas. This is Buddhism. Everything else has just been added to make things showy, to make it interesting, to make it impressive, to entertain the children and all these things, so it makes the real teaching seem very profound so that nobody can understand it – all this extra stuff . Please find out what the real thing, and save

yourself the trouble of the other stuff. When we have personally studied some of the important Mahayana sutras, they all begin with a lot of crazy stuff suitable for that culture, but every important Mahayana sutra ends with the same thing – removing attachment from the 5 khandas. We've got a friend who is quite an intelligent person, and now they have really got into a bunch of Tibetan texts that are very difficult to translate. It seems that in Tibet they've got all kinds of things which haven't been translated yet, things that are very difficult to understand and hard to translate, so this friend of ours - we won't mention the person's name - has completely got into this, and is putting all his time and energy into translating these things. But no matter what they translate, they won't really find Buddhism itself, they will just find a lot of complex, difficult-to-understand things which come from the ancient Tibetan culture. They're not finding Buddhism itself, they are finding a lot of things that have been dragged into Buddhism from the old culture from that time and that place.

Real Buddhism is just this one simple thing – removing the sense of I and mine from the 5 khandas. This is something to study not from all those books but from life. The scriptures that we ought to study are the scriptures of the 5 khandas within our own lives - within ourselves. To study the body, feelings, sensations, conceptions, and consciousness within our own lives, and see what they are like, see how this attachment arises and see how to remove this attachment. This is the kind of scriptural study to do – to do it right here using our own life. It is not necessary to go off and study Tibetan Buddhism, Sri Lankan Buddhism, Zen Buddhism or whatever – just study it right here in your own life. The 5 khandas are right here, why do we have to go off looking for Buddhism somewhere else?

We don't deny there are differences. For example Theravada Buddhism is very straightforward, and is kept within certain fairly strict limits. People who don't have enough intelligence and wisdom are unable to understand the Theravada teachings properly. Mahayana has tried to open everything up and simplify things so that even foolish people (old grandmothers in the street the ordinary man in the road) can have access to Buddhism with the idea that Mahayana, being the great vehicle, can take even the foolish people along. And then in Zen. Zen knows it's never going to work, and narrowed it down and made it an exclusive refined teaching for only the most intelligent people. If one isn't very sharp and clever, one can never figure out Zen Buddhism. It is the most direct teaching but it's also only for the most intelligent. In Vajrayana, in all those things – tantra and all that, they have kind of packaged the teachings in the most attractive, most colourful, most enticing and interesting way. So you've got basic approaches to presenting Buddhism, the direct approach, the big approach, the quick and fast approach and the attractive approach, but even though there are these distinctions, all of these come to the same point – to the same fact, which is “removing attachment from the 5 khandas”.

In a scientific era, in an era and time of high technology and reason, we don't have any real need any more to be interested in all the different forms or the superficial distinctions of Buddhism. In a scientific age like this all we need is to take a very direct, natural and scientific approach, to study the 5 khandas right here and remove attachment. All we need to do is ask how to remove attachment from the 5 khandas, how to go about removing the sense of I and mine from the 5 khandas. In times like this this is all we need, there is no need to go off anywhere. Everything you need to learn from and work with, all the tools, all the equipment are

right here. We should take a direct scientific approach. Philosophy won't help us, just thinking and speculating with ideas and opinions isn't enough. We have to take a scientific approach which deals with the real things – not just theories about things. But deal with the real things directly, experiment in a practical way. This approach will teach us how to remove attachment from the 5 khandas.

So we've taken the time to discuss these various characteristics and variations within Buddhism because if we understand these points it will make it much easier and much simpler for us to go about removing attachment from the 5 khandas. So in summary all dukkha occurs because of attachment to the 5 khandas, attachment to one or the other, or all of them together, any kind of attachment regarding the khandas is dukkha. For example if there is some pain in the foot, it's only just a certain kind of physical situation which has a certain impact on the nervous system, and that is felt as pain. That's all there is to it. It's just a certain physical phenomenon, and if there is no attachment in there it's not really dukkha. This is something we often confuse – just ordinary pain that is different from real dukkha - from real suffering. We often confuse the two. But if there's no attachment it's not really dukkha. It's just a physical phenomenon, it's something natural. But as soon as the feeling arises, I hurt, it's my pain, my foot might fall off or I might die, then a tiny physical problem is blown up into a huge spiritual problem, a huge mental problem. So that people take simple physical difficulties and blow them up into fear, worry and neuroses, people even go crazy because of little physical ailments. Some people even die from the shock of having some minor physical mishap because of upadana. Suffering does not occur because of these natural situations, suffering occurs because of upadana, the sense of I and mine regarding natural things. The

Buddha did his best to help us understand this situation with upadana, and one of the ways he tried to explain it was using a simile. There are two kinds of arrows. There is just the ordinary kind of arrow, and there is the second kind of arrow whose tip has been soaked in poison. So a person is shot by the ordinary arrow, there is pain obviously but that's all there is - pain felt by the nervous system. If the person is shot by the second arrow right in the same place, the second arrow having been soaked in all kinds of nasty poisons, how much more is that going to hurt, how much worse is that going to make the wound, how much more damage is the second arrow going to do. The second arrow is upadana, the second arrow is that feeling of I and mine. This helps to see the distinction between physical pain and the characteristic of dukkha in things - the dukkha that is experienced directly by the mind because of upadana - because of I and mine. Please be very careful to remove this second arrow, and don't let it shoot you again. For the most part we are getting shot by the second arrow pretty frequently. When a knife cuts the finger then the finger has been shot by the first arrow, then when we think or feel "I have been cut by the knife" or "my finger has been cut by the knife", then we have been shot by the second arrow, the arrow that has been soaked in the poison of attachment. And then once that happens there is enormous suffering, the mind is in torment, and all of a sudden we have got a big problem.

