

Automatic Benefits of Dhamma

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In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhādāsa gave regular lectures during the monthly international retreats held at Suan Mokkh and then Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage. Usually, Ajahn spoke in Thai and Santikaro Bhikkhu interpreted into English live. Audio recordings are now available from www.suanmokkh.org and www.bia.or.th. The following is a transcription generously made by a Dhamma volunteer. If you noticed possible improvements to the text and would like to contribute, please kindly contact the volunteer and the Buddhādāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok (suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com).

This time, we will speak about the automatic advantages that result from our study and practice of Dhamma, of the dependent origination, which we have studied, and the mindfulness with breathing, which we are practicing.

You might be a bit surprised to hear that when you have practiced these two things – dependent origination and mindfulness with breathing – successfully, then you will automatically become the best follower of every religion. This is quite an interesting point: that you will automatically be the number one follower of all the religions in this world.

This is because all religions aim for the same thing, namely, the destruction of selfishness. If you study them, you will see clearly that whether Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism or whatever, all of them are seeking to eliminate selfishness, which is the cause of all the defilements and all suffering. So in this way there is this common ground amongst all the religions.

And the fruits or results of practicing happen automatically. We say ‘automatic’ because they happen even if we do not look for them or have no intention that they will happen. If we practice correctly and fully, then they happen by themselves even though sometimes we are not aware of them.

If one sees dependent origination, then one automatically sees the Buddha. The Buddha himself said that, “*Whoever sees paṭiccasamuppāda, sees the*

Dhamma, and whoever sees the Dhamma, sees the Buddha.” So therefore, by seeing and realizing dependent origination, we see the Buddha. In fact, we become little Buddhas ourselves quite automatically.

Now, dependent origination as you have been studying it is all about how *dukkha* arises, and how *dukkha* is quenched. When you understand this for yourself, when your understanding is thorough and complete, then you can control the flow of dependent origination so that *dukkha* does not arise anymore. And so that there is the quenching of *dukkha* instead. To do so is to realize the most excellent fruit in life. This is the most excellent thing there is. It is the highest personal benefit in terms of what we can receive from life ourselves. Personally, this is the highest thing. This is the best thing that a human being can get from life. And so this will be the automatic benefit or advantage of having studied dependent origination.

This, all the principles of dependent origination are completely natural. This is nothing but natural law. It is existing in nature, and so it can also be found in all the religions. If you look carefully you can see it appearing in different ways, in different religions, and under different names. Some religions rename this law and call it ‘God.’ In Buddhism, we call it ‘Dhamma’ – Dhamma (the law of nature, or natural law). This is something that is existing in all the religions. It does not belong to any one religion. And so you do not have to waste your time thinking about what country I come from, or that I was born into such and such religion and so I must carry on the religion of my parents and on and on. It is not a matter of culture or any of those things because these are human creations. This law of nature is fundamental and universal for all of us. And so when we come to this understanding, it automatically becomes ours.

Now, if you have been a Christian previously, then studying dependent origination will not make you lose your Christianity. In fact, you will increase or perfect your Christianity onto a much higher level. That is, you will be beyond good & evil, which is the goal of Christianity. It is the first commandment of God – to be beyond good & evil. Through studying dependent origination, we become an even better Christian than ever before.

If your parents are Christians, then they will probably remain Christians. However, they need not have any fear or worry that they will lose their children, that their children will stop being Christians. Because in fact, through understanding dependent origination, you can be better Christians than ever

before. So there is nothing disrespectful or disloyal regarding our parents and relatives and friends by studying these things. Because in fact, it enables us to be a far better Christian than we ever have been. And that will help our parents to be more successful in what they had hoped for us and also in their hopes for themselves.

If you are a scientist, then you will not lose that quality at all. In fact, you will be more of a scientist than ever. Because dependent origination is a very scientific study of how dukkha arises, and how it quenches. And you will be able to quench dukkha in the most scientific way. That means you will not have to depend on any superstitions or irrational beliefs or anything emotional, or like that. But through study, experiment, and understanding, you will understand it yourself and be able to quench dukkha through your own practice. So one will be more of a scientist than ever before, on a higher level than ever before.

