

5. GOD.

On the subject of god, some people, as is their wont, will express indifference, but if pressed on the subject might perhaps say that if we do wrong where god's concerned then we aren't going to enjoy much peace and happiness in our lives. Not really knowing much about god they'll talk like that; not realizing the importance of having a deity they won't be much interested in one. Others will say that they don't want a god, that they don't have one, when in reality they do, although it's a god that shouldn't be, that is, they hold to some abomination as their god, and then go around saying that they don't believe in the kind of gods that other people do, the kind generally believed in. Even so, we, and the animals, beings that have a mind and can think to whatever extent will generally have an instinctual feeling that there is some higher thing, that there is, in the human case, a 'god.'

But, what is 'god?' Well, it's generally taken to be the 'highest,' the ultimate, that which watches over us, provides us with a refuge, is something to be feared, to be obeyed. At present many people take money as their god because it's seen as the highest thing, that which they fear, fear not having, so they pursue it, attend to it assiduously - many people worship *mammon*. Some will see the aristocracy, or their employers, their superiors as being god-like. Others, those in rural areas, in the forests, who don't have an employer, an obvious superior, will turn to tree spirits and such. Because people normally can't exist without a god, then, if they have a superior, someone they feel respect for, they'll be inclined to look on them as being a sort of god. If they're afraid of their wives - so we've heard - wives or husbands can even be regarded in the same way. People, it seems, have the ability to look on anything that can direct, or command them as being god-like, even things that aren't properly understood - ghosts, spirits - can fill the need. It's like this everywhere: a something felt to be the ultimate, something to be obeyed - this is 'god.'

'God,' then, is the highest, the ultimate, that which is to be feared, obeyed, which we can take refuge in, can respect and reverence. All sentient life seems instinctually to feel that there is a god, or some equivalent. Animals have things that they feel they can take refuge in, can feel safe with - why, for instance, do cats like to come and sit on our laps? It's because they want a refuge, they want to feel secure. Dogs come and lie down nearby, under this building, but they don't come to protect me, they come for the security it offers them. When they follow us around it's not because they want to protect us, it's because they want protection, and if they're around us they feel more comfortable, safer, happier. Chickens are the same, if they happen to come and perch on my knee it's because they want to feel safe, secure. Hence, living beings that have feelings and can think need a refuge, something they can depend on, feel safe with, which seems to indicate that every sentient life form, according to its level of understanding, needs a god of some sort, and that it's an instinctual need. Babies, little children, when they feel in danger who do they cry for? They cry for their mother. And who do they run to? They run to their mother. When they feel any fear they'll cry for and run to their mammy for protection. It's an instinctual response.

Thus, those who say that there isn't any such thing as a god, that there's no need for one, and that they, anyway, don't believe in such things, are probably denser than kittens, puppy-dogs, or chickens - either that or they don't understand their own instincts.

Let's get 'god' somewhere near right: it's an instinctual feeling we have that there must be some ultimate thing, something protecting, watching over us, hence we

can feel reasonably comfortable, we can rest reasonably easy. Human happiness depends on the feeling of being safe and secure; if there's a feeling of security there'll be a contented feeling too. For us to feel safe we must have something to make us feel safe, and that's where 'god' comes in. Everybody needs some sort of a god.

Now, there's one group of people who insist that they don't have a god, but, in reality, they do, they just aren't aware of the fact. That happens because their god isn't of the usual sort, that is, it's not a person, or anything like a person.

Be aware that there are two kinds of gods, the first of which is the most popular, the most believed in, that's the sort of god that's like a person, as with *Brahma*, *Narāyan*, *Shiva*, or even *Jehova*. Reading up on those gods one gets the impression that they have feelings just like ordinary people, that they express preferences, they even display anger. Those sorts of gods have been around for a long time and were discovered before the other variety, before the kind of god that's not a person.

If we go back to ancient times, then man in the beginning wouldn't have had knowledge of god as such, but would have felt that there was something superior, powerful, something that was to be feared. Thunder and lightning would have been fearsome, would have created awe in man, and, over time, from that base would have arisen the sense that there was something more, something behind that - thus came the fear of god; the 'god' concept appeared. As time went on it's assumed that the gods would have developed until they became those mentioned in the various religions. All of them would have been the result of fear: fearing danger, fearing suffering people built up the various gods as their protectors, as their spiritual refuges. In this way the people-like gods came to be.

