

The Buddhist Art of Life

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

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In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhadāsa 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 Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok (suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com).

Today in our first talk we will speak about Buddhism as the art of living. You all know what the word ‘art’ means. It means something which is graceful, beautiful, skilful, expert, something that can be done with great skill and ease. Art though is seldom applied to Buddhism or to Buddhism itself. People like to talk about, when they talk about Buddhist art, they’re talking about material objects. They never apply the word ‘art’ to Buddhism itself. But if we really want to speak of ‘Buddhist art,’ we must talk about Buddhism itself. That is the real art. For example, please don’t consider that Buddha images are art, are Buddhist art, that those statues, that the physical statue is Buddhist art. Rather take the meaning that is expressed on the face of those images, the meaning expressed in the face, the qualities of joy, of intelligence, of love, of patience and so on. This meaning expressed in the face of the Buddha image, this is the Buddhist art, not the physical statue itself. When we talk about life or living we should think of this on the highest level, what we can call ‘the supreme life,’ the highest life, and on this highest level the qualities or things we are looking for, can be spoken of in two aspects.

The first aspect is calmness, peacefulness, and the second is usefulness, a life that is peaceful and useful. Another thing to consider about life is that it is something, which can be developed. Even if you believe that life was given to you by God, nonetheless that life can be developed and should be developed

until reaching the point that can be called ‘supreme life.’ The word ‘supreme’ in itself signifies ‘something which is above everything.’ And so this supreme life then is inherently above all suffering, all *dukkha*, all problems. It’s above all the undesirable things. All the kinds of things that can bother us or upset us. All the things that we are having trouble with, all our problems. Thus supreme life is above all of this. And so you can also call it ‘the excellent life’ or ‘the sublime life’ whichever you like.

Next when we are speaking about Buddhism and trying to speak in line with Buddhist principles, then we need to know what the basic essence or the fundamental essence of Buddhism is. This is what we must consider next. The easiest, most straightforward way to express this fundamental principle of Buddhism is that in Buddhism, there is no ‘self.’ There is no *attā* (‘self,’ ‘soul’). Actually to put it properly is to say that ‘everything is not-self.’ All things are *anattā* (not-self). This is the basic fundamental principle of Buddhism. Everything is not-self. Now, when things are not-self, when they are natural, existing naturally from nature, in nature, through nature, for nature, then things are not graspable. When things are not-self, they cannot be clung to or attached to. When things are not-self, they don’t have any essence or substance within them that can be grasped at, clung to, or attached to. So the implication of this essence of Buddhism is that things that are not-self cannot be attached to and are not worth attaching to.

The religious culture of India developed to its highest stage before the Buddhist time, to the understanding that there is an *ātman* in all living things, especially human beings. And that this *ātman* transmigrates from body to body, becoming more and more purified. And so eventually it unites with Brahma or the Paramatman. And then this *ātman*, self, soul, exists eternally. The highest religious understanding of India at that time was that there is an eternal soul or self, called an *ātman* in Sanskrit. Then Buddhism appeared. The wisdom of the Buddha, which saw that even this thing is not-self, it’s just something natural. It can’t be considered truly to be a self or a soul. And so then the Hindu tradition we can say to simplify matters, teaches an eternal self, whereas Buddhism teaches eternal voidness. When there is no self, there is voidness – voidness of self. And the teaching of Buddhism is eternal voidness. Now, this thing called ‘self’ or the feeling that *there is* a self, or *we are* a self, this is the basis for attachment. As soon as we feel that *there is* a self, that *we are* a self, *I am* a self, we attach to that. And this is the source of all our problems in the world. But

when the understanding arises that, in fact, all things are not-self, then one sees that this sense of self should not be attached to, and that all the things that we tend to grasp at and cling to as ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ that none of these are worth clinging to and attaching to. And then we see that we should let go of these things.

And right here is the art of Buddhist living or the Buddhist art of living. In being able to not attach to anything, in having the ability to be totally non-attached, where one doesn’t even have an impulse, to attach to anything, this is the Buddhist art of living. When one sees that everything, that life itself and things in the world around us are not worth, that they cannot be attached to, that there is nothing there to attach to, to cling to as being ‘me’ or ‘mine.’ Then this is the art of living. Whereas other religions and teachings will cling to something as being ‘self,’ whether it may be some instinctual feeling that is taken to be the self, or it can be something, that has been taught later. The Buddhist art of living is to not cling to even these things. Buddhism kind of has the character of having come *after* the rest of them. All the various religions teach some form of self that should be attached to. They may teach a God that should be attached to.