Even if you are a businessman or woman or social activist or a politician, you will not lose the benefits of these various worthwhile roles in society. Instead, we will be even better at carrying out these activities in a way that is even more beneficial for society than ever before. When we understand dukkha and its quenching then we will be able to live without dukkha. This will bring an energy and joy and freshness into our lives. And so we will be much more active and much more capable in performing our responsibilities as business people, social activists, politicians or whatever. So we can serve society far better than ever before. Even more, we will... in knowing how to live without dukkha, we can help others to also live without suffering. And so we can be the most benefit of all.

If you are successful in your practice of mindfulness with breathing, you will be able to summon any mood or state of mind that you wish. Or any feeling that you wish. And you can drive away any bad moods or bad feelings that are getting in the way. You will have the ability to put the mind in whatever state, mood or call up any feeling that you feel is appropriate. And you will be able to be free of any harmful, bad moods, feelings and so on.

You will be the master of life. You will be able to govern your own mind. And this means you will be able to govern life. We cannot govern our minds, our lives, our out of control, but when we have the ability to govern the mind, that is the same as governing life. And then we will be able to find success in everything we set out to do when we can govern life. When we are the masters of our own

lives, we can accomplish our goal and everything that we undertake. If we are genuinely successful in practicing mindfulness with breathing, this will be an automatic advantage. The only thing we worry about is that you may not yet be completely successful and then you will not realize this, you will not come to this highest... to this advantage.

When you have successfully practice the second tetrad of mindfulness with breathing, then you will be able to summon up rapture, contentment, joy, happiness in just one breath. Think about this, in just one breath, you can call up these kinds of joy and happiness. Think of the advantage of this, with just one breath to be able to have these things present. This will happen automatically when we have completed our practice of this tetrad.

When you slip and fall into anger and then anger is disturbing our minds, you can chase away that anger with just one breath if we really know how to practice mindfulness with breathing. Or the opposite, if some kind of love is disturbing and annoying the mind, then we can chase it away with just one breath. Any kind of harmful disturbing state of mind or mood or emotion can be driven away with just one breath. And any desirable beneficial skilful state can be called up. This is the automatic advantage of being able to practice mindfulness with breathing.

When you are well-versed or skilful and expert in mindfulness with breathing, then we can say that you can control the world, that you are a master of the world. This means that you will always meet a world which is desirable and beneficial. And you will never meet the world in a way that is undesirable. All the things in the world will no longer be a problem for us. We will be above all the problems of the world by being able to practice *ānāpānasati*.

Another amusing result is that we can find happiness without having to use any money, without even spending a penny. In the past, if we wanted any kind of happiness, we had to pay money for it, to look even for the littlest kind of happiness, we had to spend money in our attempt. Even just to entertain ourselves costs money. But now one can find happiness and it is an even better kind of happiness. It is a superior form of happiness without having to spend even a penny.

You ought to observe that there are two kinds of happiness. There is hot happiness and cool happiness. The kind of happiness that we have bought with our money, this is hot happiness. It is hot. It is disturbing. It involves a number of problems and difficulties. It is not peaceful or calm. It is not cool. Cool happiness

does not cost any money. It involves no difficulties. And it does not disturb the mind in the least. So much of the happiness that we have gotten in our lives specially the kind we pay for is this hot happiness. So it really does not allow the mind to rest or be at peace. Instead, it disturbs the mind and it interferes with life. We should recognize this difference between hot happiness and cool happiness. A lot of the times we have a gladness that is more trouble than it is worth. Sometimes we have to really endure our own happiness until it goes away. But there is a whole another kind of happiness, which does not involve these difficulties. Through ānāpānasati we can discover and have this cool happiness whenever we want and we can be free of the hot happiness.

This matter is a very subtle one. And it requires that we observe very carefully very profoundly in order to understand it. The hot happiness is the happiness that is still under the influence of the world. It is a happiness that is still dependent on the world. The other kind – the cool happiness, is free of the world. It is above and beyond the world. And so the world has no power over that happiness; therefore, it is cool and peaceful.

