

Knowing *the* World

Teachings on the Nature of Mind and the World
by Luang Por Liem Thitadhammo



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Foreword

Within this little booklet are teachings on the nature of the mind and the world given by Luang Por Liem Thitadhammo. During a visit to Sri Lanka in March, 2013, Luang Por had this Dhamma discussion with the resident monastic community at Na Uyana Forest Monastery. The sincere interest in practising Dhamma and developing meditation led to practical and profound teachings on training the mind and understanding the world:

“...The guests that come to the monastery are only visitors, just like these visiting mental states that arise in our minds. Some make us laugh, some we delight in, while others bring up aversion and disappointment. When we see them from non-delusion, then we see it all as maya — as illusion and trickery, a system of deceiving....Know how to abandon the world. Know how to put it down.”

Luang Por explains that what we understand as the world is a misunderstanding. As a consequence of delusion we are overwhelmed with craving and attachment. Attaching to mental states and mind objects as ‘me’ and ‘mine’ makes us a victim of delight and aversion. This illusion of ‘self’ and ‘belonging to self’ arises from feeling and craving:

“...what we call the ‘Eight Wordly Dhammas’ arise from our sense of self-importance. Delight is a lokadhamma — this is sukha, or what we call happiness. Aversion is a lokadhamma, it’s dukkha — we don’t like it and we’re unhappy. See these lokadhammas as simply nature — things come, things go. The guests come and they go —

it's not their residence. For what do we go delighting and getting angry about?...‘Rupa, vedana, sañña, sankhara and viññana — having arisen they cease’. Seen in this way, everything is empty.”

Luang Por is urging us to investigate just what is the nature of these visiting mental states? What is the nature of these five khandas? Coming and going and arising and ceasing is the nature of this world — Who has control and over what? Through understanding the nature of the mind and the nature of the world one arrives at:

“...knowing and seeing the mind as it really is. That’s the so-called mind-moment of insight — seeing that ‘the citta is just the citta’, or ‘the mind is simply the mind’....If we set the mind free from delighting — abandon craving and attachment — then there’s nothing there. As I see it, this is the normal state of the mind....Neither happy nor sad. Just nature pure and simple. This is the normal state of the mind which gives rise to peace.”

The mind and the world belong to nature — empty of self and what belongs to self. This natural approach to understanding Dhamma through training the heart and mind is an essential feature of the Luang Pu Chah way of practice. Through diligence and sincerely practising Dhamma-Vinaya one gets the taste of ‘path and fruit’ for oneself — the vimuttirasa, the taste of freedom. Luang Por Liem, as a close disciple of Luang Pu Chah, has faithfully followed in his footsteps this direct path to living realization. Now as an inspiring example of Dhamma-Vinaya himself Luang Por Liem offers his teachings and service to the Sangha and the Sasana. May all who aspire to know and see the nature of the heart and mind — to know and see the nature of the world, diligently apply these practical and profound teachings. We have Luang Por’s assurance that:

“...Those who do so will come to see the value and benefit for themselves through their own practice.”

With Prosperity in the Dhamma,
The Translators
Wat Pah Nanachat, May 2013







Knowing the World

Teachings on the Nature of Mind and the World



A Dhamma Talk and discussion with the monastic community of monks, novices, nuns and lay-meditators at Na Uyana Forest Monastery, Sri Lanka, on the evening of March 16th, 2013.

Usually, when we gather together like this or meet for devotional *puja* we begin with some chanting. In our chanting we praise and show our reverence for the *tiratana* — the Triple Gem. This revering the virtues and qualities, the *gunadhamma* of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha inspires our going for refuge. The Triple Gem is the real treasure, or the real inheritance for those of us who are determined to follow in the ‘footsteps of the Enlightened Ones’. We do the chanting and devotional *puja* for reflecting on this. One of our reflections specifically refers to the noble qualities of the Sangha:



*“Supatipanno bhagavato savaka sangho.
Ujupatipanno bhagavato savaka sangho.
Ñayapatipanno bhagavato savaka sangho.
Samicipatipanno bhagavato savaka sangho.”*

[“They are the Blessed One’s disciples who have practised well. Who have practised directly. Who have practised insightfully. Those who practice with integrity.”]

These four attributes, or ways of referring to the Sangha, are like the ‘footsteps of the Enlightened Ones’. We show our reverence and respect for these virtuous qualities of Sangha which follow on from the Noble Triple Gem.

Within these qualities are the virtues we aspire to develop in ourselves through good conduct and practising Dhamma. This is a kind of developing which proceeds to lift us up and lead us onwards to the state of completeness and perfection. However, the extent to which it is thus fulfilling depends on our commitment to the practice. We can say that all these virtues we aspire to develop converge in the quality of *sallekha*, or effacement. *Sallekha* is the wearing away of *kilesas* — the abandoning of defilements leading to freedom from *dukkha*. The heart free from *kilesas* experiences a peaceful sense of seclusion, a calm and cool mind. It thus makes us a true ‘field of merit’ for anyone who encounters us. ‘*Samananan ca dassanam*’ — the sight of a *samana*, ‘a peaceful one’ is indeed a blessing, something which is good.



Now this good opportunity we all have to further develop ourselves should really be taken up in a wholehearted way. We who have genuine respect for noble virtues will naturally apply ourselves to sincerely practising Dhamma-Vinaya. Those who do so will come to see the value and benefit for themselves through their own practice. For all of us Dhamma friends here

tonight we might say we ‘live in the cool shade of the yellow robes’. We have a most suitable situation for doing whatever needs doing to diligently bring our Dhamma practice to fruition.

