

*Tan Chao Khun Upālī Guṇūpāmajahn*  
(Mahā Jan Siricando)



THE STUDY OF DHAMMA IN RELIGION

# Translator's Introduction

The story surrounding this Dhamma talk caused a good deal of intrigue during Tan Chao Khun Upāli's life – one that was only explained many years later when he wrote his autobiography.

Starting in the 1880's, Tan Chao Khun Upāli had become known as the favorite monk of King Chulalongkorn (Rāma V) in particular, and the royal family in general. However, at the height of the First World War, Chao Khun Upāli gave this Dhamma talk and had it printed into a book, even distributing it at the funeral of a high-ranking and important noble-woman, *Mom Ratchawong Ying Duang Jai Pramote Na Ayudhya*.

The talk not coincidentally features a blistering moral condemnation of the evils and stupidity of war. As Siam had officially entered 'The Great War', and was still an absolute monarchy (under King Rāma VI), speaking with this kind of unabashed moral authority was considered either overly brave or foolish. Tan Chao Khun Upāli was served with a royal decree stripping him of his Chao Khun title for "activities against the interests of the state".

Chao Khun Upāli said nothing about this and continued his practise and teaching without taking the slightest notice of any political repercussions. A year later, he was quietly given a new royal title, with all the status and privileges of his old one, and granted a royal "pardon" (in context, *read: "apology"*)...

Not only is this a typically excellent Dhamma talk, but the whole context around it is an inspiring example of the integrity of Tan Chao Khun Upāli and his absolute refusal to put favour, status or nationalism ahead of his respect for true Dhamma.

Interestingly, more unintended intrigue comes from the fact that this talk is based on a verse from the Sutta Nipāta that appears differently in almost all other versions of the Canon, apart from the Siamese edition – which changes the meaning considerably. The reading used in this talk is an anomaly as far as most editions of scripture and the Commentary goes, and this raises questions about authenticity. The satisfying nature of Chao Khun Upāli's explanations, in conformity with the *ahistorical* – i.e. 'timeless' – importance and meaning of Dhamma, looms over the likely fact that he is explaining an historically 'incorrect' reading of the verse... The question arises: ultimately, where do we find true authenticity in the Buddha's teachings?

After exactly a full century of perpetual wars since the beginning of WWI, this talk still offers much food for thought. As Chao Khun Upāli suggests, the 'study of Dhamma in religion' leads us to understand that right knowledge of ourselves, by ourselves, and within ourselves, is the supreme form of knowledge, and the supreme form of authenticity.

May the reader reflect carefully on these teachings, and establish themselves in a true path to progress and prosperity.

“*suvijāno bhavaṃ hoti  
duvijāno parābhavo  
dhamma-kāmo bhavaṃ hoti  
dhamma-dessī parābhavo*”

(Sn.1.6)

Now I will give a talk on Dhamma with regard to the Buddha’s words in the verse that has come to us in the *Parābhava Sutta*, in order to successfully offer something of use in listening to Dhamma for the Buddha’s assembly – appropriate to the time and circumstances in which you have had knowledge associated with wholesome intentions arise in the aggregates of your disposition, blossoming with mental happiness, thinking to listen to a Dhamma talk with faith and inspiration.

This will succeed through a true comprehension, born of listening, to those words and teachings of the Blessed One. It will naturally proceed with three useful benefits: that is, benefit with regard to this life, benefit with regard to the next life, and the highest benefit of Nibbāna. And within these three benefits, they will naturally proceed *att’attha* – for one’s own benefit, and *par’attha* – for the benefit of others.

So now, all of us are people who are replete with a human life, which is the beginning of the path to a good destination or a bad destination. This is to say that someone who is going to hell has to take birth as a human being first. Someone who is to go to heaven, or the Brahma world, or Nibbāna, has to take birth as a human being first – a man or a woman endowed with the full qualities of their gender like this.

This is because this state of being and life – a human being – is right in the middle. Having been born as a human being, whether one wants happiness and pleasure, or pain and suffering – to whatever level – one is naturally able to succeed in every way.

But we human beings, for the most part, tend to look for pleasure and happiness along a path of pain and suffering as our foundation. What is the

cause of that? It is because of just this knowing as the cause. When we know something, we delight in it. When we gain knowledge and skill in arts and sciences, we delight in that knowledge and skill in arts and sciences. That is, when we know how to tend orchards, we delight in orchards; when we know how to farm, we delight in farms; when we know how to sell things, we delight in sales; when we know how to draw and paint, we delight in drawing and painting; when we know the legal system, we delight in deliberating the law.