We are getting various kinds of gladness and indulging in it without ever looking to see how hot this gladness can be, how it disturbs and muddles the mind. In the Kingdom of God, there is no gladness. In the Kingdom of God, there is none of this worldly happiness. Now we do not have to wait until after death. We can now in this life, be free of this hot happiness. We can experience the happiness which is above both gladness & sadness. This is something that we can realize here in this life if we are successful in practicing mindfulness with breathing.

When we can master our minds, then we can master life, which means to be unselfish. If we can realize this for ourselves and then cause our friends in the world to realize the same advantage, then the world will be free of selfishness and all these problems troubling the world will disappear. So by being successful in ānāpānasati, we can help to create a world that is free of problems and trouble by removing selfishness from our own lives and helping our friends to do the same. Then we will have a world that is genuinely peaceful.

Now, you already know that having Dhamma is not just of benefit to the individual, having Dhamma will have benefits for the whole world. When one has Dhamma, one can benefit the whole world. So the results of this practice can spread throughout the world.

So this is the broadest benefits of practicing, of studying Dhamma and practicing mindfulness with breathing that we can bring about a better and better humanity. So that humanity is less and less selfish, and therefore causing fewer and fewer problems. The criminals and other people who are causing problems in society, this is so because they cannot control their own selfishness. And so they turn to alcohol, to drugs, to prostitution, to corruption, to sex and all kinds of other selfish behaviours. This is because they cannot control their own mind, so they fall into all these harmful selfish activities. This is why they are called, *anthapan* [Thai] or ‘fools.’ These criminals are just fools who do not understand life and cannot control it. But it is through understanding Dhamma and through being able to practice *ānāpānasati* that one gains control over one’s life. And so that one is not under the power of selfishness like the fools and criminals.

Please look carefully and you will be able to see that all problems in the world arise from the inability to control the mind. When we cannot control the mind, then selfishness occurs. And when there is selfishness, everything we do is wrong. What we do is harmful for others. It causes problems all over the world. If just one person cannot control their mind, then the selfishness of just this one person will cause problems and difficulties for everyone else. So all problems can be traced to the inability of individuals to control their own minds.

The problem is not that we do not know better. The problem is that we cannot control the mind. We all know that addictive drugs are harmful and bad. But many of us just cannot control ourselves. So we get involve in these things. All kinds of evil things in the world, people know that these things are wrong but they cannot control their minds. And so they cannot stay out of these troubles. Even the things like drinking, carousing at night, gambling, hanging around with ‘c.d.’ [?? 26:05] disreputable people, or being lazy about our work, our jobs. All of these are results of our inability to control our minds. We all know that we should not do these things. We all know better. But we are not able to control ourselves.

Take a very current example, the whole thing with drugs. Now drug has become such a problem that is considered almost a war. This drug business was not as a problem before. But now it is grown until it is an international issue dominating political discussions and so on. This whole problem is because people cannot control their minds. If people could control their minds, drugs would have no meaning. But because people cannot control their minds, they are susceptible to these things; they get caught in them, and this is spread now all around the

world. But nobody can do anything about it because they do not deal with the basic causes, which is the fact that people are not able to control themselves.

So do not think that cleverness or intelligence is enough. If one is very intelligent but cannot control one's mind to keep it correct, to keep it in the right way, then one will still get into all kinds of selfishness and problems. Cleverness, intelligence by itself is just not enough. Look at this world where people are full of cleverness, people are so intelligent, where our world is full of universities, but why is it that we still do not have any peace? Why is it that there is even less peace in the world as people get more and more clever and intelligent? And as our societies progress, we soon will be able to travel to other planets, this is how clever we are becoming. But this ability to go to other planets, is it going to bring us any peace in this world? Or is it just people using cleverness to serve their own personal benefits, to follow their own defilements, to follow their own desires? So cleverness by itself, intelligence by itself, does not bring any peace. All the clever people in this world need to practice mindfulness with breathing so that they can control their minds; so that their cleverness will actually benefit them, instead of causing them just more problems. Often, our intelligence causes us more problems than it sounds.