So this evening I respectfully extend my greetings to all of you Venerable Ones here. You who are firmly determined in heart and mind to practising Dhamma in this sincere way. On account of this I *anumodana* — I express my joy and appreciation. Now I open up the opportunity to all of you, if you have any questions regarding what might be beneficial for your practice, or if you have anything in general you would like to ask.

* * *

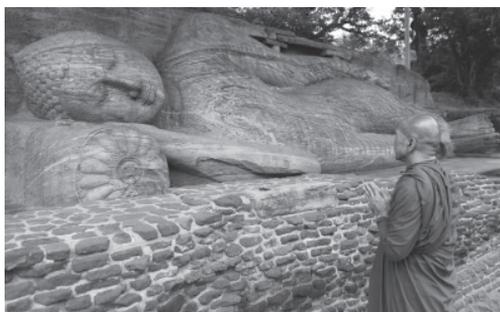


Question: Luang Por, please allow us to respectfully ask a question. Some of the meditators practise very hard trying to remove defilements and improve mindfulness, but it's very difficult for them. Developing the mind through meditation is very difficult for them. Could Luang Por, our Venerable Teacher, please explain why this is difficult for them?

Answer: Regarding the developing of our Dhamma practice, it's important not to have craving or desire as part of that process. We must avoid having craving or desire in the mind when we take up the practice. Our primary task is to become established as one who is free from heedlessness — one who is *appamado*. You can compare it to planting a fruit tree. We begin with a fruit tree sapling and a well-chosen place for planting. Then we dig a hole, provide the right mix of soil and fertilizer and plant the sapling tree. Next we give the right amount of water and sunlight, taking care to optimise growing conditions. In addition we need to protect the sapling from harmful insects and other dangers. Now, after having provided the optimum causes and conditions, the growth and maturity of the fruit tree is something we cannot determine for ourselves. We can't force it to grow in any way. As long as we have done our duty well by optimising growing conditions, then the fruit tree will grow in balance with nature and mature accordingly. In the meanwhile, we continue to protect it from insects and other dangers or obstacles to growth. It will grow in accordance with and to whatever extent there is this balance of nature in the causes and conditions. Eventually our mature fruit tree will flower and bear fruit. So regarding our development in Dhamma practice, we have to consider it in this way.

Venerable Ananda, who was himself the Buddha's younger relative, also served as the Buddha's *upatthana* monk, his faithful attendant. After the Buddha's final passing away at *parinibbana*, he was still not yet perfected regarding his attainment as a fully enlightened *arahant*. But Venerable Ananda was encouraged by the Buddha's prediction that after his *parinibbana* Ananda would in this

very life indeed realize that attainment. However, as the First Sangha Council to codify the Dhamma-Vinaya was approaching he still had not realized *arahant*. So in order to enter that First Sangha Council assembly as a Fully Enlightened One, Venerable Ananda put forth great effort in his practice to realise that goal. But even as he put forth great effort, the very obstacle to realisation was his desire for the goal. It was only when he had finally given up and abandoned that desire that his mind experienced a kind of emptiness that opened the doorway for the real coolness to enter his heart. So regarding this craving and desire, we have to know it as an obstacle for our Dhamma practice which makes it develop slowly. We have to do the practice without being driven by craving and desire.

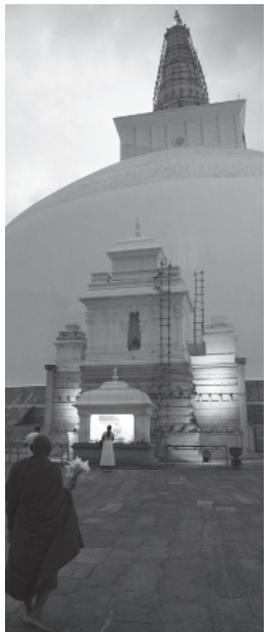


Question: *Luang Por, in your biography (No Worries, 2012) it says that when you first arrived at Ajahn Chah's monastery he taught you the brahma-viharas. I was wondering what Ajahn Chah's instructions were? How did he teach you the brahma-vihara meditation?*

Answer: The *brahma-viharas* are the four 'Divine Abidings' of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. They are one attribute or one way of describing the virtues and qualities of the Noble Ones. But

in the way Luang Pu Chah first taught me this, he actually called them the *appamañña-dhammas* — the ‘Boundless Qualities’. For example, one way of understanding the *metta appamañña-dhamma* is this state of having loving-kindness without attachment to any particular individual or any particular place. If it is just ordinary *brahma-vihara metta* regarding particular individuals, then it’s more like affectionate love with attachment. The Lord Buddha, while still living the lay-life as a prince, upon hearing that his royal wife had given birth to a son exclaimed: “A fetter has been born to me!” So you see, this is the kind of love with attachment. Is it different from the kind of *metta* without attachment? When understood in this way, the *brahma-viharas* are virtues of the Noble Ones and we call them the *appamañña-dhammas*.