Ultimately, whatever arts and sciences we know, we naturally delight in things following our knowledge and understanding. In the end, even brick-makers and potters delight in making bricks and turning pots to sell – which is just their sphere of knowledge.

In our own conduct and practise, it is the same. When we know the tune of killing living beings, we delight in the killing of living beings. When we know the tune of theft – stealing the belongings of others – we delight in theft and stealing. When we know the tune of sexual misconduct, we delight in sexual misconduct. When we know the tune of lying, we delight in telling lies. When we know the tune of intoxicants, we delight in consuming intoxicants. When we know the tune of various kinds of gambling, then we delight in gambling according to our knowledge. In the end, even if we know how to play checkers and chess, we're bound to like playing checkers and chess, according to the level of our knowledge.

The path of good conduct has the same characteristics. When we know the qualities involved in giving, we like to give. When we know the qualities involved in virtue, we like to safeguard virtue. When we know the qualities involved in meditation, we like to meditate. When we know the qualities of Path, Fruit and Nibbāna, we like Path, Fruit and Nibbāna. When we know the qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, we like to respect and venerate the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha.

Ultimately, when we know with adeptness and skill about any kind of art or science, we naturally delight and find satisfaction in that. Because of that, someone who is knowledgeable about the Buddha will thus bind themselves in important agreement with the verse in the *Maṅgala Sutta*, that says, “*asevanā ca bālānaṃ, paṇḍitānañ-ca sevanā*”: not socialising with fools, and socialising with knowledgeable people, is the highest, supreme blessing. It's

like this because looking for society is the beginning of a path that will give rise to knowledge.

If, in the first instance, we have socialised with those who are knowledgeable, we're liable to come to know a good path of arts and sciences. If we meet with foolish people first, we're liable to come to know arts and sciences of an evil nature.

If the knowledge of evil arts and sciences enter into us to the point where we delight in our knowledge, it is very difficult to correct.

Relying on all the reasoning that has been explained here, the Blessed One, the great teacher who was exceptional in the ways of giving talks, presented the composition of a Buddha in the form of a verse in the *Parābhava Sutta* – in the verse I first raised up and recited at the beginning: “*suviḷāno bhavaṃ hoti*” – good knowledge is naturally like the needle of a compass pointing towards a path of progress; “*duviḷāno parābhavo*” – evil knowledge is naturally like the needle of a compass pointing towards a path of ruin and degradation; “*dhamma-kāmo bhavaṃ hoti*” – love, desire and pleasure with Dhamma is naturally like the needle of a compass pointing towards a path that gives rise to progress; “*dhamma-ḁessī parābhavo*” – despising and hating the Dhamma is naturally like the needle of a compass pointing towards a path that gives rise to ruin and degradation.

In this way, the essential meaning, in brief, of this verse is that just good knowledge is a bridge to progress, and evil knowledge is a bridge to ruin and degradation; love, desire and pleasure in Dhamma is a bridge to progress, while despising and hating Dhamma is a bridge to ruin and degradation. Just that much. It doesn't present the modes of good knowing or of evil knowing, of loving and desiring, or of despising and hating Dhamma – that it has particular kinds of characteristics.

If we are to be neutral about it, good knowledge and evil knowledge is the substance of knowing truth. We should know both kinds with circumspection.

The great teacher himself developed good knowledge until he was able to teach goodness to his disciples. As for evil knowledge, the Buddha developed that knowledge until he was able to teach about evil for his

disciples to hear. There is an important point about the ‘duties associated with knowing’ – that is, the practise or thing to do (with regard to knowing something)<sup>1</sup>. If we have practised wrongly, against the path of good conduct, we will not gain happiness and pleasure. This is for certain. Being able to practise good conduct is because of knowing the causes, and knowing the results, of good conduct – that it has power or benefits in whatever ways.

We are bound to be unable to escape these words ‘good knowing’ and ‘evil knowing’. Good knowing and evil knowing are important designations. It’s right to call them the foremost, or the presiding chiefs. They are genuine bridges to progress and ruin.

Now I will expand on those points of ‘good knowing’ and ‘evil knowing’, according to my own thinking, in order to be a path of reflection and contemplation for the reader and listener.

The first point, “*suviḥāno*” – good knowing or knowing well – how do we know so that it should be counted as ‘good knowing’? If we are to speak according to the ways of the world, the knowledges of arts and sciences in which harm cannot be found – that is, the knowledges of arts and sciences associated with loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity, are called “*suviḥā*”: good knowing.