So do not just teach your children to be clever. Do not just train the intelligence of your children, but also teach them self-control. If you do not, then this intelligence will just turn on them and will make problems, will mess up their lives. You can call this 'self-control'; you can call it 'discipline'; you can call it whatever you want. In Dhamma language we call it 'being able to control the mind.' When we cannot control the mind, then we will just act and behave in selfish ways. And when this selfishness is very clever, then it has all kinds of abilities to cause problems. Nowadays, everybody in the world is selfish. Everybody is behaving selfishly. And so this world is full of competition. People are always fighting against each other to get the things they want because they are all very clever. But nobody has the ability to control their minds. So the situation in the world may be getting worse, not better because as we get more and more clever.

Please see if you can remember this one sentence which expresses what we are saying, that if we cannot control the mind, then life will bite itself and that cleverness will kill its owner. 'If we cannot control the mind, life will bite its

owner and this cleverness will kill its owner.’ You have probably noticed that every lesson of ānāpānasati, all sixteen lessons [of] mindfulness with breathing, are one form or another of mastering of the mind. In the first lesson, the first tetrad, we, by gaining mastery over the breathing and body, this is one level of controlling the mind. And then mastering the feelings also helps us to be able to control the mind. Then in the third group of lessons, we work at mastering the mind directly. And then finally, there is the last group about Dhamma, where one thoroughly understands Dhamma and is able to keep life completely in line with the natural law of Dhamma. So every aspect of this practice, all of the sixteen lessons involved in it, are ways of controlling the mind. If we can practice this, then we will be able to control our minds, in all respects, in a completely natural and relaxed way. It is not some uptight kind of control. So please pay attention to ānāpānasati in this way until you see how important it is, so that you stick to it as a companion for life.

When we say ‘partner of life,’ we mean something more than just being a friend. One can have many friends, but one’s partner in life or one’s mate is something very special and unique, something very important. If we have ānāpānasati as our partner in life, then it will always be available to help us and protect us. Or we can even go so far as to say, ‘to take mindfulness with breathing as life itself,’ so that it is always with us. If we have ānāpānasati as life itself, then we will have Dhamma as life itself. To have Dhamma as life is to protect us from all problems. It is like having a vaccine that prevents all diseases. It’s like a medicine that can cure all diseases. If Dhamma is our partner in life, or even life itself, then we will be beyond all problems. The ordinary partners that people have, the husbands and wives, we can be separated from these partners by many miles, we can even live in a different country than our partner and still survive, and still live quite happily. But if we’re divorced or separated from Dhamma, then we will not survive very long at all. Our life will become a mess. And if we are totally separated from Dhamma, then we will die. Having this partner or mate is absolutely necessary. By taking ānāpānasati as our partner in life, we will more and more have Dhamma as our partner.

Next, we would like to invite you all to help create a new world. We ask you all to help to build a new world. Now do not go thinking that this is beyond your ability or that it is a waste of your time, or it is unimportant. We invite you to help by helping others to understand dependent origination and, by helping them to

have the Dhamma of mindfulness with breathing, a new world will come about. A world of peace will come about when people have this Dhamma.

Please do not think that trying to build the better world, to try and make a new world is crazy or beyond our abilities. In fact, it is the most correct thing to do. It is most appropriate. It is what we all ought to be doing.

Look at things in this way: we cannot exist in this world alone. Nature has created us in a way that we cannot live alone. We cannot be totally alone or by ourselves. Even if the whole world was given to us, how could we live in it, all alone? Even in a family, how could we be alone without family? It is impossible to be all by ourselves, there would be no family. We just cannot survive in this world without friends. When this is the natural fact of things, then it is necessary that we have good friends. If our world is full of bad friends, friends who are just causing trouble for us or encouraging us to do stupid dangerous things, then it is like being dead or being a zombie or something even while we are still breathing. We need to fill the world of good friends, of comrades, of genuine comrades in birth, ageing, illness, and death, then life will truly have meaning and value. This is the reality of things that we need friends. But we need good friends. So we must do whatever we can to have a world of good friends.