Buddhism came after all these kinds of teachings and said that there is nothing worth attaching to, there is nothing that can be clung to. So this is why it seems to have come after. Because after all the different possible religious teachings appeared, then there appeared the final teaching which is: “Nothing is worth clinging to as I or mine.” It’s clear that Buddhism is the first teaching of *anattā*. It’s the first time that anyone taught the teaching of not-self. Before Buddhism there were teachers who taught ‘nothing,’ who taught nihilism, that there is nothing, that there is just some great emptiness or nothingness. This was an older teaching. But the Buddha realized that this was just one extreme viewpoint, that of nothingness, that nothing exists. On the other extreme is the belief in ‘selves.’ ‘Selves’ that exist constantly, always, eternally. But Buddhism realizes that both of these, nothingness and total selfness, that these are extreme views which don’t fit with the nature of things.

Those things that people were taking to be a self, an eternal self or soul, Buddhism points out that that self is not-self. That ‘self’ you consider yourself to be you, that ‘self’ you feel you are, is not-self. So Buddhism is neither a teaching of nihilism or nothingness which is called *nirattā*, nor is it a teaching of some self that exist on and on from moment to moment, from minute to

minute, from life to life. Buddhism isn't that which is called *attā*, the teaching of 'self.' Buddhism is the teaching of *anattā*, not-self. All the things that exist, exist as not-self. They are not-self. Something very subtle and important to understand about this *attā*, self, is that all living things have an instinct of self. All living things have some very basic instinctual feeling of being some kind of self. This is true even of plants. It's true of all animals and especially of human beings. For life to establish itself and survive, it needs to identify itself. In order to protect itself and serve its needs. This is an instinctual mechanism. It's not one that has to be trained or thought about. It's totally instinctual. So we call it the 'instinct' of *attā* or the *attā* instinct, the instinct of self. But in the human being this instinct is conceptualized, we name it 'me,' 'I.' And then we give a lot of importance to this 'I,' this 'me.' We don't realize that this 'me,' this 'I' is merely a concept, a label applied to an instinct. Now, the instinct of self doesn't mean that there *is* a self. It's just this naturally occurring feeling or sense we have. It doesn't mean that there actually is something that is a self. But we feel that there is. And then we conceptualize it as 'I,' as 'me.' And all of our languages are full of such words. And once we form the concept of 'me,' then the mind goes a little further and conceptualizes 'mine.' And once the mind is thinking in terms of 'me' and 'mine,' then it starts to think about all kinds of things, positive, negative. What 'I' like, what 'I' don't like. Then the mind continues in this way, until it gets into suffering, until there is *dukkha*. This all arises out of this basic instinct of self. But what we don't realize is that we can just leave it as this vague sense of self. There is no need to conceptualize it and let this conception be the center of our thinking.

If we can just leave it be at this natural sense of self and not add it any further into 'me' and 'mine,' positive & negative, then there won't be any *dukkha*, any suffering. Now all of you know that a concept is not the thing itself. The concept or name of something isn't the thing in itself. So one can see that in this instinct of self there might be a belief or sense of feeling that there is a self, without there having to be a self in there. The situation is that this instinctual knowledge of self – the Thai word for instinct means 'a knowledge you are born with,' 'an inborn knowledge' – but instincts are a kind of knowing which is not complete, which is still somewhat ignorant. And they can even be wrong. Just because we are born with certain feelings or instincts or knowledge, kind of knowing, doesn't mean that they are correct, that they are actually true. And so because this basic concept of 'self' is based in ignorance, it lacks wisdom, to

take it as the basis for our thinking, to center our life on this concept of ‘me’ and then ‘mine’ and all the other things is also ignorance, foolish. And this is why it leads to so many problems and to so much suffering. But then we are slaves to this concept of ‘I’ just all the time. Although this concept is illusion, although it is delusive, although it is just some kind of trickery, we are enslaved to it. All of our thinking and therefore all of our living is under the service, is in service of this concept of ‘self.’