I’ll raise up an example – literacy. That is, I’m of the opinion that literacy is a pathway to happiness and pleasure. If you want to gain happiness and pleasure, you should thus engage in learning to read: this (motivation) is characteristic of loving kindness. To want to have oneself free from the stupidity of illiteracy, we thus have to determine in our hearts to study: this (motivation) is characteristic of compassion. Once we can read, we feel pleased and lighthearted: this (motivation) is characteristic of appreciative joy. What makes the heart neutral is: when it is appropriate for loving kindness, we are established in loving kindness; when it is appropriate for compassion, we are established in compassion; when it is appropriate for appreciative joy, we are established in appreciative joy; when it is appropriate for equanimity, we are

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<sup>1</sup> A reference to the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – having known the four Noble Truths, one should selectively either fully understand, abandon, realise or develop things based on one’s knowledge.

established in equanimity. This is characteristic of having equanimity, or perspective. Literacy here is associated with the divine abidings in these ways.

When there is loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity, for example, there will naturally be a pathway for it to be spread to others, everywhere, without limit. Any knowledge, if it is associated with the Dhamma of the divine abidings like this, we are bound to count and include it as absolutely “*suvijā*” – good knowing.

If we are to speak in the way of Dhamma, according to the basis and standard of the ‘*sappurisa dhammā*’, the Buddha taught : 1. knowing Dhamma, 2. knowing the characteristics and modes of Dhamma, 3. knowing oneself, 4. knowing one’s measure, 5. knowing the right time for oneself, 6. knowing one’s audience, 7. knowing the individual. These are what the Buddha said were the best kinds of knowing, called “*suvijā*” – good knowing.

If someone knows and conducts themselves regularly and continuously in these seven aspects of Dhamma, that person is a person of ‘true human value’ (*sappuriso*). Thus it is called ‘good knowing’. But the knowing as it has been pointed out in the various things that have come to us in the way of the Buddha’s dispensation, means that knowing oneself is the pinnacle of knowing. Like in dependent co-arising: it presents *vijjā* – knowing – and *avijjā* – not knowing – to mean knowing oneself and not knowing oneself, plain and simple. That knowing, of oneself, can be sometimes good and sometimes evil, as well.

As for that evil knowing of oneself, I will present that in the verse on “*duvijā*”. At the moment, I will just present ‘good knowing’ of oneself only – that is, knowing that oneself is a human being, whether a man or a woman. That point is something we are unable to modify – when we are a man, we are endowed with the duties and responsibilities of a man; when we are a woman, we are endowed with the duties and responsibilities of a woman.

This is according to the natural range of things and abilities in the world, but as for Dhamma practise, there is nothing particularly designated for ‘men’ or ‘women’. We have the exact same duties – it’s just that, at this time, women are unable to take higher ordination. But even then, the path for practicing the holy life still presents an opportunity: that is, knowing oneself

as a human being. This is the ultimate. Nothing can compare to this. It is the beginning of a path to any and every state of being and birth – whether a devatā, an Indra, a Brahma, a Yama or a yakkha, one has to obtain an individual state as a human first. Or, the path to the highest states that the Buddha’s dispensation admires to an ultimate degree – that is, transcendent states from the lowest level of merely a ‘stream-enterer’ all the way up through ‘once-returner’, ‘non-returner’, and ultimately an ‘arahant’. One has to come to gain an individual state as a human being, a man or a woman, before one can be successful.

I am also of the opinion that this individual state of a human being is the source of all knowledge in the world – except for those who are dis-abled: that is, dumb (mute), insane, stupid or physically disabled with deafness or with one’s body, head or limbs being deficient, for example. Or, greed, hatred and delusion envelop one more than the normal measure. Having become like this because of a lack of causes in the rebirth-linking stream of the mind, these kinds of people are lacking in human endowments. They are people who are unable to cultivate ‘true human value’ Dhamma – that is, three kinds of good conduct by way of the body, four kinds of good conduct by way of speech, and three kinds of good conduct by way of the mind<sup>2</sup> – to any further fulfillment within themselves. This can’t be counted or included as a true human life, because it is not something from which one is able to give rise to knowledge in an all-around sense.