Now, you could call this world ‘the Kingdom of God,’ or you could call it ‘the coming of the Messiah’ or whatever you wish. In Buddhism, we have the same kind of wish, Buddhists talk about the coming of [Sri] Metteya Buddha, and that Metteya Buddha will bring the world of universal love, or universal friendliness. It is a world that is just full of friends. One leaves one’s home, one goes out in the street and all one meets is friends. People are raising their hands asking, ‘What can I do for you?’ ‘Can I help you?’ ‘Is there any way I can serve you?’ Everywhere we go we just find friends. So that our husbands, wives, children seem to be everywhere, where everyone is the same in being friends. And then we go home and then, ‘Oh, this is our husband, our wife, our children our parents.’ But somehow it is the same everywhere, everyone is our friend. This is something that many Buddhists are hoping for, a world that is full of true friends. This is something that we ourselves hope for. And we wonder whether you also hope for the same thing, or maybe you do not care.

In short, we can just call it ‘a world of friendliness,’ a world of friendliness. This is something that we need very much. But right now it is not possible. It’s not possible because everyone in the world is being selfish. Everyone of us is still

behaving selfishly and so we prevent the world of friendliness. And we are selfish because we cannot control our minds. The world is full of selfish people because nobody has ānāpānasati. Nobody has the results and advantages of mindfulness with breathing. And so we do not have a world of friendliness. But when we practice mindfulness with breathing, when we receive its benefits, then we can control the mind and then there is no more selfishness and then we can create the world of friendliness in a blink of the eye. You might think that we are just kidding you but we say that you can build, you can create a world of friendliness in the blink of an eye if we have the benefits and advantages of ānāpānasati.

From reading the papers, listening to the radio, we can see that all around the world there are people fighting and killing each other. It is not just between countries, even within the same country, there are people squaring off fighting, killing each other, blowing each other up. Not even within countries, but even within the same religion. People who follow the same religion, supposedly, are fighting and killing each other. If we look, we'll even find this in the same family. We find people of the same family fighting each other, killing each other. In any family, we find people arguing, taking advantage of each other. Husbands and wives are always getting into fights. The sole reason for all of this: the fighting, the killing on whatever level, the reason is because of selfishness. So let us all work to get rid of this selfishness, to create a world of friendliness. Let us do what we can to remove the selfishness by learning to control our minds, to master our own minds so that there is no selfishness. So that we can end all the fighting and competing and killing on the national level amongst religions, amongst families. Even to remove the fighting that goes on between us and our husbands and wives.

It is not hard to see that all the religions aim at peace in the world, that all the religions are seeking a world of peace. The thing is, all the followers of these religions do not practice the religions that they profess. People will maybe do their ceremony in the churches and temples and say 'I am this,' 'I am that.' But then they do not actually practice the religion that they claim to follow. And the reason for this is because they cannot master their own mind. And so they behave selfishly, instead of following the teachings of their religion. And then even worse, the religions get perverted and twisted by the selfishness of these people, who claim to follow the religion, but actually do not practice it. What we need is to be able to master the mind, to train the mind with mindfulness with breathing so that we can actually follow our religions. Whatever it is, if we would actually follow it, if we would follow our religion then we would be building a world of

peace, and we would make our religions what they are meant to be. But now most of the religions in the world are useless. They are empty, they are just a waste of time and energy because nobody is practicing them. All they are doing is going through ceremonies and signing up lists of converts and other useless and meaningless activities because people are not actually practicing. And by not practicing the religions, because they cannot control their minds, religions are not able to fulfil their roles of bringing peace into the world.

There is a secret which nobody notices, and it is time we brought it out into the open because it should not remain a secret anymore. The secret is that the member, that every member of every political party is selfish. Without any exception, everyone who is a member of a political party is being selfish. Now when we say 'member,' this includes both people who are officially registered, card-carrying holders, card-carrying members of this or that political party. But this also means people who support one party or another in private. Even if just inside, we prefer or favour one party or another, this is selfish. As long as we continue taking sides and breaking up into parties, then we are behaving selfishly, instead of genuinely behaving for the common good. All these political parties claim to be seeking the common good. But in fact this is not the truth. They may not realize it but their behaviour is actually selfish. They are seeking the good of only certain individuals or, most of all, their own party. What we need to do is to transform this situation, to change these political parties from entities of selfishness into unselfishness. So that politics can become an unselfish activity, instead of a selfish activity. When we have political groupings that are unselfish, if we have the party of unselfishness then it will finally become possible to solve society's problems and the problems of the world. But these selfish political parties will never really solve any problems. They just keep changing the problem or recreating it in new forms. What we need is to start the party of unselfishness.