And so the Buddhist art of living is to get free of this concept, to remove lives from the tyranny of ‘self.’ To live without being dominated by ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ This is the Buddhist art of living. *We are the we which is not a real we. We are a we that is not a real we or you are a you which is not a real you.* If you can’t understand this sentence, then you won’t be able to understand Buddhism. Once you understand Buddhism however, you will understand, that *I am an I which is not a real I.* When we understand in this way then we are free, liberated. There are no problems, there is nothing heavy in life.

We have a great need to understand this fact. If we don’t understand it then we will carry many heavy burdens. Once there is ‘I,’ there becomes ‘mine.’ We cling to many things as being ‘mine,’ and then we carry them around with us. We carry these things in the mind and in the mind they are very heavy. And the more the mind is full of ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ the heavier things get. And these burdens are called *dukkha*, suffering. This is why we need so much to understand that all things are not-self. So that we no longer need cling to them as ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ And then we needn’t carry them around with us. We needn’t have these burdens upon our minds. And then we are free, liberated. Now we should look at the lowliness and harmfulness of this ‘self,’ of this ‘I.’ First, when there is this clinging to ‘I,’ things are picked up and they become very heavy. And so this ‘I,’ this life itself which is clung to as being ‘me,’ this life bites its owner.

It becomes heavy and burdensome to itself. So we say that *it bites its owner.* But this ‘me’ doesn’t stop with just life right here. It reaches outwards and becomes selfishness. And so that life doesn’t just bite itself, it bites others. This is the lowliness, the harmfulness of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ It bites itself, it bites its owner and it bites others. You can see this very clearly in the modern world which is filled with all different forms of selfishness. You can see how this selfish behavior of people bites themselves, causes themselves great pain and suffering. And you can see how that selfishness reaches outwards and bites the

lives of others. This is the great harm that is done by 'me' and 'mine.' Please study these things very carefully. Please study this until you see the truth, that this world is being destroyed by selfishness. Because of the selfishness of individuals the world is being ruined. You can see it in the capitalists are selfish, labor is selfish, the owners are selfish, the employees are selfish, the left is selfish, the right is selfish, the men are selfish, the women are selfish and so on. All over the place people are thinking, speaking, and acting selfishly. And the result is that this selfishness is destroying the planet. If we are not able to do something about this selfishness, then people would just continue to fight each other. And this fighting will go on until there is nothing left. Industry, material development, and these things which are so highly honored these days, as these increase, selfishness also increases. As industry grows such as in countries as Thailand, selfishness increases very rapidly. One can see it happening from year-to-year. As material standards of living increase, selfishness increases. As selfishness increases, whether in the West or the East, love disappears, kindness, sharing, and other values like this, fade away. And so with material development and industry on the upswing selfishness grows accordingly and this leads the world to destruction.

All the most serious and terrible problems we have in the world now, all the major crises are caused by selfishness. For example, environmental destruction. We are harming nature far too much. Killing animals, destroying forests, and all of this is because of selfishness. Because of the desire and greed of human beings.

Pollution – the vast majority of pollution is unnecessary, it's caused by human greed and carelessness, which comes from selfishness. The strange new diseases we have now such as AIDS. These are a result of selfishness or at least the crisis is a result of selfishness. All problems of drug abuse, crime, and all the others are because of selfishness. Another, maybe the most important danger of this selfishness is because when there is selfishness, we can't talk to each other. When we are being selfish, we can't talk, we don't listen to each other, we don't care about each other. You can see this in the United Nations. There is so much selfishness that people can't really talk. There is no understanding, just a lot of competition. When they agree they just agree for selfish reasons. There is no real understanding of each other or even of the world's problems. And if we can't talk to each other, we can't sit down and learn how to understand each other, how are we going to make this a world fit to live in?

So it begins with this basic instinct of self and then the concept of ‘me’ and then ‘mine,’ and then this grows into selfishness which bites its owner and bites the rest of the world. This is the source of all our problems. When there is selfish[ness] wives and husbands can’t even talk to each other. When they are being selfish, all they do is argue and fight and eventually they end up getting a divorce because of their selfishness. All the divorces, the high rate of divorce is because husbands and wives are no longer able to talk together, to understand each other. And this is because of selfishness. But when there isn’t any selfishness, it’s easy for the entire family to understand each other. It’s easy for a village to understand each other and work together. If there isn’t any selfishness, it’s easy for the whole world to understand each other. Now the terrible problems exist, there are even between parents and children, there is talking without understanding, between teachers and students there is talk but no mutual understanding. But if we took out the selfishness, if we just removed the egoism, then everyone could understand each other.