As for those who have human endowments in full – that is, they do not have these disabilities enveloping the aggregates of their disposition – they are able to cultivate ‘true human value’ Dhamma to a fuller and more replete state. This has been made possible from two or three causes. This here is called ‘a true or genuine human life’. If one has a true human life, one will then (potentially) be a true master of knowledge – that is, if one studies anything,

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<sup>2</sup> Three kinds of good conduct by body: not killing living beings, not taking the belongings of others, and not engaging in sexual misconduct; four kinds of good conduct by speech: not telling deliberate lies, not using harsh speech, not using divisive speech, and not engaging in pointless chatter; three kind of good conduct by mind: not cultivating mind-states of covetousness, not cultivating mind-states of ill-will, and not employing wrong views.



one is completely able to succeed. Even just knowledge in the world is no small thing.

The lifespan of a human being is only 70 or 80 years before one is unable to take on other duties – whatever people have been determined to study in the way of worldly knowledge, they just know and act according to that. When life is like that, it runs out in an empty fashion. The knowledge in the world has yet to be completely known all-around. Because of that, we should carefully examine things to see that any one particular kind of knowledge is enough to be able to cultivate happiness and pleasure within us – so we study only one area, or just two areas, but we do it in a true way in order to make it into a real refuge for us. That is enough.

As soon as we understand that some particular field of knowledge satisfies us, we're bound to succeed completely, because just this individual state as a genuine human being is a master of knowledge throughout the world.

This individual state as a human being – if we compare it to the vehicles of transportation that we use in the world these days, what we would count as the best of vehicles by way of water would be a boat, by way of land would be a car, and in the sky would be a plane.

As for the plane, it is able to travel through the belly of the sky through the power of earth, water, fire and wind. When it runs out of nutriment – that is, gasoline – it must fall into the earth.

As for the boat, it is able to glide only in the water.

As for the car, it is only able to move along pathways that have been prepared and their surfaces smoothed. It is not particularly amazing, because it has been extrapolated out from just this physical vehicle.

The physical vehicle is just the body of this individual state. It has four wheels – that is, standing, walking, sitting and lying down. It runs on rice and various other foods instead of gasoline. It can be used and driven completely successfully along any path – never mind whether it's water, on land, in the mountains, in the jungle, near or far... until it can become a king, an aristocrat, a president, a millionaire, a merchant, a scholar or a state minister. It can accomplish all of these tasks, right up to one's aspirations. Even if one

aspires to heaven, the Brahma worlds, or transcendent states – it is possible to succeed, because we have examples of people in the past who have driven themselves to all of these stations.

They have pointed out the method of the path that goes to all three of those types of beautiful stations, following a single path, but composed of eight factors – with a name appearing universally as ‘the eight-fold path’. That is, *sammā-diṭṭhi* – right view; *sammā-saṅkappo* – right inclination and reflection; *sammā-vācā* – right conversation; *sammā-kammanto* – right bodily action; *sammā-ājīvo* – right means of livelihood; *sammā-vāyāmo* – right effort; *sammā-sati* – right establishing of recollection; and *sammā-samādhi* – right establishing of the heart in continuity.

These eight factors – the Buddha gave them the name ‘the Noble Path’, because they constitute the way of proceeding by body, speech and mind for noble beings. If we don’t want to be a noble being, only wanting the endowments of heaven, we should proceed at the level of the aggregate of virtue – that is, *sammā-vācā*, *sammā-kammanto* and *sammā-ājīvo* – making it solid and firm, not letting it become deficient or lost. This is a sure means of obtaining heaven – called ‘driving one’s physical vehicle right to heaven’.

When we have arrived at the plane of heaven and want the higher endowments of a Brahma, we should proceed by adding or increasing the aggregate of concentration – that is, the factors of *sammā-vāyāmo*, *sammā-sati* and *sammā-samādhi* – making them solid and firm. If states of *jhāna* don’t deteriorate, this is the straight, absolute obtainment of the endowments of a Brahma. This is called ‘driving one’s physical vehicle to the Brahma world’.

When we have succeeded in obtaining the Brahma-world and aspire to the highest transcendent endowments, we should proceed by adding or increasing the aggregate of discernment – that is, *sammā-diṭṭhi* and *sammā-saṅkappo* – through insight, knowing and seeing. Destroying distorted views and making an end of them will bring success in obtaining endowments of transcendence.

When we have succeeded in the transcendent endowments of the Deathless Dhamma, this is called ‘driving one’s physical vehicle to the other

shore' – that is, Nibbāna. This is the end of the wastelands of birth, aging, affliction and death. It is a categorical and absolutely ultimate ease.