Real politics would be able to create a peaceful world or a peaceful police, city or nation, without using weapons, without using force and power. Nowadays, all we have are fake politics. We have fake governments that really cannot perform their rightful duty. All these governments exist through weapons, through power. And the peace that they supposedly protect is not a very deep or meaningful one. It is often a false peace. This is because the politics we have is fake politics. Genuine politics must be able to build the world of peace without using weapons, without using force. This can only happen when it is a politics

based in Dhamma, which is something that we must study further in order to be able to have a Dharmic politics that is truly able to make a peaceful world.

Even the politicians or the governments which claim to be democratic, even these are selfish. Often the democracy is just the cover for selfishness. And then dictatorships are selfish in a dictatorial way. Communist governments are selfish in a communist way. Even the more recent socialist governments can be selfish in their way. Each of these are just different versions of selfishness. These various political groups or parties will always claim certain ideals and they will use these to try and cover up the selfishness. But the basic motivating force behind all these things is selfishness. And so they are really not able to succeed in any of their claims. They claim all these ideals but they never really fulfil them because the basic impulse is selfish. This is because none of these parties or these ideologies are based in Dhamma. They are based instead in selfishness. And so these political situations will keep spinning around creating conflict and problems until we can remove it all from the power of selfishness, until we have a political party that is truly composed with Dhamma. There are, of course, politicians claiming to be representing a religion or to be representing religious values, but almost always this is just another cover for some selfish project. Only when the parties are only genuinely interested in what is right, in peace, in unselfishness, in Dhamma, only then will there be real or true political party.

Take a very immediate or closer example, what happens if the employer, the boss is selfish, and the employees are selfish. When the boss is selfish and the employees are selfish, they are not able to talk to each other. They are always trying to take advantage of each other and exploit each other. And so what kind of work is done? When both sides are just being selfish, no real meaningful work is done. But what happens when the employer is unselfish and the employees are unselfish? Then what kind of results occur? What way will lead to peace in this world? What way will lead to us actually doing things in this world that lead to peace? The way of just where everyone is being selfish or where we're being unselfish? If the employer is unselfish and the employees are unselfish then they can sit down and talk to each other. They can discuss the work and they can go about doing it in a peaceful productive meaningful way. This is the central issue in solving all the problems in society with the environment with this world. All of the problems come from selfishness. We cannot solve the problems because of selfishness. The only way we can do anything meaningful in this world is by getting rid of selfishness.

Or if we come even closer to home, to the family. If we look, the father is selfish, the mother is selfish, the children are selfish, I myself am selfish. When the family is just full of selfish people, then what is going to happen?

To get rid of selfishness, to destroy this selfishness can only be done through Dhamma. One has to have Dhamma if one is to get rid of this selfishness. And having Dhamma is the automatic advantage of being successful in practicing mindfulness with breathing meditation. If we practice this deeply, completely, then the result will be Dhamma, which having Dhamma, being able to practice and apply Dhamma in a way that will get rid of all selfishness. This is the only way we have open to us for beginning to solve the world's problems. So please be very interested in practicing ānāpānasati and learning to master our minds so that we can free ourselves and free our world from selfishness.

So let us create a political ideology that is truly on the side of God, that truly support the wishes of God. This kind of party or ideology would have to be one that is basically 'socialist,' meaning that it is for the good of society. It is an ideology that truly considers the common good. However, this kind of socialism would not be the socialism of Karl Marx because his socialism is still basically one of selfishness, so it has never been really successful. Instead, we need a socialism of Dhamma. A socialism rooted in Dhamma, controlled by Dhamma. Then it will be a socialism which is free of selfishness. We call it 'Dharmic Socialism.' Dhammic Socialism – a socialism of Dhamma. In this kind of socialism, there is no selfishness at all. This is the kind of political ideology that we need in this world.