It's the same with everything. If there is just a natural mechanism taking place there's no problem, but as soon as the second arrow of attachment - of I and mine - comes in, then there is a big problem. If we can understand this point, this one simple point, then we will understand Buddhism quite well.

Our study of Buddhism is generally accepted. We study many things that aren't really necessary, we even study things that are irrelevant or trivial. We're always asking questions like "why do things have to be this way?", "when did this happen?", "why do monks wear this colour?" and things like this. We ask a lot of questions that aren't really necessary. The Buddha to help us understand the danger of this mentioned another simile. There was a man who was shot by an arrow, and he was lying there in pain. His friends came to help him, they came to take out the arrow so he would feel better. But the man said "wait, don't take it out yet. Before you take it out I want to know who shot it, what task the man who shot it was doing, what kind of arrow is it, who made the arrow, what kind of wood is it made of, what kind of poison is it coated with?" He had a long list of questions, and he wouldn't let them take out the arrow until they had answered all the questions. Is our approach to Buddhism the same as this? Where we ask a lot of unnecessary questions and so never get around to removing the arrow. Please be very careful how you go about studying Buddhism. Don't ask questions that aren't really necessary. Whenever you have the opportunity to ask questions of a teacher, please don't ask too many; if we ask too many questions there will be so much information the real information will be lost amongst the irrelevant stuff. Just ask the necessary questions - the important questions. The most important question is how to remove attachment from the 5 khandas. If we can keep things direct and simple like this, we will save ourselves a lot of time, energy and confusion.

We can summarise this all by saying that in Buddhism the important thing is removing attachment from the 5 khandas. All we need to do, all we need to study is these 5 khandas right here, these living khandas of our own life. Study them when there are just the

khandas, when there are pure khandas without any attachments; and then study the upadana-khandas, the khandas that are being studied as I and mine. If we see more and more clearly the pure khandas and the khandas that are clung to, this is all we really need to do. This is what vipassana is about. It is not necessary to go anywhere to do vipassana, just examine the khandas, study the khandas, scrutinise the khandas very very carefully, to know what they are like, what the pure khandas are like - the khandas without attachment, what the upadana-khandas are like - the khandas that are being clung to as I and mine. This is all we really have to do in Buddhism.

In Buddhism we have a special name for the person who has been completely successful in their study and practice to the point they have finished, they have done everything that needs to be done. We call such a person an arahant. To understand what arahant means in a very simple way, we don't have to give any complicated definition. An arahant is just the pure khandas. Arahant is the name we give to body-mind which is just these 5 pure khandas without any attachment. For the arahant there is no attachment whatsoever - not even the least bit. But in us ordinary worldly ones, us thick ones – ordinary thicksters, there is constantly arising attachment in some of us quite a lot in others not quite so much. This is the difference between the arahant and the worldly - the thick ones, whether there is any attachment left or not.

The word arahant has turned out to be very difficult to translate into English and other European languages, most of these translations we've seen are not very good. To keep things correct and simple we ought to define or understand arahant as a life of pure khandas without any attachment, where there are just pure khandas without

any attachment, that is the arahant. This is a simple and clear definition. When there isn't any attachment there is no suffering. The arahant is completely beyond, completely free of dukkha. What this means is to have completely removed all attachment from the 5 khandas, that's how it is traditionally said. We talk about extinguishing attachment in the 5 khandas, removing all attachment from the 5 khandas.

If we spoke a little more correctly, or a little more precisely, we could say that the thing to do is to prevent the arising of attachment in the 5 khandas. To always be removing attachment is a real hassle, but to stop it before it happens is much more exquisite. What they say "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". So the real thing is to understand dhamma, know the dhamma - understand dhamma, and then by being careful - by being mindful and careful - never slipping or making mistakes preventing the arising of attachment in the 5 khandas. Don't just get rid of the attachment, stop it from happening. When we use the word being careful or not being careless, the Pali word is appamatta; this is a very important word. When we say "be careful", don't be careless, what we mean is that it is like our house is on fire and we have to hurry and get our possessions out as quickly as we can. This is what we mean by being careful. If we wait and have to ask who started the fire, where did they buy gasoline, from what company, who made the matches, what way is the wind blowing and all these things, then the house will burn down. The thing is just to hurry and get everything out of the house before it burns down. So be very careful, and get rid of, eliminate and prevent all attachments regarding the 5 khandas as quickly as we are able to do so. We're worried that you'll spend too much time on studying unnecessary things, that things will go too slow and you'll never achieve what should be achieved. So we encourage you just to give your

attention to the central issue finding out what attachment is, how it arises and learning how to get rid of that attachment regarding the 5 khandas - learning how to remove it all. We encourage you to give all your attention to this and not spend time asking unnecessary questions – questions that aren't really relevant or practical. Just do what needs to be done to remove all attachment from the 5 khandas.