Although it would be said that god wasn't physical, was only consciousness, yet, if the consciousness revealed human traits then that god would have to be some sort of a person; in some religions they fear the sort of god that seems to be no better than an evolved human being, and although it might be said that this god doesn't have a body, that it's only mind, only consciousness, yet if it doesn't get beyond knowing love, anger, hatred, fear - knowing anything in the same way that people do - then it's basically a person. Anyway, it's believed that a god of this kind is able to do this, that, and the other, until finally it comes to be believed that it must be the ultimate, the pre-existing source from which all things spring, must be the all-knowing creator, preserver, and destroyer of all there is - who goes about destroying the cosmos from time to time in order to create it anew - who possesses enormous power and who exists everywhere in everything at all times.

So, they see god as pre-existing, as creating everything, preserving, controlling everything, destroying everything whenever and wherever, and dwelling everywhere in everything in order to do all this. So he has power over everything and is all-knowing - thus is god. Now, take these attributes of god and ask yourself whether there's anyone, any person that would be capable of doing all of this? If there isn't anyone then it must be said that there isn't such a god of the person sort, and that god must exist in some other way. By simple reasoning: when god is described as possessing certain attributes then we look for someone, some person who matches the description, and if we can't find anyone then it must be that this god exists in some form other than the person-type. Hence we come to another sort of god, one that isn't a personification but that still possesses all the attributes of a god. What is that god if it isn't a person? It's a law, the impersonal law of nature, the *Dhamma* law, specifically, the law of *idappaccayatā* - god in the fullest sense.

Now, if we're Buddhist we'll dwell according to the tenets of the Buddha, and the Buddha did have a god. Some people having never heard this sort of thing before won't believe it, won't want to believe it, because it's something novel, something new - for some - but be patient and pay attention: the Buddha had a god which he respected as the ultimate, the highest, and the 'god' the Buddha revered was the law of nature - not a person, but the law of *idappaccayatā*, the Buddhist law of nature. The Buddha's enlightenment involved awakening to *idappaccayatā* as it describes the arising of suffering, of *dukkha*, thus: what does *dukkha* come from? It comes from birth. What does birth come from? It arises from becoming - becoming arises from attachment, attachment comes from craving, craving from feeling, feeling from contact, contact from the senses, the senses from name and form, name and form from consciousness, consciousness from the power of concocting, the power of concocting from ignorance! These are the details, the formula of *idappaccayatāpaṭiccasamupādo*, the law the Buddha awoke to. Once awake, once he'd discovered the truth, the thought arose that now he was Buddha and fully awakened who or what should he revere? Dwelling without having anything to look up to, to reverence wasn't fitting, one must have something to respect, but the 'one who knows,' who or what should they respect? He decided to revere what he'd awakened to, the *Dhamma* that enlightens, the law of nature, the law of *idappaccayatā*, the law that causes suffering to arise and to cease. He also declared that all past and future Buddhas, all Buddhas, revere the *Dhamma* they awaken to, the law of *idappaccayatā*.

Now, how well does this law of nature fit the meaning of 'god?' Well, *idappaccayatā* is the law that exists before anything, it's in all things, in everything, everywhere at all times, is present in every part, in every particle, in every atom that goes to form anything, so that every world, no matter how many hundreds of worlds there are, even the entire universe and every atom in it is controlled by *idappaccayatā*. Remember that we're composed of uncountable atoms and in every single atom exists the law of *idappaccayatā*, indwelling. It's behind the creation of everything, all things arise, persist, and cease according to this law. *Idappaccayatā*, although it isn't a person, has power over everything. Now, these people-type gods can't be in everything; they can't be in a rock for instance, and some people believe that because god is some kind of a person it can't possibly exist in excrement, but if *idappaccayatā* exists in every atom of everything that arises, then it's everywhere, even in excrement. This is the true god that really is everywhere at all times, that really does have power over all things, that controls all things, allows all things to be - and, of course, is all-knowing, if it wasn't so how could it ever create anything properly? The law of *idappaccayatā* created the sun, the moon, created everything in the universe; could it do that if it wasn't all-knowing?

We have the law of *idappaccayatā* as god because the enlightened Buddha honoured it as the ultimate, revered it as 'god.' According to custom every Buddha reveres the *Dhamma* that enlightens, reveres *idappaccayatā*. Buddhists can't get away from the fact that, when the Buddha reveres anything as god then we ought to do the same, hence we, all of us, ought to reverence the *Dhamma* law of *idappaccayatā*, the law of nature, as we would reverence god.