Actually, Luang Pu Chah spoke in a way which was leading away from worldliness and the unenlightened state. He didn’t speak using the language of *puthujjanas*, the unenlightened ones. He simply spoke in a way that led the mind to true peace and seclusion. Consequently, Luang Pu Chah’s teaching encouraged in us a sense of responsibility to do the practice properly. This is how I saw it. What he said would elevate the level of our sati. He kind of cautioned us or reminded us how to have mindfulness regarding the practice. So it’s similar to what the Buddha said: “The Buddha only points the way” (MN 107). But the task for the one actually doing the practice — that’s another story.



* * *

*Question: I ask permission from Venerable Bhante, our Venerable Teacher, and from all the Venerable Ones here to ask my question. My question is: Can our Venerable Teacher please explain how you understand what is ‘path-consciousness’, or *magga-citta*, and what is ‘fruit-consciousness’, or *phala-citta*? And the second question is: What is ‘total-nibbana’, or *parinibbana*? Thank you very much.*

Answer: *Nibbana* — *nibbana* is the ending of kilesas. The ending of greed, aversion and delusion. We can say that this is one attribute or one quality of Dhamma. *Nibbana* is the ending of craving and desire because all craving and desire has been abandoned. Delight comes from desire. Satisfaction comes from desire. Aversion and dissatisfaction come from desire. This craving and desire is essentially bound up with feeling — *sampayutta* — and is a consequence of ignorance or faulty understanding. The Noble Arahants encourage us with this reflection: “*rupa, vedana, sañña, sankhara* and *viññana* — having arisen they cease”. These five aggregates of form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness are simply of a nature to arise and pass away — just that much. Seen in this way, everything is empty.

As for *magga-citta* and *phala-citta*: Through watching and carefully guarding our mind we come to a state we call ‘*puu ruu*’. This Thai word ‘*puu ruu*’ means knowing and seeing the mind as it really is. But can you actually see yourself in this way if there are still obstacles in your



mind or defilements blocking your seeing? Because usually as *puthujjanas* we still have obstacles and blindness — the greed, aversion and delusion which are clouding and polluting our minds. It's like water. If water has green substance mixed in with it, we don't say, "What's this green substance in the water?" Rather we just call it: "green water." Or if it has red substance in it we say: "That's red water." Actually, what we are seeing and referring to is the substance in the water. So regarding these kinds of *citta* or states of mind, they are actually different levels of someone seeing their own purity. When there are obstacles, you won't see it. When the obstacles are gone you see it clearly. That's the so-called mind-moment of insight — seeing that 'the *citta* is just the *citta*', or 'the mind is simply the mind'.

* * *

Question: Venerable Ajahn, as the abbot of a monastery a monk has to deal with a lot of people, both monks and lay-people. Some of them are greedy, others are angry and some of them are deluded or even crazy. How to deal with these people? And how, as an abbot or a senior monk in a monastery, to let one's mind remain calm and cool? So that is my question.

Answer: This is something that actually everyone has to deal with. The Thai word for abbot is '*jao-awal*'. What it

literally means is: ‘*jao*’ is the lord or the owner, and ‘*awat*’ comes from the Pali word *avasa* which means a residence or dwelling place. So we could say that *jao-awat* means the ‘lord of the residence’ or the ‘owner of the dwelling place’. Now whoever is to be the lord of the residence has to know that dwelling place well. But just what is this dwelling place we must know well? *Rupa, vedana, sañña, sankhara* and *viññana* — this is our real residence. The more we abandon our delusion regarding our real residence, the more we develop *upekkha* and abide in equanimity.

The guests that come to our monastery are *agantukas* — only visitors, just like these visiting mental states that arise in our minds. Some make us laugh, some we delight in, while others bring up aversion and disappointment. When we see them from non-delusion, then we see it all as *maya* — as illusion and trickery, a system of deceiving. The delusion and illusory nature of the world are like a theatre which tricks us into getting happy, excited and carried away. As we read in the Buddha’s teachings, once he said:



***“Etha passathimam lokam, cittam rajarathu pamam;
yattha bala visidanti, natthi sangho vijanatam.”***

[“Come look at this glittering world, like unto a royal chariot; the foolish are immersed in it, but the wise do not touch it.” (Dhp. 13, 171)]

The Buddha urged us all to see the world in this way. If we see it with delusion, then we'll see the world as delightful, sparkling and desirable. But for those who know the world in line with Dhamma, will they go searching for anything substantial in it? Know how to abandon the world. Know how to put it down. There is an old Northeast Thai expression which says: "The one who is the loser, or the one who knows how to surrender, that one is a monk or a Venerable One. And the one who wins — the winner is *mara*, because a winner has enemies."

The *lokadhammas*, or what we call the 'Eight Wordly Dhammas', arise from our sense of self-importance. Delight is a *lokadhamma* — this is *sukha*, or what we call happiness. Aversion is a *lokadhamma*, it's *dukkha* — we don't like it and we're unhappy. See these lokadhammas as simply nature — things come, things go. The guests come and they go — it's not their residence. For what do we go delighting and getting angry about? All we really need is what's sufficient for us to do our *samana* duties well — that's enough.

The *lokadhammas* are the dhammas which bind up and shackle the world. The Lord Buddha sat above them. We read this story when we study the scriptures. Before

his attainment of *anuttara-samma-sambodhiñāna*, on the day of his Supreme Enlightenment, the Buddha received eight bunches of Kusa grass from the Brahman Sotthiya (SnA.II,391). Taking the grass he proceeded to make a seat to sit on. Our traditional



interpretation of this story is that these eight bunches of Kusa grass represent the eight worldly dhammas that the Buddha rose up above. What are these eight worldly dhammas? They are the four pairs of: gain and loss, fame and obscurity, praise and blame and more generally we have *sukha* and *dukkha*, or happiness and suffering. If we can really see these eight worldly dhammas for what they are, then just this is enough for understanding what keeps us shackled in the world. These are the worldly dhammas which bind up and shackle the world.