The system of practise that is called anapanasati, mindfulness with breathing, is an excellent way to remove attachment from the 5 khandas. You've come here with an interest in learning about anapanasati and learning how to practice it, so we encourage you in this and hope you can maintain the focus in using anapanasati to remove attachment from the 5 khandas. This is the only thing that we need to be interested in.

We've been talking about the Noble Truth of dukkha, dukkha-ariya-sacca. We should understand that it is important to get clear that there are many ways of talking about dukkha; this is one of the difficulties of language. When we use the word dukkha, we can mean the dukkha that is the pain and misery itself, that which torments the mind - that dukkha itself. When we use dukkha it can be the thing itself, or we can mean dukkha as that which brings dukkha - that which leads to suffering; this is somewhat different. And then another meaning of dukkha, another way of using the word is having the characteristic, having the lakkhana of dukkha. There are these three ways of understanding dukkha:-

Dukkha that is directly experienced, dukkha that is torment within the mind.

Things that lead to that dukkha

Dukkha that has the characteristic of dukkha in all conditioned things.

Because of the inherent difficulty of language, the inherent ambiguity, the way we have to twist words around to try and explain things, we are left with these three different ways of using the word dukkha. When we talk about the Noble Truth of Dukkha it is important to understand that the dukkha that is meant here is this first kind, the dukkha that torments the mind. This our problem, the others are not really a problem. The problem is this dukkha that is tormenting us and preventing us from being at peace. It's this dukkha that we directly experience as pain and misery in the mind, and this arises from upadana. If we understand how to remove attachment from the 5 khandas, then we will understand this Noble Truth of Dukkha sufficiently. When you have understood dukkha thoroughly then you will see for yourselves that it is the most ugly thing there is, the most frightening thing, the most disgusting and terrible thing there is. We'll see this for ourselves when we see dukkha. If we don't see this fact we haven't really seen dukkha, then we'll fall in love with it. When we don't understand dukkha when we haven't seen it as it is, we fall in love with it. We keep attaching to things, we fall in love with attachment because attachment has an incredibly powerful attraction; this I and mine is very deceptive and it has a very profound influence. It is very easy to fall in love with ego, upadana, attachment; instead of getting free from dukkha we fall in love with it. We keep plunging into dukkha over and over again. So why do we have to dress up in beautiful clothes, why do we have beauty pageants, why do we crave delicious food, why must we do all these things? The reason is that we have mistaken dukkha for happiness, we have fallen in love with dukkha - we have fallen in love with attachment. So for this reason we turn life into a lot of dukkha - a series of difficulties and problems.

In short, please note dukkha in the three ways we mentioned at the very start yesterday. See dukkha as being painful, as being tormenting,

suffering. See dukkha as being ugly and disgusting, the most ugly disgusting thing there is, and third see dukkha as the most empty, meaningless, worthless thing there is. If one sees dukkha in these three ways, then one will have understood the Noble Truth of Dukkha thoroughly. We could speak on and on and on about dukkha, there are all kinds of little details we can mention but what we have discussed so far is enough. What is attachment, and how do we remove attachment? If we understand this we understand the Noble Truth of Dukkha, dukkha-ariya-sacca. This is enough, this is enough talking about this first Noble Truth, and so we'll finish our talk on the dukkha-ariya-sacca.

Noble Truth of Dukkha's Origin -1

(Audio file [Origin4a](#))

Today we will speak about the second Noble Truth the one that is called samudaya-sacca, the truth of the origin of dukkha. For the sake of ease in understanding our subject we'd like to take a bird's eye view of all the ariya-sacca together. If we look at these logically, we'll see that the first Noble Truth asks the question "what is it?" The second Noble Truth concerns the question "From what does it come, from what does it arise?" The third question then is "For what purpose, what is the purpose of this?", and the fourth "By what means or method is that purpose realised?" If we look at the Noble Truths and see all these four happening together, then we will have a very clear understanding of what the Noble Truths are about. Ask "what is it?", "from what?", "for what purpose?", "by what means, by what method?". At the Ajanta caves(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajanta_Caves) in India, there are a number of relief sculptures carved into the rock, and one of them portrays 4 deer sharing the same head - there are 4 bodies but one head is shared between all 4 of the deer. Our understanding is that this surely is meant to represent the 4 Noble Truths. We have

a few copies of this around Suan Mokh especially up at the arts workshop up in the woods. If one reflects on this picture then one will have a clear and easy understanding of the structure or the outline of the ariya sacca. All 4 of the deer perform a different function or activity, but they all share the same head. This is how it works with the 4 Ariya Sacca. The first one answers the question “what is dukkha?”, the second one answers the question “where does dukkha come from?”, the third noble truth answers the question “for what purpose, what is the purpose and benefit of dukkha?”, and the answer is in order to quench it – in order to extinguish it. Then the fourth Noble Truth answers the question “how?”, and the answer is the Noble 8-fold Path. This is the outline, the framework of the 4 Noble Truths.