As for *Narayan*, *Shiva*, *Brahma* and the other gods, can they do all the things we've mentioned? They can't; they can't exist in a pile of excrement, for instance, which indicates that they lack the full qualities of a true god, of the in-dwelling, all-knowing creator, preserver, and destroyer of all.

So, we get two kinds of gods: those that are like people and have feelings like people, and a god that's a law, the law of nature. Those more popular people-like gods are the first to appear, the other sort happens later when the Buddha awakens, because it's then that he meets with the law, the 'law of truth,' the truth of nature. Whether there is or isn't a Buddha this law will always exist, so, respect it as god, but as a non-personal kind of god.

Which kind of god would suit us as Buddhists? In order to be Buddhist which kind of a god should we put our faith in; conversely, without which kind would we no longer really be Buddhist? If someone professing to be a Buddhist clings to some people-type god then they really cease being Buddhist. The Buddhist god is a law, the ultimate law, the law of *idappaccayatā*. But, why argue about it; why argue about whether the Buddhist religion has a god or not? We ought to realize that we don't really know how many kinds of gods there are anyway, and when knowledge is incomplete there's bound to be disagreement. Even so, there'll be criticism when it's said that the Buddha's god was the law of *idappaccayatā*. Those who are only aware of people-type gods will dispute it, won't allow that the Buddhist religion has a god. We don't need to argue about it anymore, just let them find out for themselves whether the Buddha believed that there was a god or not. Anyway, the Buddha didn't actually declare that there was a god, he said that he revered the one thing, the ultimate, the *Dhamma* that enlightens - *idappaccayatā*.

Unfortunately, some people in their wisdom will say that, because it doesn't have a god the Buddhist religion isn't really a religion at all, and that the Christian, Islamic, the Hindu religions are religions precisely because they do have gods. But we can see for ourselves the wisdom or otherwise of that statement. We know that we have a truer, a higher god than those of other systems, but that it's not a person, it's a law, the law of nature.

Formerly Thai people weren't Buddhist but held to the religion of the time - they took ghosts and spirits as their gods, believed in such things as forest people have since time immemorial. Subsequently they came to believe in a religion that had gods of the *Brahman* kind, because people from India who held to the *Brahman* religion came here to teach before the Buddhists. Thus Thai people acquired belief in *Shiva*, *Narayan*, *Brahma*, in the people-type gods - *Brahmin* gods. Now, when the Buddhist religion arrived, according to the chronicles, it was confronted with and had to overcome the prevalent beliefs in order to gain acceptance, so when King *Asoka* sent his emissaries, the elders *Sona* and *Uttara*, to this country to promulgate the Buddhist religion they had some work to do before the people would accept and respect it. To effect change in them they had to really struggle, but they were successful and people came to respect the Buddhist religion, and, further, to have a god of the *Dhamma* kind, to take the *Dhamma* as god according to the Buddhist way. But there are still those who don't comprehend the Buddhist religion truly, and still revere the old gods, even now. There are Thai people who still worship *Shiva*, *Narayan*, *Brahma* and so on, just as before. We're inclined to put them into the superstitious category, not the Buddhist, because believing in people-type gods is supposition, superstition, not Buddhism.

If it's the Buddhist religion there must be a god of the kind the Buddha had. If it's the old kind, the sort which defies explanation, then it's a superstitious belief, something deeply and firmly rooted in the minds of people in this region to this day, and superstition must be regarded as a quality of people with weak understanding. There are probably many people sitting here who are still superstitious, who believe in gods of the people kind, gods that can't be explained. How can people-type gods

exist before all things, how can they create everything? - being the same as people would prevent them from creating people; a god must be superior to people to be able to create them. How can they know everything, dwell within everything, have power over everything if they're the same as people? But because knowledge is often weak they're still believed in. People with weak knowledge must incline towards the superstitious. It's a long-lasting inheritance which will remain until wisdom comes to drive it out and they can come to the *Buddasāsanā* once and for all.