The vehicle – that is, this physical body – is a body of a potent nature that is able to be driven to beautiful stations and destinations according to one's aspirations. There are examples – that is, those who have gone in former times to each and every station. All of us have obtained this vehicle – that is, a complete human body like this – so we shouldn't use it along a wrong path, letting it deteriorate and break apart without any benefit – that is, without having been able to send us to a beautiful station. This is called 'wasting an opportunity in having something good but not being able to use it well', and further, having it turn around to harm us.

Coming to know any of the knowledge of the world, right up to the transcendent, right now – liable to give rise to success in anything in this way – is called 'knowing oneself as a path to progress'.

In that second point, which says “*duvijāno parābhavo*” – evil knowledge is a bridge to ruin and degradation – it can be explained as whatever knowledge that is associated with greed, anger and delusion at its root. That is, when we study, the focus is on giving hardship to others and taking the advantages and benefits for ourselves – like the knowledge involved in fraud, robbing and plundering others: that is, focusing on swindling others and taking good things for oneself. Evil knowledge like that...

Some things are necessary to study, and some things are not necessary to study – like the knowledge of soldiers: the knowledge and training to shoot a gun accurately, for example. This is called “*duvijā*” – it is evil knowledge for real, because it lacks loving kindness and compassion for one side.

Knowledge of using guns, swordsmanship... all weapons of war of every sort, like the various kinds of vehicles of battle: fighter planes, submarines with missiles and torpedoes, for example – these have to be counted as evil knowledge. They are a bridge to ruin, degradation and tragedy, for real.

But these kinds of knowledge, once we know that they are evil knowledge, it is necessary to study them in order to know them and be smart – but we should understand that it is evil knowledge. They are a bridge to ruin and degradation.

There is an example I can point out for you to see: the arising of the 'Great War' in Europe in the year 2457 of the Buddhist Era (1914), starting in the month of July. It can be seen at this time how it has led to massive destruction and tragedy: that is, fellow human beings should love each other, should look out for one another and safeguard each other in order to be correct, for it to be counted as 'civilisation'...

In truth, the causes that gave rise to it, according to the news, are not that great or momentous. I have heard that a Serbian citizen assassinated a member of the Austrian royal family and his wife – during a time when they had gone on a tour of Serbia – in line with the tendencies of delinquent fools as a cause. The two countries thus began a dispute with each other and went to bigger countries to help settle the issue.

Russia sided with Serbia, while Germany sided with Austria. England and France sided with Russia.

When these countries brought their power and authority to each of these two sides like this, neither side was intent on settling the issue – they were aiming at laying down their power and authority, until they all declared war, competing in killing each other and committing indignities all over the world, with uncountable casualties and deaths resulting from the science of weaponry, and with many more dying from starvation or from the arising of various diseases because of the stench from countless airborne vapors of filth.

It's not just soldiers dying – old people, women and children, who flee from the enemy with their families travel without food to support themselves. Many countless numbers of people have died.

The people who have died in this 'Great War' are not counted in the millions. It's clear they have to be counted in the tens of millions. It's really disheartening and pitiful that there has to be separation between husbands and wives, children and grandchildren, that there have to be widows and orphans with no one to help feed them, resigned to ongoing poverty and hardship. If I were to continue to expound on this, there would be no end.

I'll just come to point out merely a little bit in order for us to see the power of evil knowledge. It naturally brings harm and destruction, right up to a level like this. That is, each side thinks that they are the masters of

knowledge – their planes can kill, their submarines can kill, their battleships can kill on a massive scale, their missiles and bombs can kill... Each side values their knowledge and is conceited about it – thus they are fearless and bold in fighting and competing with each other. It is completely lacking in loving kindness and mercy, and they just see each other as pieces of meat or fish...

Evil knowledge is the cause of tragedy – whether it is great or small is determined by the strength of the knowledge. Like the knowledge involved in making lances, swords or spears, for example: the instructions for making them are not particularly great or momentous. The tragic results that you get from a science of weaponry like that are not terribly great. If the knowledge involves a great deal of instruction, like the knowledge involved in making guns, missiles and bombs, for example, the tragic results you will get are massive – like what has appeared these days.

We should understand that knowledge associated with greed, hatred, delusion, jealousy and ill-will is called “*duvijā*”. This accords with the Buddha’s words, “*duvijāno parābhavo*” – evil knowledge is a bridge to ruin and tragedy – in this way.