The *kicca-vatta*, or the ‘Fourteen Monastic Duties’, form one chapter of the Vinaya discipline which we are responsible for training in as monastics. One of these *kicca-vatta* is called the *avasika-vatta*, or the duties of the resident monastics regarding their residence. But actually it doesn’t refer to any one monastic in particular. It just refers to anyone who is residing there and knows the place well. Such a person we could call the abbot or the *jao-avasa*, the lord of the residence. Even if it’s a dog who lives there and knows the place well, we could call it the ‘lord of the residence’.

There is a story about a wise old monk. He had a way of teaching people who were lost in their own self-importance. This old monk had a dog in his monastery and he called his dog ‘Sompan’. *Sompan* is yet another Thai word for abbot — we should understand that all these names are just conventions. If a guest who had self-importance came to the monastery and said: “Where’s *sompan*, where’s the abbot?” This monk would point over there and say: “There’s *sompan*, there’s the abbot.” And that person would go and see that it’s just a dog and get

offended, thinking that the old monk was teasing him. So it was a skilful means for reducing *ditthi-mana* — the sense of self-importance and conceit — and also for teaching the nature of conventions. It is important for us too not to get lost in these conventions.

This Thai word for abbot, *sompan*, comes from the Pali word *sambhara*. It literally means ‘the one who carries the burden’. Actually all of us here are abbots and we’re all carrying around this burden of *rupa*, *vedana*, *sañña*, *sankhara* and *viññana*. When we start to feel how heavy it is we want to put it down. This *sambhara* — we have to put it down. Just put down the burden. I live over there in Thailand. I’m not really the lord of the residence. This body, this *rupa-khanda* doesn’t belong to me. And whatever place we call our country actually belongs to nature. If we set the mind free from delighting — abandon craving and attachment — then there’s nothing there. As I see

it, this is the normal state of the mind. Neither good nor bad. Neither heavy nor light. Neither black nor white. Neither happy nor sad. Just nature pure and simple. This is the normal state of the mind which gives rise to peace.



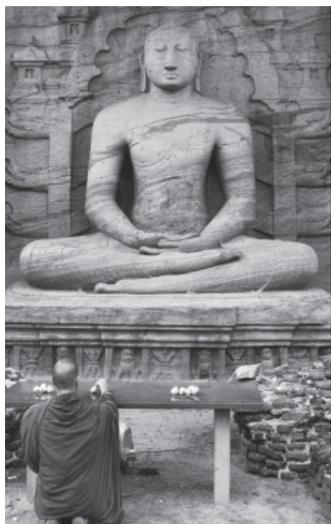
[Luang Por Liem invites Tan Ajahn Jundee to say a few words. He is a senior disciple of Venerable Ajahn Chah with 39 vassa as a monk. He has been the abbot of Wat Pah Ampawan, Mango-grove Forest Monastery, in Thailand for more than 25 years now.]

Luang Por, I respectfully request permission to speak. Respectful greetings to the Sangha here. As for myself and my status here today, I'm what's called a '*paccha-samana*', or an attendant monk following behind Luang Por Liem. Now Luang Por has invited me to say a few words. By giving me this opportunity to speak, maybe I can add a little something to our understanding. These are just some thoughts of mine and perhaps it's not all correct. Nevertheless, I can say something for you to consider.



Especially regarding this question of being an abbot — as Luang Por was explaining *sompan* literally means 'the one who carries the burden'. If we don't understand this situation, then we do end up carrying everything around and it does indeed become a heavy burden. The monastery is heavy, the lay-people are heavy, the material things are heavy — everything becomes really heavy. Luang Pu Chah used to warn us about this. When he would send his monks away to other branch monasteries for the *vassa* Rains Retreat he would say to them: "Be careful you don't turn into the 'abbot' — the *sompan* — because that's the gateway to hell." One way of understanding this is that when our mind-state degenerates into a state of suffering and negativity then it comes closer to the hell realms. For the one who takes everything up as a burden, it's easy to as if 'fall into hell'. If we don't yet have some firm foundation in our Dhamma practice which we can rely on in difficult situations, then anything can turn into a hell realm. The lay-people, the monks, the material

things in the monastery — anything. And this shows that attachment and sense of self are becoming involved and taking over.



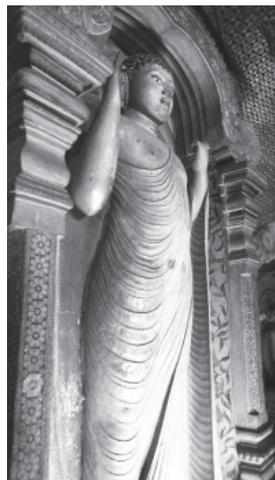
I live over there in Thailand and I've been an abbot for over 25 years now. I've been through just about everything. I've been accused, I've been criticized — all kinds of things. If we're not solid in our practice and able to patiently endure difficulties, then there's no way we'll survive. Just as Luang Por was now explaining, it's essential to understand these eight worldly dhammas. As long as we know them for what they are, then we won't go picking things up whereby they turn into burdens.