The god business is like this, so, if we would have one then, please, let it possess all the qualities of a true god and not those of some person, or anything like that. Bear in mind that the true god must exist before all things, and must create, control, preserve all things according to necessity, must cause all things to arise, to persist, and to cease, to arise, persist, and cease. This god must have power over everything, everywhere, so it must be found in every atom of the universe. In this day and age it brings the computer into existence, the spacecraft - it creates everything and anything that exists, nothing is beyond it. God is all-knowing too - the Buddha just knew the quenching of *dukkha*; there was no need for him to know everything, he just knew the quenching of *dukkha*, which, in a sense, is the same as knowing everything. But if we look beyond the Buddha, go a little deeper, then it's really god that knows everything, it's only the god *idappaccayatā* that can be all-knowing, that actually carries out the quenching or otherwise of *dukkha*.

Idappaccayatā is the Buddhist god, the true god. The gods of other systems aren't proper gods if they can't pre-exist everything, can't create and control and destroy everything. Even so they were revered, worshiped, because, in former times, people only knew so much, were only aware of the sort of gods who were like people. Then the Buddha came to know and teach about a god that was above that, an ultimate god with all the true qualities. Thus Buddhists have this kind of god, a god of the true sort. So we don't accept it when they say that the Buddhist religion has no god: in truth the Buddhist - more than any religion - does have a god, and a truer, a more god-like sort of god too. People won't admit of that because it's not the same sort of god as in other religions; it isn't understood properly so it's claimed that the Buddhist religion is essentially god-less.

Some know the highest god as *Jehova*, a god whose state is much like that of a person, in that he can be angry, and when he is it's terrible. We have no faith in this sort of thing: if god can still be angry, can like and dislike, can give rewards, can punish or whatever, can still behave like a person, then we don't accept it. Having said that however, *idappaccayatā* can be angry too, although not in the same way that people are angry. Try to do wrong per the law of *idappaccayatā* and you court disaster! While sitting here try it and see - you'll court disaster. Yes, god does punish, but this god isn't a person.

Now, if we want to do as some do and worship god we can do that by behaving correctly towards the law of *idappaccayatā*, that is, by avoiding even the slightest wrong-doing. When we live in this way there isn't any *dukkha*, it's quenched. We supplicate our god by practising living correctly and we get the benefits of doing that - no suffering. Worshiping people-like gods can be an uncertain business because they have feelings like people do, so they can be prejudiced. By way of illustration we can relate a children's story that I listened to as a child and still remember: When *Shiva* was the chief god the animals came to him complaining about human oppression, and to ask him to arrange matters so as to put a stop to it. In the story as related the prawns went along to complain too, went to complain about humans eating them, eating them regardless of their feelings. *Shiva* replied that if that

was so then prawn flesh was probably good to eat and, perhaps, he'd like to try some too. On hearing this the prawns didn't know what to do, so they ran away. To this day prawns act in the same way – go and look at them in the water, they'll flee in all directions because they're frightened, they think it's *Shiva* come to eat them. This god still wanted to try eating prawn, which was the very complaint the prawns had voiced against humans. It's a children's story but it has meaning - has a meaning that we should think about: if gods still have feelings like people do then they aren't worthy of reverence; a just, impartial god that is the truth of nature would be better.

If we behave correctly according to the law of nature we get the best result, if incorrectly then there's suffering. There's no compromise, we can't cheat the law because it's everywhere, in everything, in every atom of the universe, so who can escape it's attention? We have to yield, submit in everything we do. That would be worshiping god in the Buddhist sense. So we study to know how to behave properly in all situations, because worshiping here isn't about performing ceremonies, it's about practising correctly towards the law of *idappaccayatā*. The Buddha tells us that we worship properly by practising, not by bribery: offering flowers to images, candles, food, etc., is, one might say, a baser form of worship, the truest form lies in behaving correctly. We have the *Dhamma* as our god, and we worship god by doing right according to the *Dhamma* law. There shouldn't be any problems if we understand god properly. Problems arise when we misunderstand, when we don't know what god really is, don't know what attributes, what qualities god should possess, because then we get the ancient *Brahman* teaching. If anyone should feel inclined they can go and look at the *jedi* in the Emerald Wat in Bangkok: in the big *jedi* there is a cavity with a *Shiva lingam* and an image of *Ganesh* inside; the *Shiva lingam* and the image of *Ganesh* are from the *Brahmanic* religion yet can be found in the *jedi* at the Emerald Wat in Bangkok, which is Buddhist; in that Buddhist *jedi* there are *Brahman* things too, forcing the assumption that they believe in two religions at the same time. That's probably the result of a compromise, of powerful people saying that it's possible to hold to two religions at the same time without any problems. We think that there was probably a *Brahman* temple in front of all Buddhist temples in former days and in the *Brahman* temple there would have been the usual images – *Ganesh*, the *Shiva lingam*, etc. - and that, subsequently, somebody put them together in the Buddhist *jedi* so they could pay homage to them all at the same time. They did this because their knowledge was weak. Such people could then visit and homage the *lingam*, or else the *lingam* and the Buddha *rūpā* together, and continue on doing that until such time as their knowledge, perhaps, became stronger. Thus, for a couple of generations our ancestors went backwards, regressed, they weren't particular and just worshiped everything, anything: *Shiva*, the Buddha image; that's how they were. But, we, now that we know 'what's what' can discriminate, and we can separate the gods into two distinct groups, putting the gods for those with weaker understanding into one, and those for people with stronger abilities into another. So, from now on we can choose which to worship, the feeble knowledge kind, or the other kind.