So the kind of ideology that is a liberal democracy based in the freedom of the individual is something that is not really natural or Dhammic. This is because if we honestly look at life, we will see that nature has created us to live together. Human beings cannot live without society. We are social beings more than we are individuals. As long as we cling to political ideologies of the rights and freedoms of the individual, we will always have ideologies which tend towards selfishness. So instead we need to take a view that is basically socialist but not socialist in the way that it has been twisted and turned in political history. Socialism means society is taken as the basic unit instead of the individual. And that the ideology is, or the political system, is solely what is good for society. But this will not work if it depends on weapons and force. We need to develop a socialism that does not rely on force. Instead, a socialism where we are able to control our selfishness through Dhamma. It is a socialism based in Dhamma that

is brought about through Dhamma. We are not talking about forcing this on the world. It must grow out of Dhamma. It must grow out of people practicing Dhamma. To do this then, to bring about such a Dharmic socialism, means, first, being able to control selfishness. Controlling selfishness can only be done by having Dhamma which is the result of developing the mind through mindfulness with breathing. So we ask all of you to do your best to practice *ānāpānasati* so that this will give us the ability to master our own minds in order to free ourselves from selfishness. Then we can help to build our social structure, a politics, a world that is unselfish.

Please do not misunderstand the word ‘religion.’ Most people do not use this word correctly. Properly, religion is that which removes selfishness. Religion is the thing that can get rid of selfishness. Karl Marx did not understand this. And so his claim that religion was the opiate of the people. He claimed that religion was the opiate... that is not real religion. If something is truly a religion, all the things that do function as an opiate are not actual religion. If something is truly religion, then it must be able to get rid of selfishness. This means that real religion can get rid of all the addictions, all the addictive drugs, opiates and coke and all those things. And it can even get rid of the highest form of addiction, the most dangerous drug of all, which is just selfishness. True religion has this as its goal. And a real religion is able to do it. A true religion can get rid of all the drugs, all the addictions, and all selfishness. So please understand religion in this way. If we understand it this way religion has benefit and value. If we go and understand religion in another way, then religion becomes worthless and even dangerous.

So in short, let us all do our best to build a world that is full of peace. A world that is full of peace because people are eliminating and controlling selfishness. We can control selfishness by being able to master our own minds, by training our minds correctly with genuine religion and things like *ānāpānasati*. Please take this as your own hope and wish. And then strive that each of us may do our best to master our minds to control selfishness, so that we can have a world that is empty of selfishness, a world of unselfishness, a world where there is universal friendliness. True universal love, not just words about love, where we are all comrades, true friends in birth, ageing, illness, and death. Please take this as your hope and do you best to bring it about.

So we must form a peace corps. We must form a peace corps within ourselves by eliminating selfishness from ourselves so that we can be a vehicle for peace, instead of for conflict. If we can become a peace corps. then we can master our

minds. We can become a peace corps by mastering our minds and eliminating selfishness. We do this through having the Dhamma that is a result of thoroughly practicing mindfulness with breathing. And we practice this based in, with a foundation of the understanding of dependent origination. When we begin with an understanding of dependent origination and practice mindfulness with breathing correctly, then we will be more and more successful at freeing ourselves from selfishness. And we will become a peace corps or a vehicle for peace in this world. If you still feel that there is selfishness in this world then keep practicing. Practice over and over and over, until you can remove all selfishness. This is how we can create a world of peace, of friendliness, of love. Please do your best to use your life in this way. If in a future, you still are not completely successful, then we welcome you to visit again, so that we can continue to work at solving the problem of selfishness. Time has been used up and so this will be the end of our talk.

So thank you all for being such good listeners. You have been listening very well [attentively] for the last two hours. We hope that all of you who have come as tourists will leave as pilgrims with your backpacks filled with that which will keep you free of suffering, that will free you from death, that will allow you to live without any problems.

So, come as tourists and leave as pilgrims. That is all for this morning.

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Transcribed by Sibporn Sihsobhon (gsihsobhon@yahoo.com) in 2016
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