The second Noble Truth in Pali is called samudaya-ariya-sacca. The meanings of these things must be attended to carefully, we must understand these words correctly, both in sufficient detail and in a refined enough way; we must be careful about understanding them thoroughly, also in a deep enough way. Especially with the word samudaya we must be careful to understand what is meant by this, because words can be confusing - words can take on different meanings and connotations, and this can confuse us. So it is important we have a correct understanding of the word samudaya. Samudaya is very similar, almost identical to the words hetu and paccaya. We should try to find individual words that can translate all of them. Our understanding is that we can translate these 3 words in the following way:- samudaya as origin, hetu as cause especially the primary cause, and paccaya as condition which is often secondary or supportive to the primary cause. So we can translate them as origin, cause and condition; this is our understanding. All three of these words pretty much have the meaning of cause, but causes can take a different form as we have

mentioned. There can be the primary and secondary causes, as well as direct and indirect causes, so we prefer to use the word *hetu* for the primary, most direct cause - especially when there is a single cause we use the word *hetu*. When there are many conditions, and so none of them is really primary, we use the word *paccaya* or conditions.

We'll spend a little bit of time discussing these three terms because if we understand them correctly and clearly it will be quite beneficial. When a potter makes a pot, we can see all three of these. When the potter makes the pot the primary cause, the *hetu*, of the pot is the desire or the need of the potter that motivates the whole activity. The *paccaya*, the support conditions, are things like collecting the clay, bringing the water, having the potter's wheel and all the other things necessary to make the pot. When the cause and conditions are brought together that is called the *samudaya*, the origination of the pot. All three of these can be found in the simple activity of making the pot. So we are to understand the difference between each of these three terms.

In the Pali this is called *dukkha-samudaya*, and this word is almost always translated the cause of suffering. We have already discussed why suffering isn't such a great translation of *dukkha*, and here one of the synonyms for *samudaya* is used, so it is translated as the cause of suffering. One of the synonyms is used instead of the direct translation of *samudaya*, and this rather easy translation now is quite common being used all over the place. So we've tried to explain things in a way that will help you understand these words correctly - the Pali, *dukkha-samudaya*, or even the rather vague English translation, cause of suffering. In the Pali we pretty much only find the words *dukkha-samudaya*, we almost never find

dukkha-hetu, the cause of suffering, and dukkha-paccaya, the conditions of dukkha. It's almost always dukkha-samudaya which has the broadest meaning of the three possibilities. So we should understand the correct meaning in this case, at least use it ourselves even if everybody else has a different understanding.

So we'd like to look at the words hetu and paccaya. In the Pali there is some overlap between these words but for the most part hetu means cause in the sense of direct, the direct cause and also with the implication of being single, the single direct cause. Whereas paccaya has the meaning of being an indirect cause, and there are generally many of these causes. Hetu refers to a direct and single cause, and paccaya to various indirect causes. But even so sometimes in the Pali these words are used to mean the same thing, hetu and paccaya are sometimes used as synonyms. So this makes it difficult for some people to sort out the meanings, and it makes the study at times a bit troublesome - sometimes these two words are just used to explain each other. This is one of the difficulties we must always deal with when we use the Pali as a basis of our study.

So let's look at the word samudaya again. Samudaya can be broken into two parts – sam and udaya. Sam means complete with nothing lacking – full and complete, udaya means to arise - to occur. So samudaya is a complete arising, something that arises complete and whole with nothing lacking. The word dukkha-samudaya means the arising of many things together, the word sam can also mean together. The arising of many many things until they come together completely, and there is dukkha - complete dukkha. So that's enough about the literal meaning of the word samudaya, if we

spend too much time on this it will turn into a Pali class rather than a dhamma class.

Next we would like to look at dukkha-samudaya in terms of its practical meaning, especially according to the principle we find in the scriptures that everything arises from a hetu or cause, and must proceed or exist under the power or according to the power and influence of that cause. When we say that all things arise from a cause, we're speaking specifically about all the things which are caused which are conditioned. We're not speaking about the thing which doesn't have any cause, has no conditions and is completely independent. We're saying all conditioned things, all impermanent things, arise from a cause. We can say all phenomenon arise from a cause, but that which is the opposite of phenomenon, the noumenon, has no cause; of course noumenon is different. All phenomena are merely the appearance or manifestation of a cause and then must exist, occur, proceed according to the power of that cause. If we're speaking about Buddhism we can never avoid the fundamental principle that all things arise from a cause, and exist according to the power of that cause. If we're talking about things that don't have causes, that are free of causes, then we are talking about some other creed or sect or some philosophical school that existed in India before, during and after the Buddha's time. There have been a number of philosophies that try to assert that things don't have causes but that's outside of Buddhism. All things except the noumenon, the unconditioned, arise from a cause, and exist according to that cause. When we say, in Buddhism, that all things come from causes, we are pointing to the basic scientific character of Buddhism - the understanding that all things come from causes is the basic principle of science. Buddhism isn't any kind of a philosophy that relies on assumptions or speculation - on basically guesswork. Buddhism deals only with causes and the effects of

causes, and tries to understand this. This is scientific. We should never confuse Buddhism with philosophy, with rational and all other kinds of speculation based on various assumptions.