The gods of the people-sort, *Brahma*, *Shiva*, *Narayan*, etc., those aren't Buddhist. The gods that are like people, even though they're described as being non-physical, as being mind only, consciousness only, if they still experience people-like feelings, they aren't Buddhist; we don't want them.

The Buddha had a god he revered and which he was the revealer of - *idappaccayatā*. He taught, revealed *idappaccayatā* to us so that we could practise according to it until free from suffering. In this way we could please the god he revealed to us. The Buddha introduced us to a god worthy of our reverence, of our

adulation. If our god is a real, a true god we can worship him - there's no need to be ashamed of that - we can behave and practise so that we don't go against his ordinances, so that we don't act contrary to the *Dhamma* at all. This would please god, and would express our reverence for the Buddha's god, for the true *Dhamma*.

So, to continue: we don't need to argue; some want to believe in that kind of a god, we believe in this kind of god, each to their own and there's no need for disputes. Although some hold to another religion, to a god of another kind which satisfies them, yet they don't have any hostile intentions towards us, they're satisfied with that and respect that alone, then we, as we see it, have the right to believe in something more than that. There's no need for argument.

But don't be willing to think that there isn't a god; if anyone thinks that they're more ignorant than a cat. Cats have gods, they often come and sit in our laps because they need a god, they want a refuge, so why are people willing to think that they don't need a god: 'I don't have a god' - they're more ignorant than cats!

The god *idappaccayatā*, the law of nature, is perfect, just, and exists in everything, everywhere. The happiness and suffering of mankind arise because of this god. In the *Pali* it says believing that *sukha* and *dukkha* come from a person-type god, like *Shiva* for instance, is a wrong view. The Buddha had said, somewhere, that our happiness and suffering arise according to the god *idappaccayatā*: we act wrongly in life and we suffer; act correctly and we don't. But if we believe that it all depends on *Shiva* it's a wrong view. *Shiva* cannot control us to that extent; if we believe that he can then it goes against nature, against the law of *idappaccayatā*; if we allow *Shiva* that monopoly it's completely wrong, and we're in trouble, because then we're in the same place as the prawns. If, with *idappaccayatā* as our god, we live properly, there's contentment; if we don't live properly, we suffer. Our happiness and suffering happen in dependence on the law of nature. But if we think that they happen in dependence on the whim of some person-type god that's wrong, it can't be true because it would interfere too much with our rights as human beings, we should have the right to create our own happiness or suffering, just as we should have the right to cure our suffering by turning it into happiness through our own efforts. Suppose that some god would deliberately make us suffer, then we'd need the knowledge of *idappaccayatā* to combat his influence, because if we can control the moment of sense contact so that there's no ignorance involved there won't any suffering either, and then the spirits, angels, destiny, luck, *kamma*, or whatever, won't matter. We can defy the whole legion of those that would make us suffer by always acting correctly per the law of *idappaccayatā*. Hence, Buddhists have a basic refuge, a way out, and really don't need to suffer, don't need to have *dukkha* at all.

If we act correctly per the law of *idappaccayatā* we won't have any illness. We experience sickness, disease because we make mistakes. If we can live wisely then we won't be sick, we can take care of any disease, no matter what it is. At present doctors, excellent, first rate people no doubt, aren't aware of how every atom depends upon the law of *idappaccayatā*, and, because they don't know this still cannot cure certain diseases. Through really understanding the power of the law of nature dwelling in every atom of the human creature we might be able to heal disease, or to stop people from dying.