As for what has been presented here, it has been evil knowledge outside of oneself. Evil knowledge within oneself is yet another kind. The evil ways of seeing oneself are many and varied, like seeing that oneself is still associated with greed, hatred and delusion – we still perform deeds of misconduct, with killing living beings and swindling others as examples. This is called ‘evil knowledge’ of oneself. If one knows oneself as evil like that, hurry to correct things – don’t let these kinds of evil exist within oneself. One returns to the path of progress again. If one knows oneself as evil and still continues to act on it, this is the path to ruin and degradation for real.

There is still another kind. One’s intentions don’t wish for evil, from one’s perspective one doesn’t feel something is evil, one’s determination is wholesome, one understands that one is correct according to the model (of practise), one practises according to the path of calm and insight absolutely straightly – but things can flip over to evil knowledge. Like someone who develops the three characteristics, or contemplation of unattractiveness, or recollection of death, for example – that is, investigating within this entire body that is popularly considered ‘ourselves’ to see it as *aniccam* – not certain,

to see it as *dukkham* – difficult to endure, to see it as *anattā* – not one’s self or identity, to see it as *asuci* – unclean, to see it as *asubham* – unattractive, to see it as *paṭikūlam* – disgusting, without use, just covering up the earth in an empty fashion like this.

Modes of seeing it this way are a cause giving rise to disillusionment, able to wipe out love, desire and preference within oneself in one way, and preventing intoxication and delusion with perception from entering in, to some extent. The Buddha thus raised this up as the substance of *vipassanā kammaṭṭhāna*. Its value is extensive – without end.

As for the harm, there are all kinds of harm – like the many monks who developed recollection of death and gave rise to weariness and disinterest, despising and hating themselves until they used their bowl and robes (as payment) to hire an assassin named Migalaṇḍika to put an end to their lives *en masse*, which appears in the (origin story to the) third *pārājika* training rule, as an example. It was because of the harm in seeing oneself as evil, knowing oneself as evil.

It’s not that there’s just that alone: those who see *aniccam*, *dukkham*, and *anattā*, and it leads them into madness, are many. It leads some into anihilist views – seeing that good and evil don’t exist; once you die there is nothing. There are many (like this)... But the truth of seeing like that, is that it is not actually one’s knowledge – it is just what they call ‘knowledge’, for the most part.

There are two groups. One is stupid, not knowing anything – they just listen to what others explain, analysing the properties like that or like this: like they explain how this thinking and reflecting depends on just the brain – once we die there is no brain. What is going to give rise to (renewed) birth? Birth just resides with our father and mother. They tend to see things just at this level. In depending on our father and mother for our birth like that, who would object to that? And we don’t just depend on them for our birth – we rely on them until we are all grown up. Our father and mother are foremost (to us) in goodness and virtuous qualities – to expand on this would have no end. But we should investigate and see the things that our father and mother have created and given birth to. What are they?

If we examine carefully for certain, we'll tend to see everything as it is. If we wonder whether our father and mother are the originators of our birth, we won't lose track of the essence – we are able to see it in full.

It's like a potter who spins and molds pots that can be bought and sold – we can lose track of things and see that the potter is the originator, but the pots also arise because of the clay for making the pots that already exists, however much. The requisites for creating the birth of a child are already there, before our father and mother came along, in that way. When it is like this, someone who sees that just our father and mother are the originators still isn't quite right – that is, they are only looking at the level of fabricated states. They don't yet see unfabricated states.

Because of that, we can deduce that a person at this level is still really stupid – that is, they still don't use their own knowing and seeing. They just believe others in what they say. In being able to analyse the properties, they just believe others. In truth, however they analyse things, they are only able to analyse the outward appearances.

In actual truth, they can object to a needle, claiming it isn't replete with the four properties, but the sky – more refined than the needle – they are unable to object to, saying the four properties are not fully there. When the sky is that refined, the properties are unable to be split apart. When it is like that, what can you take as the meaning of separating the properties in any way?

Another group has too much 'recollection' and 'discernment' – they take recollection of 'not-self', recollection of emptiness, as their object of reflection – too much – until the perception of not-self and the perception of emptiness arises, seeing that there is no identity, no self. They see an empty nothingness. They take a void, a nothingness, as their object of knowing. They understand that an empty void is Nibbāna.

These people accept ignorance as their refuge and place of abiding. Just emptiness and nothingness itself is the substance of ignorance – thus it is called, 'taking the substance of ignorance as one's refuge'. This is the substance of a *mogha-puriso* – a genuinely empty, worthless person. It is the substance of ingratitude, lacking the virtuous qualities of the Triple Gem. The

virtuous qualities of one's father and mother, the virtuous qualities of one's spiritual teachers, the virtuous qualities of kings and ministers – these are not present in oneself.