When we ask “what is the cause of some phenomenon?”, if we answer that the cause is God, can you accept that? Can you accept that the cause of each phenomenon is God? Can you accept that as scientific – as a scientific answer? In Buddhism we would respond in line with the principle of *paticcasammupada* – dependent origination. The cause of each phenomenon must be the cause that is directly associated, stuck together, directly and straightforwardly with the phenomenon. We don’t take the cause to be God or Gods or angels or any powers we cannot see for ourselves, we take the direct immediate cause that we can see. This cause and this phenomenon are closely associated, are stuck right together.

In the old scriptures we can find descriptions of the kind of situations which were happening at the Buddha’s time. Here are descriptions of some of the beliefs that people held; in these cases we are talking about those who were not following Buddhism. When it came to the understanding of the cause of *Dukkha*, there were some who believe *dukkha* and *sukha*, pain and happiness, were the result of actions that the individual committed in a past life. All the *dukkha* and *sukha* of this life are the results of things done in a past life or in past lives; this is one belief. Another group believed that all pleasure and pain in this life arises because God has ordained so, that’s the way God wants it. In Pali the word used is the word *Issara*, in Sanskrit *Izvara*, this is a proper noun meaning God. So other groups held that all pleasure and pain, all happiness and *dukkha*, gladness and sadness occur because of God, that’s the way God makes things. Then there was a third group that said that

dukkha and sukha have no cause, they are just floating there – hanging there, nothing causes them they just come and go without any rhyme or reason.

These are three basic understanding about the cause of dukkha, and all of them are outside the Buddhist teaching. The Buddha, when he arose in the world, said that it doesn't work like that, those 3 beliefs don't really fit with the facts. He said whether there is dukkha or sukha depends completely on a direct cause, and that direct immediate cause of dukkha and sukha is whether or not one is correct in accordance with the law of paticcasammupada. If the way we are living at this moment is proper and in harmony in accordance with the law of paticcasammupada, there is no dukkha. But if our way of living, our way of being at this moment, is opposed to, is in conflict with, the law of paticcasammupada then there will be dukkha. The Buddha said there aren't these distant causes outside of ourselves. The cause of dukkha is right here in a close association with the phenomenon - the result of dukkha

Regarding dukkha-samudaya there are those who say dukkha originates because of old kamma. Kamma just means action, so old kamma just means actions in previous lives. Buddhism says no, that is not how it is. There are others who say that dukkha originates through the power of God, God creates dukkha for us, and Buddhism says no that is not in line with the facts. There are some that there is no origin of dukkha, dukkha has no cause or origin; it just happens but they don't say how. Buddhism also says that that's not correct, none of these three ideas are how it actually happens. Buddhism, instead of speculating philosophically how it might be, just tries to examine and find out what is actually going on. What is the direct and immediate cause or origin of dukkha? What are

the things right here that are immediately related to dukkha - where we can see them together happening right here? What is that cause we see existing right here, existing in relationship, in immediate association, with dukkha? And as we have talked about previously, we can say that the origin of dukkha happens through the kilesa, defilements, it happens through tanha, craving, and it happens through ignorance, avijja, as has been explained when we discussed paticcasammupada.

Now there is something very strange about dukkha-samudaya. In Thailand, as well as Burma and Sri Lanka, there are a number of Buddhists who believe very strongly, have a very deep ingrained belief, that dukkha arises because of old kamma. When dukkha happens to them, which is how they see it, they just sit and cry and moan and wail about their old kamma, don't see anything they can do about it. It's quite strange that there are so many Buddhists who are holding a belief which is directly opposed to what the Buddha actually taught. But in Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka we can find this kind of belief all over the place. People don't seem to pay attention, at least to this teaching of the Buddha, that dukkha has a direct cause right here. The origin of dukkha is in ignorance, craving and defilement - right here. The Buddha never said anything about old kamma in past lives as being the origin of dukkha. So there is this quite strange situation where these Buddhists are holding a belief which isn't even Buddhist. So although they may say they are Buddhists, please don't mistake this belief to be a Buddhist belief. We must realise that there are many Buddhists holding ideas which are not really Buddhism. If we don't understand this point we will be very confused by all these conflicting beliefs which people are holding. The Buddha taught simply that dukkha has a direct immediate cause which we can verify right here, and we don't have to believe anything outside

ourselves - like past lives and all that. So please be careful to realise that there are a lot of things going under the name Buddhism which are not really the Buddha's teachings and which are not in line with the facts.

Now in spite of what we have said, we should be very clear to understand that the belief that dukkha arises from old kamma has great value and importance in terms of morality. By morality we mean living lives in a good wholesome peaceful way. When dukkha happens, because many people attribute it to previous actions whether earlier in this life or past lives, this belief will have great value in explaining to people to stop doing foolish evil things and do good. So there is great value on the morality level in this belief, even though it is beneficial in terms of morality it is not necessarily beneficial in terms of absolute truth – paramattha-sacca.

When a Christian suffers pain or dukkha and then attributes it to God and prays to God to take the pain away, there is no need to try and prove whether this is correct or incorrect understanding. We can observe quite easily whether this belief, that God is the creator of dukkha and can take it away, does lead to morality - to people leading good peaceful lives - if they actually act on this belief. These kinds of belief are of great value, however they are not absolute truth. They are a kind of relative truth, a relative truth that brings relative benefits, the benefits of morality. Now many people are unable to understand absolute truth so we must maintain these teachings of relative truth for the sake of those who cannot understand absolute truth. However we should never confuse the fact that these relative teachings are relative truths, and they are not absolute truth – paramattha-sacca.