Metta is another essential dhamma we must rely upon for wellbeing. Just now the questioner mentioned how some people who come to the monastery have greed, some have anger and some are deluded or even crazy. This is just the nature of people. If we understand this then there's no real problem, there's nothing really there. If we don't understand this, then everything can become a burden. But it's especially important with difficult people that we are established with *metta-dhamma*, this quality of loving-kindness which works wonders.

I'd like to refer again to that old Northeast Thai expression about surrendering that Luang Por had mentioned: "The monk or the Venerable One in you will arise when you surrender." I'll give you an example from

my own life. It was my second year at Wat Pah Ampawan, the monastery where I live in Thailand. At that time I was still a new abbot and didn't yet know much about anything. A problem arose and I had no idea what was behind it. One day a group of lay-people from the village came to the monastery. They were very angry and accused me of misbehaving. Although the accusations were false and aggressive, I kept up the *metta* with them. They were using very harsh language and words that I wouldn't even want to repeat here. But I'll give you one example. They were using a Thai expression like: "You're such a greedy pig of an abbot!" And I really didn't understand why they were saying it because I hadn't been greedy like that.

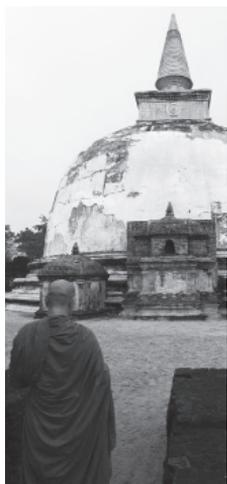
Actually it turned out that one group of monastery supporters had put up markers to indicate the monastery boundaries. There were basically two groups of lay-people: the group of local villagers who supported the monastery and wanted us to be there, and the other group that didn't want us to be there. And it was this group that was angry about monastery boundaries being put up. But I hadn't been involved — it was the group of monastery supporters who had done it. So I just smiled and said: "Look, don't worry. Say whatever it is you have to say and I'll just listen to everybody." As I was hearing everybody, they were getting more and more angry and heated. And they actually had weapons, they had knives and long swords. By now the one group of lay-people was ready to physically harm the other for this dispute over land. So when I saw that, I simply said: "Look, this has gone far enough. If you act now following on this anger then you'll



regret it a lot later. But if you stop now, you still stand a chance.” That’s all I said. I just warned them like that and walked away to go sit in the meditation *sala*. After sitting there in the *sala* for a while, I saw them coming over to me with their swords. I thought: “Oh no, now they’re coming to kill me.” But actually they came into the *sala*, put down their weapons and said: “Ajahn, thank you for saying that. We could have killed somebody just now and we would have regretted it.”

So as it turned out, the situation wasn’t such a big ordeal. But if I hadn’t had some good foundation in practice, then it could have turned into a bigger problem. As Luang Por was just explaining, this being an abbot or a *sompan* can mean ‘the one who carries the burden’. If we’re not yet firmly established in our practice, then it will be difficult. We really have to find ways to not grasp and cling to these things as ‘me’ and ‘mine’. In other words, if we just don’t pick it up and carry it around, then it’s not really going to be a problem. If we know how to let go and abandon situations as soon as they arise, then we stay

normal. It’s natural that mental states come and go — it works the same way in us as in others. If we understand that it’s really a trick of the *kilesas*, then we need not take it on as a burden. As Luang Pu Chah used to say: “Whatever burden other people are carrying around, don’t go making it your burden.” I really like this saying. If they want to carry around a burden then that’s their business. But as for us — just don’t pick it up and remain calm and cool. So these are just a few reflections that I offer for your consideration.



Question: Luang Por, please allow me to ask a question. Could you briefly explain how hard you put forth effort to develop your practice in the early years? This will be very beneficial for our newly ordained venerable monastics and new meditators to hear how you put forth effort in the beginning of your practice.

Answer: The changes in our lives are just natural because nature changes. We begin our arising in the world with the little body of a baby. As time passes by and we grow up, even that process of growing up is actually the body declining, changing and becoming otherwise.

So at first, of course, I never thought that I would become a monk. But this was also to change. Initially, living in society we have to work hard to develop ourselves and get it right. As time passed by I tried to do my duty well, and learned more and more what my role in life was. On the one hand, from the point of view of the world, it is normal and customary for young people to get married and raise a family, following on from their hopes and wishes. But this was not to happen to me. Now on the other hand, there is the point of view of those who want to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Buddha. I could see that following the way of the world was the way leading to non-freedom. It was the way leading to bondage and confinement, like being in prison.



Having had this initial insight, I decided I needed to grow further in knowledge and understanding. So I renounced the world in order to train myself and discover the full meaning of it. I took up the way of training for one who sees the danger and disadvantage in *samsara*, this ‘cycle of birth and death’. We usually just call it ordaining, or becoming a monk, or renouncing the world. But it wasn’t as if I was straight away able to give up everything. My mind still had the usual obstacles in it, so I determined to find out why. For the most part I didn’t study externally. The place to study was right here within myself, learning how to make my mind pure. Purifying all aspects of my conduct in order to become a *samana*, to become beautiful in the spiritual sense. I made it an all-around training in Dhamma-Vinaya. If I was as yet unable to accomplish some particular practical skill, then I would train further right there.