People like this – whether they believe that they die into nothingness, or die followed by birth – are bound to fall into the group of those with wrong view. They aren't able to cultivate goodness within themselves, and they find fault with spiritual teachers – saying that they know the truth in their own being, but they rely on deceiving people in order to support themselves: thus they teach that doing *that* is goodness, doing *that* is evil – they're set upon deceiving others just to eat... In truth, where are you going to get good or evil from? They tend to talk like this.

People like this tend to find fault with virtuous people – raising up themselves and denigrating others in various ways like this. As for themselves, they don't perform acts of goodness by giving, or by safeguarding virtue. And still they constantly criticise others.

They squander both benefit for themselves and benefit for the others that they associate with in society. It is like this because of the harm in seeing 'not-self' as an empty nothingness. It is the substance of *micchā-ditthi* – that is, knowing wrongly, seeing wrongly. Thus it is called 'wrong view'. It's someone who studies the religion but turns it into something external – not knowing themselves. People like this, even if you count them in the hundreds or the thousands, you still haven't got them all.

Someone who studies the Dhamma in this religion should contemplate and reflect a lot. Don't mess it up – *aniccam*, *dukkham* and *anattā* are not playthings. If you get it right, it's absolutely straight in accordance with Nibbāna; if you mess it up, you absolutely fall into the depths of the world.

Knowing oneself, seeing oneself as something evil or bad – the Buddha thus presented it as a bridge to ruin and tragedy. This accords with the Buddha's explanation “*duvijāno parābhavo*”, in these ways.

The third point, “*dhamma-kāmo bhavaṃ hoti*” – love, desire and pleasure with Dhamma is a cause of progress – we have to study and understand Dhamma, in order to obtain some clarity first about what is called 'Dhamma'. That is, that Dhamma, if I were to present it according to its modes and



characteristics, there would be no end. Like the Buddha splitting things up into the *study* of true Dhamma, the *practise* of true Dhamma and the *realisation* of true Dhamma; or, wholesome Dhamma, unwholesome Dhamma and undeclared Dhamma, as examples. We're bound to be unable to clearly get the essence of it.

Because of that, the Buddha thus summarised it in another way as “*svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo*” – Dhamma that the Blessed One has expounded rightly. In this way, we are bound to get the meaning that the teachings of the Blessed One, in every way, are called the ‘Dhamma’. If it is like that, there would be no end of it either, because the teachings of the Buddha are extremely wide-ranging and extensive.

We can further categorise the teachings of the Buddha in three ways – that is, by the characteristics of *ādikalyāṇam*, *majjhe-kalyāṇam* and *pariyosāna-kalyāṇam*<sup>3</sup> teachings of the Buddha – because in the beginning there is virtue; because in the middle there is concentration; and because in culmination there is discernment. In this way, we're bound to get the essential meaning that this virtue, concentration and discernment is called ‘Dhamma’, because they are the teachings of the Buddha.

If it is like that, we have to search out and see the substance of virtue, the substance of concentration, and the substance of discernment. Because the teachings of the Buddha are *sandiṭṭhiko*, a practitioner should see them with regard to themselves. If we don't know virtue, don't see virtue, how will we safeguard virtue? Like someone who doesn't know cows, doesn't see cows – how could they raise cows?

If we want to see virtue and know virtue, we have to know the body, know speech, and know the heart first.

The coming together of six properties is called ‘the body’.<sup>4</sup> The sounds that emanate from the aperture of our mouth, which succeed because of the body, are called ‘speech’. Bringing things in to think, contemplate and reflect

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<sup>3</sup> *ādikalyāṇam* – beautiful in the beginning; *majjhe-kalyāṇam* – beautiful in the middle; and *pariyosāna-kalyāṇam* – beautiful in its culmination.

<sup>4</sup> The properties of earth, water, fire, wind, space and consciousness.

on, knowing all objects which come due to (contact with) the body, is called 'the heart'.

The Buddha declared virtue with regard to just this body, speech and heart. As for that heart, it is the substance of intentional action. When we talk about virtue, we can't exclude the heart at all– that is, the one that is careful is the heart; the one that safeguards is the heart. What is it careful of? It's careful of the body and careful of speech. What does it safeguard? It safeguards just this body and it safeguards just this speech.

We can agree that one is careful of oneself, one safeguards just oneself, because the body is oneself, speech is oneself and the heart is oneself.