When we speak of the ariya-sacca we are talking exclusively about ultimate truth, absolute truth – paramattha-sacca. In terms of the Noble Truths the truth is no longer relative. If we talk of dukkha-samudaya we are speaking in absolute terms of what is directly observable, what is direct fact, it has nothing to do with speculation or philosophy. When we speak about the origin of dukkha in this way, we can give a variety of responses; we have already heard some of them. In the Buddha's explanation of the 4 Noble Truths the origin of dukkha is specifically given as being tanha, craving. When he first taught the four Noble Truths, and in all subsequent places when the Buddha or anyone else taught these truths, the second Noble Truth was always given as being craving – the origin of dukkha is craving; this is of course absolutely true.

But as we understand from studying paticcasammupada the dependent origination of dukkha has as its cause avijja, ignorance, not knowing things as they truly are. So this cause of dukkha is ignorance, but as we mentioned in the last couple of days in short upadana in the 5 aggregates is dukkha. This means when we speak in the most direct and immediate terms, the most direct cause is upadana – attachment, that grasping and clinging at things as I and mine.

Noble Truth of Dukkha's Origin -2

(Audio file [Origin4b](#))

Further we can also say that dukkha arises because of the concocting of sankhara, because of the cooking up of the mind by sankhara there arises dukkha. The Buddha has said sankhara is the

supreme dukkha. So in talking about dukkha-samudaya we can give 4 responses but in fact it is all the same thing. All these 4 responses differ in literal meaning but are talking about the same fact. The origin of dukkha happens through all of these things, all of them together, it just depends on exactly which angle we look at things or whether we take the most immediate cause or cause which are a little bit preceding. We can say that the cause of dukkha is ignorance, we can say that the cause of dukkha is the concocting of sankhara, we can say that the cause of dukkha is craving, or the cause of dukkha is attachment. The most immediate is attachment, a little before that is craving, and the most originating cause of dukkha is ignorance. We are talking about one thing, it is all the same process. Please don't think there is any contradiction or conflict between these various responses.

In talking about the 4 Noble Truths the Buddha himself said that tanha is the origin of dukkha, the direct cause of dukkha is tanha, craving or thirst. But if we ask "where does craving come from?", the answer is ignorance. Craving comes from ignorance, from not knowing things according to truth. So we can just say dukkha comes from ignorance. Or we say "what way does dukkha result from craving?", and we must say that through craving there is upadana and then there is dukkha. There must be upadana coming out of that craving in order for there to be dukkha. If there is no ignorance there is no dukkha, if there is no upadana there is no dukkha. All this activity of ignorance, of craving, of upadana, is called sankhara, this complete concocting - this busy concocting - is called sankhara. So it is just as correct to say dukkha comes from sankhara, dukkha arises out of sankhara. We can use these different responses but there is no contradiction, it's all talking about the same thing.

In fact there are more than just these four words, there are quite a few other things that are involved that we could say is the origin of dukkha, or cause of dukkha. But these four words are enough because all the other things are directly related, are implied, are included with these four.

If we'd like in fact to just gather it all together in one word, it all comes down to dukkha originating from tanha, the origin of dukkha is tanha. To bring it to just one word, that word is tanha – craving. Craving simply means desire through the power of ignorance. When there is desire with ignorance this is tanha. To put it more bluntly stupid desire, foolish want, this is the origin of dukkha. There are many other words we could use but in the end it just comes down to one thing. This word, tanha, or foolish want, is quite broad. If we use it in terms of God we can say that there is tanha that God will help us, even if God doesn't help us we still want God to help us; there is still this tanha that God will help us. We can use this word, tanha or craving, even in this way. The reason we want God to help us is because we have this craving somewhere, there is something we desire and crave and we also desire that God will help us get that thing we crave. This desire that God will help us is coming from this tanha that we have.

If there isn't any belief, any sense of grasping at I and mine, then there is no tanha - there is no craving. There is still craving arising because we are still clinging and grasping at things as I and mine because there is still upadana = there is still arising tanha. Because there is all this updana and tanha, we stay ignorant there is still avijja, incorrect knowing.

Next we will look at the characteristics of tanha, according to the way the Buddha described them. In Pali the Buddha described the Noble Truths, he described tanha in the following way. The first is ponobhavika – leading to a new existence. Existence here doesn't mean something physical, we are not talking about the existence of (Zandtao ?) or even of physical bodies. We are not talking about the existence that after this body dies another body will exist, we are talking about the existence that arises from craving. Every time there is craving there is a new existence. If there is craving in this minute there is a certain existence, then later in another minute, another hour, if there is craving there is another existence. We're talking about the existence or bhava which arises every time there is craving, we are not talking about a physical existence. So in some minutes we want to be millionaires with piles of money. If there is craving or tanha to be a millionaire, in that minute there is existence as a millionaire. Or in other minutes there may be the craving to be a politician with lots of power then in that minute there is existence as a politician. Or sometimes we crave to be businessmen so there is existence as a businessman, or we crave to be monks or nuns then there is existence as a monk or nun. This is why tanha is described as ponobhavika, meaning every time there is craving this leads to some existence immediately. Immediately upon craving there is existence in some form or another. Sometimes a woman has wants and desires like a woman, but sometimes a woman has wants and desires like a man, and so exists as a man. It can go to a point where sometimes a woman exists as a man, and sometimes as a woman. This is why tanha is talked about as ponobhavika – leading to new bhava or new existence. One can go through all kinds of different existences in a day through the power of craving. Even within a single hour there can be a tremendous crowd of existences, and then in an entire life it is just full of all kinds of different existences.