Next we look at the way of removing selfishness. In Buddhism the way is to look at life, to look at oneself and to see that one is not-self. To look and see that oneself is not-self. Seeing that everything is not-self. Seeing that there’s no self to be selfish about, selfishness ends. This is the simple and direct approach of Buddhism. In the religions or for the people who believe in God, if you have a God, if there is some God, there is still the need to end selfishness. And the way is to give one’s life to God, to surrender to the will of God, to do God’s will. When one totally gives oneself to God, there is no more room for selfishness. When one’s life belongs totally to God, there is no more selfishness. This is the other approach. In both kinds of religions there is the need to overcome selfishness. There is one short sentence that we like you to remember. It’s the heart of today’s talk. It’s the sentence that, *whenever there is selfishness in life, that life bites its owner*. ‘Whenever there is selfishness in life, that life bites its owner.’ This is what we would like to talk about in more detail.

Dogs hardly ever bite their owners. It’s only a really lousy dog that bites its owner. But how often does selfishness bite its owner, bites its owner over and over again? Your selfishness is far worse than your dog. Please take a good look at this. Please allow us some time to provide some examples of how selfishness bites its owner. We will list a certain amount, but there won’t be too many.

The first example is love. Ordinary love bites its owner. Now, there is another kind of love which in Buddhism is called *mettā* (loving kindness),

karuṇā (compassion) that doesn't bite its owner. But ordinary love bites both the lover and the beloved. It's hot and burns up both the lover and the object of love. The first example is love.

The second example is anger. When anger appears, it bites its owner first before it even has a chance to go and bite anyone else. As soon as anger happens, it's biting its owner even though the person we are angry at may not even know a thing. They may not even be affected at all. So anger is the second thing that bites its owner.

The next example is hatred. As soon as hatred appears, it bites its owner. The one hated may not know a thing. They may have no clue that someone hates them. But the one who has the hate is being bit all the time. This is the third example.

The next is fear. Fear is foolish. It is stupid. It is unnecessary. Things happen and we get frightened and then we think about it and get even more afraid. And then this fear bites us. Although it is totally unnecessary. There is no need to be afraid. But now in this world, we are afraid of so many things. So fear bites its owner.

The next one is excitement, stimulation. This is one that all of you like very much. You spent a lot of money trying to buy this one. Even though it's biting you. Think of all the things we buy to give us excitement and stimulation. Traveling all around the world, spending hundreds and thousands of dollars or whatever in order to find stimulation, excitement, inspiration. People go to sporting events, movies, dancing, spending lots of money on these things, just to get excitement. Although all of this excitement bites its owner. It doesn't bring anyone peace. It doesn't help anyone. The tourist industry has become a very important phenomenon in the modern world. In some countries it's a major source of income, where whole countries dedicate themselves to attracting and distracting tourists, trying to be exciting, stimulating, exotic and so on in order to deceive people and get their money. But people like this very much, they foolishly think that this excitement and stimulation is happy. And so people are very willing to spend lots of money in order to deceive themselves. And so this tourist industry has changed the world greatly. It is very hard to find a quiet place anymore because everybody is looking for excitement. They only look for quiet when they are worn out. Please examine this carefully and see if this is what is actually happening or not. Pay attention to excitement and stimulation,

to inspiration and see how it bites its owner. People like to search for strange and exotic things. They like to have strange experiences, to buy strange things, even if these things don't have any value. They don't care whether these things are valuable or beneficial. They care only that it is strange and exciting. So, for example, now people, foreigners like to come to Thailand and buy birdcages. Southern Thailanders like to keep song birds and they make very nice cages. And foreigners come and spend a lot of money to buy these cages just because they are different, because they are strange. Sometimes they take them home and just kind of hang them on the wall or occasionally make a light or a lampshade out of it or something. But they buy things for no other purpose than the strangeness, their uniqueness or whatever. Some recent news in Thailand is that foreigners like to eat *som tam* which never happened before because it is raw papaya and if it is made properly, it's mixed with raw fermented crab with worms in it and lots of chili pepper. And so foreigners never used to eat that stuff, but now, because they are so crazy about excitement, they'll eat anything just to eat something new. So this strangeness and excitement bites its owner. Please take a good look at this one and be careful.