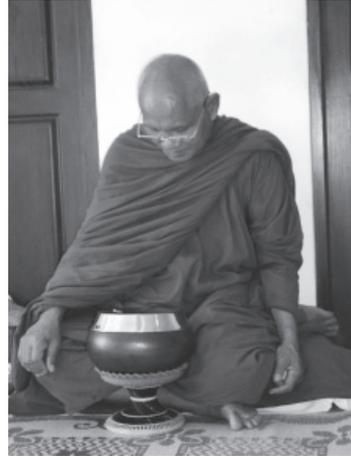
One way of training I used in learning how to purify myself was the *dhutanga-vattas*. These are the austerities, or the ascetic practices established by the Buddha for ‘going against the stream of craving’. They are especially useful for confronting and ‘burning up’ feelings which arise on

account of experiencing unfamiliar and challenging situations. For example, the Buddha allowed us and advised us to eat just one meal a day. When I first took up this practice — oh! it was so difficult. I wasn’t familiar with it at all. Before ordaining I had eaten at least three times a day. But the purpose of these *dhutanga* trainings is to go against the stream of our familiar comforts and



conveniences. This tends to stir up feelings, which show up where the craving is hiding. If we don't go against the stream, then we'll never know.

So out of respect for this *dhutanga* training I took up the practice of eating one meal a day. At first I was very hungry and it was so unpleasant. Agitation, concern and anxiety would arise and I would often lose heart and feel that I just couldn't do it. Actually, this is a big danger. As mentioned in the discourse where the Buddha teaches the dangers for newly ordained monastics, it can be disastrous (MN 67). Initially eating just once a day brings up agitation, and in a few hours you're hungry again. Hunger is a kind of *dukkha*. But when this kind of *dukkha* arises we must avoid encouraging and developing it. Out of respect and love for these rules and principles we have to contemplate: "What is hunger? — What is thirst?" Over time as my body adapted all these concerns and agitations faded and the feelings of hunger reduced. As the Buddha teaches, one of the dangers for newly ordained monastics is this inability to endure feelings of hunger. Initially, until we adapt, we may have to rely on patient endurance to overcome this danger.



As time passed by — with the *ayū-saṅkhara* life principle gradually wearing away — I gained more and more experience. However, I could see that my mind was still corrupted with *kilesas*. I felt like a lotus still mired in the mud of *raga*, *dosa* and *moha* — still stuck in the

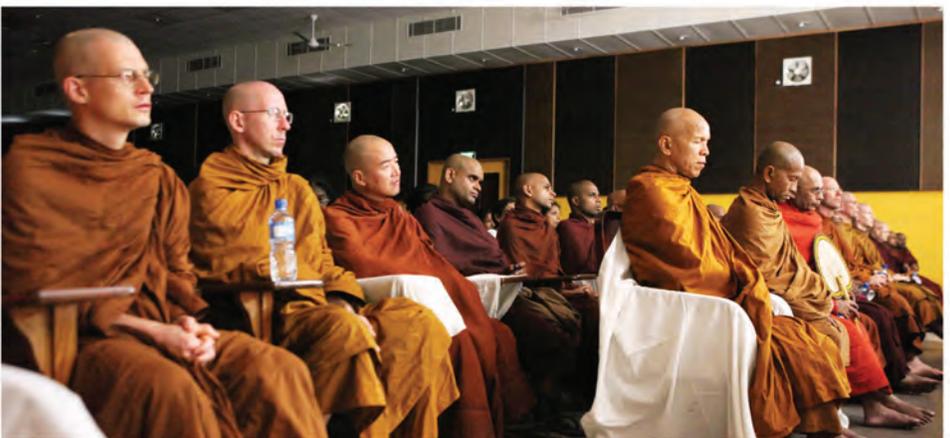
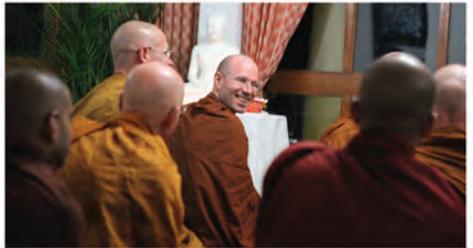
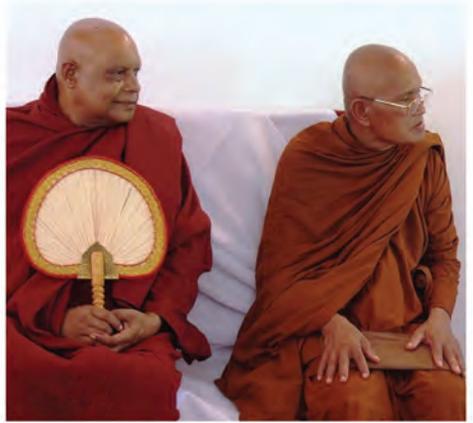
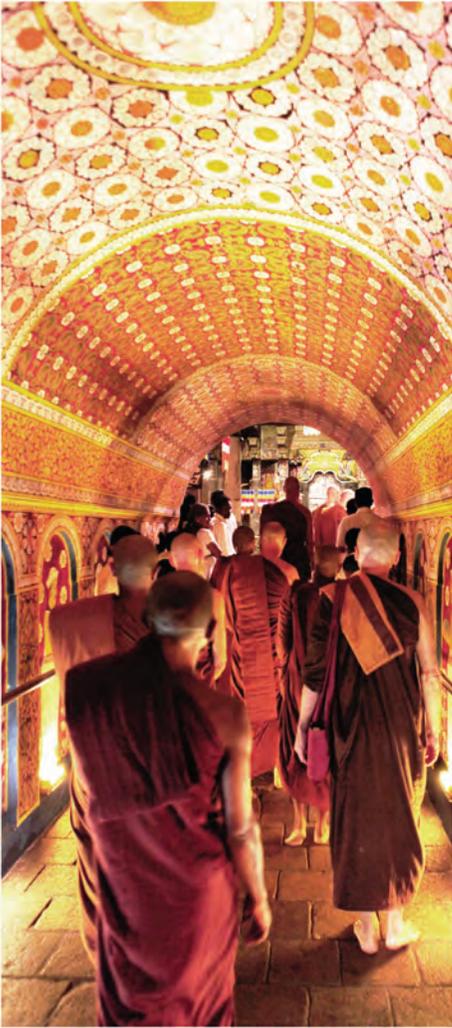
swamp of greed, aversion and delusion. But actually, if I hadn't seen these *kilesas* there, then I wouldn't have kept practising. If I hadn't seen the impurities still in the mind, then I wouldn't have known how it needed further purifying. So I continued on diligently practicing the *dhutanga-vattas* with a sense of urgency to purify the mind of defilements.