Being careful and safeguarding the body is not letting it kill living beings, steal the belongings of others, overstep the bounds (of sexuality) with others, and not letting it consume alcohol.

Being careful and safeguarding speech is not telling lies, not using harsh speech, not using divisive speech, and not engaging in pointless chatter.

When the body and speech are able to be free from harm in those ways, it is called *sammā-vācā*, *sammā-kammanto* and *sammā-ājīvo* – it is the substance of the aggregate of virtue. The meaning of this is: just oneself is the mass of virtue. When we say that we ourselves are virtue in that way, won't we be able to see that oneself is Dhamma?

Because virtue is the teaching of the Buddha, and the teachings of the Buddha are called 'Dhamma', when we see that we ourselves are virtue, we are 'Dhamma' in the same way. This is called 'someone who has arrived at Dhamma at the level of virtue'. Someone who safeguards virtue is called 'one who safeguards Dhamma'. Someone who safeguards Dhamma is called 'one who safeguards virtue'.

Whatever is virtue, just that will be concentration and discernment. Someone who is pleased with Dhamma, loves Dhamma at the level of the Dhamma of virtue, the Dhamma of concentration, or the Dhamma of discernment, is bound to receive results of progress and prosperity, greater or lesser, according to the power of the Dhamma which accords with one's love, desire and pleasure. This accords with the Buddha's words, "*dhamma-kāmo*

*bhavam hoti*” – pleasure in Dhamma, love for Dhamma, is a cause leading to progress – in this way.

The fourth point, “*dhamma-dessī parābhavo*” – despising and hating Dhamma is a bridge to ruin and loss: we should understand it in the same way. That is, when we understand that oneself is Dhamma, Dhamma is oneself – in that way – and we still create for ourselves unwholesome states in a regular manner: that is, letting ourselves fall under the power of greed, hatred and delusion, conducting ourselves poorly with evil and unwholesome states by body, by speech, and with the support of the heart in an ongoing way – this is called ‘hating Dhamma’.

The meaning of that is: that one still makes themselves into their own enemy. That person is called ‘hating Dhamma’.

Those words ‘their own enemy’ – we should understand the meaning in this way: the six internal sense-bases are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and heart – these are the modes and characteristics of oneself. If all six are present and replete, this is called, ‘completely fulfilled with the full endowments’. We’re able to succeed in our tasks and duties in every way, according to our aspirations.

Someone who is lacking in one or two of these ways is a dis-abled person – they aren’t able to succeed in creating the highest benefit. Even if someone has all six, but falls back on a stupidity which envelopes them, they make these sense-bases into an enemy to themselves. That is, when they see a visible form with their eyes, hear a sound with their ears, inhale an aroma with their nose, know a flavour with their tongue, feel a tactile sensation with their body, or know an idea with their heart – to whatever extent it is an agreeable object, an object that is desirable, they want it, they want to have it, they’re delighted and overly pleased. It leads to suffering, unhappiness and resistance arising, and makes one experience sorrow, lamentation and disappointment in various ways.

If they receive an object that is to whatever extent a disagreeable object – that is, an object that is dissatisfying – then an exceeding hatred arises until one experiences suffering, unhappiness, sorrow, lamentation and disappointment in various ways. In this way, this is called, ‘making oneself

into one's own enemy'. That person is unable to successfully create the highest benefit for themselves.

We should take the meaning as: whoever still laments in sorrow and disappointment, still has unhappiness and resistance, feels oppressed and stifled in their heart because of relying on their eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and heart as the cause, is called 'an enemy to themselves'. This person who is an enemy to themselves is called "*dhamma-dessi*" – one who despises and hates Dhamma. They will naturally obtain ruin and tragedy for real. This accords with the Buddha's words "*dhamma-dessi parābhavo*", in the way explained here.

We can summarise the meaning of all four points of these words of the Buddha as: good knowing, evil knowing, loving Dhamma and hating Dhamma. They are four modes. If we condense them, they are bound to be just one. That is, good knowing is knowing oneself well, evil knowing is knowing oneself badly, loving Dhamma is loving oneself, hating Dhamma is hating oneself.

We can agree that they come together as one, right here, in oneself.

Because of that, someone who knows themselves, sees themselves... the Buddha thus raised this up as the pinnacle of knowing, in the ways described here.

Let the reader or listener rely on wise attention in an astute way. You'll be genuinely bound to not lack for beneficial results.



Comments or questions about this talk can be addressed to the translator by email:

[wide.angle.lens.email@gmail.com](mailto:wide.angle.lens.email@gmail.com)

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