The second Pali description of tanha is nandiraga sahatada (Z?). It means associated with or tied up with nandiraga - raga means lust or passion nandi means pleasure or satisfaction. What this means is a lustful satisfaction, a passion for pleasure, a passion for satisfaction. Tanha is associated with, composed of, bound up with having a passionate interest in, a longing for, a lust for satisfaction or liking for pleasure. This word raga, or lust, in Pali means for the mind to get so thoroughly caught up with something, so thoroughly imbued with it, it is as if the mind has been dyed by that thing. The word raga can also be used for a dye, to dye a cloth with some colour. When the mind is so tied up with something, so caught up in it, that it becomes dyed or imbued with that thing, this is the meaning of raga. Nandi is a sense of pleased satisfaction, a sense of liking, so nandiraga is when the mind has imbued itself, dyed itself, with pleasure and satisfaction. So now our mind, our heart, has been dyed by whatever it is that satisfies us, pleases us by whatever it is we like. This is our problem.

The third characteristic of tanha is papara tinantini (Z?). This means wandering around liking this, liking that, just wandering all over the place getting infatuated by things without any limit. Basically it means being pulled all over the place by our likes and preferences. Papara (Z?) has the meaning of this and that, this thing or that thing. So tanha has this characteristic of being led, wandering all over out of pleasure and satisfaction and liking for this or that, over here over there, endlessly without any limit wandering all over the place. All phenomena can be the object of craving, both negative and positive phenomena can be taken as the object of tanha; this is what is meant by papara (Z?) - this thing or that thing, meaning even completely opposed things, meaning positive or negative. So the words, Papara tinantini (Z?), means

completely infatuated with, completely engrossed with this and that, in this and that endlessly.

So let's take a look at this. In the first one tanha creates new existences, in the second tanha dyes the mind with satisfaction in whatever it is that satisfies the mind, and the third is falling into liking and disliking of all kinds of things. What we've just mentioned are 3 characteristics of tanha, different kinds of tanha, however tanha itself which has these 3 characteristics can take 3 different forms. The first is kama-tanha which is craving for sensuality - for sensual pleasures, basically craving to get. The second is bhava-tanha - craving to be, craving to exist or to become. The third is vibhava-tanha, craving to not exist, craving to not be. There are three kinds or forms that tanha takes, wanting to get, wanting to be, or wanting to not be - it's quite easy to remember these three forms of tanha.

What's really interesting is this third one – wanting to not be. In the Pali this is another kind of bhava, another existence, wanting to not be is another kind of being. If you get lost in logic you may not figure it out but when we want to not be, eg want to not live, want to be dead, that is an existence. Wanting to not be is to exist in a certain way. All three kinds of tanha are leading to a new existence in various ways. We challenge you to find a kind of tanha outside of these three, of all the cravings and desires that you have find one that is different from these three. We don't think you will be at all successful.

Even somebody who wants to kill themselves, this is a kind of craving, in fact it is a very, very powerful craving, the craving to

be dead, wanting to be a dead person is a tremendously strong kind of craving. All kinds of craving whether in a positive way or a negative way, with a positive or negative object, all of these still just come down to craving even if it is the craving to get rid of something, the craving to not be something. Good people have tanha, lunatics have tanha, the animals have craving - even the trees and plants have a kind of craving but it is so subtle and refined we don't see it. Even the angels and celestial beings, if there are such things, have tanha; the Gods, who are more powerful than the angels, they have an even better more refined kind of tanha. All life is being sustained or is being nurtured on tanha – on craving; all existences, all these different ways of being, are nurtured by craving. If the craving is very confused and overpowering, then that person goes crazy. Existence, the states of being, come from tanha in this way, and then there is satisfaction, there's a pleasure in existing in that way- in that state of being.

The first form of tanha, kama-tanha, is related to sensual, basically sexual, needs. Kama means basically sexuality so sexual desires are the core ingredient of this first kind of tanha. Everybody, all ordinary people, have got sexual desires, and they express themselves directly and indirectly in all kinds of ways. This is the first kind of tanha, the kind of basic tanha we find in our lives. Then we have desires for all kinds of attractive pleasing things, things that are attractive to the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. All of this desire for these attractive delicious things is called kama-tanha – sensual sexual desires.

We are full of all kinds of ideas about what to be, I want to be this, I want to be that, or I want to be all these many things. This wanting to be something, this is bhava-tanha, craving for existence, craving

to exist in some way – in many different ways depending on the circumstances. Just the thought of I am, I exist, this is the result of wanting to exist, of craving for existence.