All of us here, out of respect for the Noble Dhamma — the Noble Teachings of the Lord Buddha, should endeavour to diligently practice this Dhamma-Vinaya well in accordance with our ability. Having ordained as a *bhikkhu* or a monastic into this well proclaimed Doctrine and Discipline, we can say we 'live in the cool shade of the yellow robes'. We should frequently remind ourselves that the world regards us *pujaniya-puggalla* — those who are worthy of great reverence and respect. But we should

beware not to see this as personal respect. Rather these yellow robes are the 'Banners of the Arahants', and the faithful are bowing to the *ariyavamsa* — the great lineage of Enlightened Ones. As for us personally, all we have is this *patikula rupa-khanda*, these dirty bodies of ours. If we can see it in this way, it helps to humble the heart and free it from sensual desire and craving.



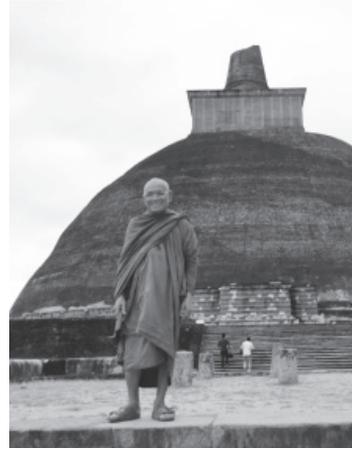
So these are some reflections on how I initially began developing my practice of Dhamma-Vinaya. At the very least we are able to cultivate a certain wholesome pride and good feeling that we're not living a disgraceful or





worthless life. But actually, moreover than that, when we diligently practise like this we are following in the footsteps of the Noble Ones.

The Venerable Ratthapala was one endowed with great faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha — a real *saddha-carita*. This quality of having great faith is indeed a spiritual virtue. But in addition to this, Venerable Ratthapala had a special view on the world which helped him to abandon desire and eliminate craving from his heart. Perhaps we've all studied the *Ratthapala Sutta* (MN 82). First he pointed to the world and said: "Any world is unstable, it is swept away." Again he pointed and said: "Any world has no shelter and no protector." And again he said: "Any world has nothing of its own — one has to leave all and pass on." Finally he said: "Any world is incomplete, insatiate, the slave of craving."



These reflections point us to abandoning craving for the world and putting it down. If you can do this much, then the *maccu-rajā* — the 'Lord of Death' — cannot find you. So I see the world in the same way as Venerable Ratthapala did. All the wealth and treasure, material things, this body — *rupa-khandā*, *dhātu-khandā* — nothing lasts. It's all simply an expression and manifestation of change and decay. Keep abandoning delight and aversion from your mind. See everything as not your self or belonging to you. We have no real power or control over our life or the world. This nature of things is an attribute of Dhamma. We must be diligent in withdrawing our infatuation and intoxication

with the world. Keep letting go of defilements as soon as they arise. This will keep the heart and mind calm and cool, leading it to peace. So this is just the way we have to do it.

* * *



[Concluding remarks by Venerable Ariyananda Mahathero, acting abbot of Na Uyana Forest Monastery, Sri Lanka.]

From Luang Por and all the Venerable Sangha here I request permission to speak. Today our time has passed already. For two hours now we have been discussing Dhamma. We have heard many valuable teachings. I feel our Venerable Teacher's Dhamma will be very beneficial for all the venerable monks, nuns and lay-devotees. Our Venerable Teacher has been focusing on how we can develop our practice, such as through developing calmness, in order to reach real happiness. These teachings are very beneficial for us. Especially when, for example, sometimes we are meditating or practising and, for one reason or another, our confidence can decline. But when we see this kind of Venerable Teacher, and we hear this kind of Dhamma, again our confidence increases. Such valuable Dhamma can again give us energy to keep practising. So with much appreciation, we are very grateful to our Luang Por for delivering these Dhamma teachings.