According to the Buddha there isn't anyone who dies or is born, no 'me' who's born, lives life and then dies, only the myriad atoms, the parts that combine to make up the body and mind, operating according to the law of *idappaccayatā*. The god *idappaccayatā* is great; we need to reconcile ourselves to it, fall in with it, understand it and then we won't have to suffer, we won't have any problems. In this

day and age people in the world resist *idappaccayatā*, preferring to follow the defilement of *taṇha*, of foolish desire instead, and then, when they have bodily *dukkha* they get mental suffering too because mindfulness and wisdom are absent from life. Worldly people remain obstinate where the god *idappaccayatā* is concerned. They don't submit to it, don't behave in accordance with it, rather they give in to suffering, saying that suffering is 'fun.' Most people would say that some suffering, some happiness is good, is better than no suffering at all! Some of the people who come here (to *Suan Mokkh*) believe that it isn't normal for anyone to be suffering-free, so, when we say that we teach about the complete quenching of suffering they shake their heads - they don't want it! They hold that to not suffer is abnormal. There's a way to do away with suffering, with ageing, sickness, and death - get rid of the 'self,' the 'me' who suffers, but they say that's abnormal, and they don't want it. So, the minds of such people must continue to experience disturbance because the system for ending it is unacceptable.

Now, the miscreants in Bangkok, and elsewhere in the world, have their own version of god - the defilement of greed, of *taṇhā*, foolish desire is their god. They don't know about the law of *idappaccayatā*, so they don't try to control their behaviour. Thus they're dangerous, causing trouble and strife for their fellow men everywhere. They don't have a proper god, if they did they'd cease being a problem very quickly. Every government should train people to understand the workings of the true god, *idappaccayatā*, and then all the wrongdoers would dissolve away, would change, become decent people dwelling contentedly. But at present those with power go more towards promoting, encouraging the defilements, which is much the same as encouraging people to increasingly dislike god. People don't want the *Dhamma* god, they prefer defilement, they take money to be their god, and then, when they take the refuges it's '*satang saranaṇ gachāmi, satang saranaṇ gachāmi*' - *satang*, money, has become their god. Governments should help people to know the real god, that which is a true refuge, because if they take refuge in money it will steadily destroy the world until there's nothing left. Buddhists mustn't go wrong in this: the true god is the *Dhamma* the Buddha awakened to, that which he taught about - *idappaccayatā* - act so that we don't make any mistakes and the law of *idappaccayatā* won't create a 'me' to do the suffering - simple.

Keep the true god in the mind, don't rely on a bit of glass hung around the neck. The true, real god must be preserved in the mind. If you get the chance look at the pictures in Thai newspapers: the pictures of malefactors apprehended by the Police show that they invariably wear amulets around their necks, their god hangs around their necks, everyday, but it doesn't help them. Thus, keep the true god in mind, control behaviour so that it's always correct and put an end to problems. Humankind, if we have faith in a genuine god won't have any problems, will dwell in contentment, and then the disputes about whether there is or isn't a god, what god is, what your god is, what my god is? - the arguments can end, and anyone can hold to any kind of god they like without hurting anyone else. A God, even if on the level of a person, is still a good thing, because it allows people to have *siladhamma*, to function morally. Thus having a god is better than not having one because then, at least, there is some moral behaviour in this world.

We've looked at the variously misunderstood and disputed matter of 'god,' in order to try and bring out some understanding and put an end to, some, of the disputing. Because there's no need for disagreement; we can all live together, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Thai, Indian, etc., can live together in this world and follow our own god, whatever it may be.

When, as happens, belief in particular gods comes to an end, when they're seen as no longer viable, then there's change, people change their allegiance of their own accord. It's been the same since time immemorial, people changed, changed, changed their beliefs until they arrived at the ultimate person-type of god. Subsequently, the Buddha discovered that there something beyond, a superior kind of god: the law of *idappaccayatā*, which was what he awakened to, and, when he had, revered it as the highest, the ultimate. We'd be bold enough to say that nobody will ever find a god anywhere higher than this law - ever. The god *idappacayatā*, pre-existing all things, controlling all things - all the arising, persisting, and ceasing wherever, whenever it happens - and indwelling in every single atom that goes to make up the entire universe.