Once one sees that being like this, being like that, existing in this way or that way is all full of problems, hassles, troubles and difficulties, all that existing in being is just a bunch of struggle. I don't want any of that, I don't want to be like this or like that, I don't want to exist, then there is all that craving not to be, craving for non-existence. Ten years or so ago there was the one pseudo-Christian sect led by Jim Jones, they all drank poison in order to kill themselves. This is one kind or form of vibhava-tanha - craving for non-existence. This is just another kind of deception of losing one's way. You see it in many people, they get frustrated or disappointed, and they say I want to die, I'm sick of this, I don't want to put up with this any more. This is happening all the time. We meet with a little disappointment, difficulty or frustration we get depressed we don't want to exist we want to die. In some people this craving for non-existence can be so strong, they actually go and kill themselves.

When our mindfulness and wisdom faculty loses its way tanha arises. When our sense, our understanding, of what is correct or incorrect, of what is our proper duty and what isn't, when this loses its way, wanders off the path, then tanha arises. Whenever wisdom cannot discern, is unable to see what is correct, then there will be tanha coming up. Tanha is when life has gotten off track, when it is heading in the wrong direction. This helps us see how tanha comes from ignorance. When there is ignorance, incorrect understanding, then life gets off track, the wisdom faculty gets derailed and tanha arises. All craving, all forms of craving, arise

from ignorance, from a lack of proper understanding – not understanding things according to truth. We lose the way and tanha occurs.

Every arising of tanha is always dukkha, every occurrence of tanha is always dukkha. No matter how tanha arises - where, when, under what circumstances - every instant, every occurrence of tanha is always dukkha. If the desire doesn't arise from ignorance then we don't call it tanha. If the one in the desire is wise, then we don't call it tanha. For example if you come to Suan Mokkh with mindfulness and wisdom, with correct knowledge and understanding, and if you come here in order to study Dhamma and develop the mind in order to extinguish dukkha, then that would not be called craving – that is not tanha. But then there are some who come looking for superstitious powers, that is full of tanha and it will probably make them crazy too.

So please be careful to discriminate well between wanting with ignorance and wanting without ignorance. If our desire comes from a misunderstanding of truth then it's called tanha - because it comes from avijja. But if the desire, the want, is coming from a correct understanding of the way things are, if it is coming from wisdom, we don't call it craving. There is a saying "Don't live through tanha, don't live by craving, you ought to live with mindfulness and wisdom." We shouldn't have lives that are run by, led by tanha, because it will keep dragging us into dukkha. But instead we should live, we should go through life under the direction of mindfulness and wisdom. In Pali there is a neutral word that also means want or desire, this word is sankappa. It just means want or desire but it is a neutral word of want or desire. But then usually there is added the word miccha – wrong, or samma - correct proper or right. So

there can be right desire, wise desire, as well as wrong desire or foolish desire. So there's a kind of want and desire which is correct and proper, and another kind of want and desire which is foolish, dangerous and wrong.

So we should be very careful about these kinds of words because there is tremendous confusion brought about because we don't consider carefully. Tanha always means ignorant, it's always blind and stupid, blind want, stupid want, ignorant want or whatever. We need to find an English word that includes within it the sense of ignorance, blindness and stupidity. The word sankappa has no sense of being stupid or incorrect – it is completely neutral, so we have to find one word for tanha that clearly implies stupidity and incorrectness. And for sankappa we must find another word that has no connotations of being incorrect or foolish. Sometimes for sankappa the word used is aim, but you can think about this for yourself – in English as well as other languages. Don't use cheap and easy definitions or translations, help us to find the words that have the proper connotations.

A word that is relevant here is the word hope. This seems to be a word that westerners are quite attached to, but in Thailand it has never had much importance or meaning. But it seems that westerners often like to live by their hopes and their wishes, and they even come to Thailand to teach Thai children to have a life based on hope. But the question about all this hope is “Is it wise hope or stupid hope?” Are they hopes which are under the power of ignorance or hopes and wishes that are under the power of wisdom? We ought to be very careful about this word hope because it could be a kind of hope which is another form of tanha. But then again hope might sometimes have nothing to do with tanha.

So in summary tanha is to desire, to want, under the power of ignorance - desiring through the power of ignorance; this is the meaning of tanha. This is dukkha-samuddaya, this is the origin, the source and cause of dukkha, this tanha or craving through the power of ignorance and foolishness. This is the second noble truth, the dukkha-samuddaya-ariya-sacca, the noble truth of the origin of dukkha. And so the subject of the origin of dukkha has come to a close at the same moment that we have run out of time so we finish both of them together, and we'll end today's meeting at this auspicious moment.

Noble Truth of Dukkha's Quenching -1

(Audio file [Quenching5a](#))

Today we will speak of dukkha-nirodha-ariya-sacca.

Noble Truth of Dukkha's Quenching -2

(Audio file [Quenching5b](#))

The Path leading to Dukkha's Quenching -1

(Audio file [8Path6a](#))

The Path leading to Dukkha's Quenching -2

(Audio file [8Path6b](#))

Concluding Facts about the Four Ariya-Sacca -1

(Audio file [conclusion7a](#))

Concluding Facts about the Four Ariya-Sacca -2

(Audio file [conclusion7b](#))