At one point it occurred to me that maybe we have been working our Luang Por too hard, because he has been giving many Dhamma sermons. Now for today, this is the third Dhamma Talk and also there have been a few Dhamma discussions. That is a full schedule for the whole day for Luang Por and all the Venerable Ones, and it may be tiring for them. The last few days have also been the same as today. But through it all Luang Por didn't show any tiredness. For this we are very happy. He feels that whatever the schedule is we should follow it. I recall one occasion when even I was very tired, but Luang Por continued on to complete the programme. In this way also Luang Por can inspire in us this arousal of energy and endurance. These factors are very important for us to develop in our meditation. Sometimes, for one reason or another, some laziness arises and we feel that we cannot continue practising. Maybe it's due to painfulness in our body, for example. But when we recollect these kinds of teachers, then we again get energy to continue practising.



So on behalf of Na Uyana Mahathera (Venerable Ariyadhamma Mahathero), the Na Uyana Venerable Sangha of monks and nuns, and also the lay-devotees and faithful lay-supporters, we respectfully invited our Venerable Luang Por and his attending Venerable Ajahns to come visit us here in Sri Lanka and they kindly accepted. We are very thankful to Luang Por for coming and helping

our Buddha Sasana (Buddhist Religion) and our Buddhist tradition. We offer our highest reverence and respect for the *saddhamma* sermons he has delivered here. We wish our Luang Por to live more than 120 years to support the Sasana. But please understand, with this kind of Venerable Teachers, if they live long or not, it's not for their sake but for the sake of the Sasana. The Sasana is shining when these Venerables are there. Also if there are any noble wishes that the Luang Por has, may all those noble wishes be fulfilled.

And from our Na Uyana Sangha and community, and all the lay-devotees and faithful lay-supporters, we respectfully wish Tan Ajahn Jundee, Tan Ajahn Satien, Venerable Ajahn Siripaño and Venerable Ajahn Kevali

further good practice, good health and long life to support the Sasana. Also on behalf of the Na Uyana Sangha we would like to ask for forgiveness if there was any discomfort or inconvenience regarding our organization and

hospitality during the event of your visit. We please ask for forgiveness from Luang Por and the visiting Sangha. We again wish Luang Por and the Sangha to live long to support the Sasana.

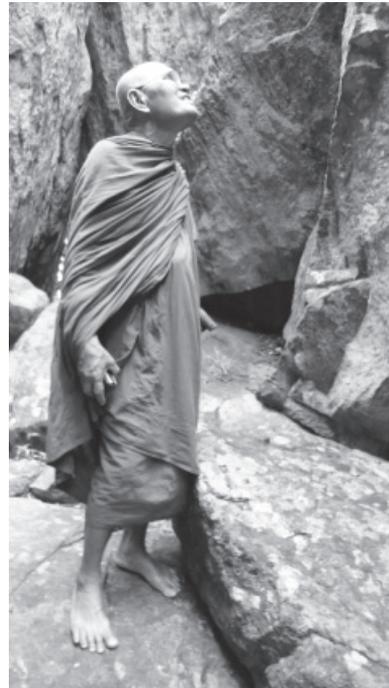


About Luang Por Liem

Luang Por Liem Thitadhammo is a Buddhist monk in the Thai Forest Tradition. He was born in Sri Saket Province in the Northeast of Thailand on the 5th of November 1941. After higher ordination at twenty years of age, Luang Por practiced in several village monasteries throughout the Northeast. With a growing interest in Dhamma-Vinaya and practising meditation, he joined the Forest Tradition in 1969.

He took up the training under Luang Pu Chah, who was later to become one of the most famous monks of the Thai Forest Tradition. Living under Luang Pu Chah's guidance in Wat Nong Pah Pong, Ubon Province, Luang Por Liem soon became one of his closest disciples. During that time Luang Pu Chah's reputation and influence continued to grow and spread throughout the world. After Luang Pu Chah became severely ill in 1982, he entrusted Luang Por Liem to lead the monastery. Shortly thereafter, as Luang Pu Chah's illness prevented him from speaking, the Sangha of Wat Nong Pah Pong appointed Luang Por Liem to take over the abbotship.

He fulfils this duty up to the present day, keeping the heritage of Luang Pu Chah's Dhamma and characteristic ways of monastic training available for monks, nuns and lay disciples. He also provides leadership and support



for Wat Pah Nanachat, Luang Pu Chah's International Forest Monastery for training monks using the English language. For the Sangha at Wat Pah Nanachat, Luang Por Liem is not only a dearly respected teacher and guide in the monastic life, but has for the last seventeen years also conducted every monastic ordination ceremony as the preceptor.

Luang Por Liem has twice been honored with honorary monastic titles from His Majesty the King of Thailand. He is currently known as Tan Chao Khun Phra Rachabhavanavikrom. In recent years, many invitations for teaching Dhamma from all around the world have brought Luang Por Liem to visit the many international branch monasteries of the Ajahn Chah tradition. This recent visit to Sri Lanka signifies the growing relationship between the Thai and Sri Lankan Forest Traditions. In addition it contributes to upholding and propagating a genuine path of practice for Awakening to the world over.



"....These teachings point us to abandoning craving for the world and putting it down. If you can do this much, then the Lord of Death cannot find you. All of this -- nothing lasts. It's all simply an expression and manifestation of change and decay. Keep abandoning delight and aversion from your mind. See everything as not your self or belonging to you. We have no real power or control over our life or the world. This nature of things is an attribute of Dhamma. We must be diligent in withdrawing our infatuation and intoxication with the world. Keep letting go of defilements as soon as they arise. This will keep the heart and mind calm and cool, leading it to peace. This is just the way we have to do it."



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