Some other examples are that selfishness makes us worry about the future. Because of selfishness, we worry about things that will happen to us, things that haven't happened yet, things that may never happen. We go and create these worries because of selfishness. And then, in the opposite way, selfishness goes and causes problems with the past. We go and long for the past, we dwell in memories and get upset about the past. So selfishness makes us both worry about the future and long for the past.

Another one is envy. Selfishness envies the one who is more intelligent, or stronger, or has more power, or is more beautiful. Anybody who's got something more than us, we envy them. And this envy is tearing apart the world. It creates problems between families. They envy over whose child is, does better in school and things like that. Or who makes more money. There is envy between communities, between villages and the envy between countries is ripping the world apart. There is tremendous problems created by the envy which comes from selfishness. We see someone has more money than us and we become envious. Or they have a bigger house, or a faster car, or more beautiful clothes, or even a better location in the meditation hall, and we become envious. And while we are sitting there being burned up and being bitten by our envy, the other person doesn't know anything is happening. We

are creating all kinds of schemes to get even, and they are not being affected in the least. This envy that comes from our selfishness bites us up. It bites individuals and it can also function collectively in families, groups, and even nations.

The last example we'd like to give is jealousy. When one is jealous of what one has, one doesn't want to share it. When one is jealous of one's possessions or whatever, one won't share it with others, even those who are in need. There is a special kind of jealousy. In Thai there's a different word for it, *hueng*, which is sexual jealousy. It's the jealousy one feels towards one's husband or wife or one's sexual partner, one's lover. Or one is very possessive, very jealous of whoever this may be. Both kinds, the ordinary jealousy and the sexual kind, they burn us, they bite us very strongly. These are two last examples or one last example, of how selfishness bites its owner.

All of these things come from selfishness. There is love, anger, hatred, fear, excitement, worry about the future, or longing after the past, envy, and jealousy. These are just a few of the examples of what selfishness does, of how selfishness bites its owner. All of these come from selfishness. But there are many others which you can see for yourself. Just pay attention to the world a bit and you'll see how all these different things operate and notice that all of them come from selfishness.

The Buddhist art is to not have a 'self.' If there is no self, one doesn't have a self, then where does the selfishness come from? There is nothing to be selfish about and there is nothing for the selfishness to bite. If there is no self, life doesn't have an owner to get bitten. This is the Buddhist approach. In the theistic religions, when there is a God, one gives oneself to God, give oneself to God totally. And then selfishness is God's problem and you are free of it. There is nothing more. And once you are giving yourself to God, there's nothing left to be bit anymore.

There are two approaches, one is to have no self, to let go of self totally and then there is no selfishness. That's how we get rid of selfishness. The other approach is to give oneself to God and then God will take care of the problem.

For the time that remains we would like to spend a little bit more time examining how selfishness bites the one who is selfish.

The selfishness causes what we call 'defilement' (*kilesa*).

‘Defilement’ means something dirty, something that pollutes. And in this case it pollutes, defiles, makes the mind dirty. Whenever there is selfishness it causes defilement. There are many different forms of defilement. There is, for example, love, anger, hatred, fear, worry, jealousy, envy, excitement, boredom, restlessness, doubt and on and on. Or traditionally we speak of just the basic three: greed, anger, and delusion. Whenever there is selfishness, defilement appears. This is happening most of the time. But very few people are interested. Nobody pays any attention to it, so they pretend that it’s not happening. But it’s happening pretty much all the time. So you might want to remember this. That whenever there is some kind of selfishness, there will be defilement. These defilements are the state of mind that is defiled or polluted. Another name for defilement is fire. These things are fires in the mind. They burn, scorch, bake the mind from within. So try to remember this word ‘defilement’ (*kilesa*). Now, whenever there is selfishness, there will be defilement. So when there is defilement, there occurs something else which is called *anusaya* (tendencies, habits). When one defilement occurs it starts to develop a habit. The more a certain defilement happens, the more it becomes habitual. You can test this out very easy. Go and get angry at someone and then you’ll find that it is very easy to get angry at them again and again. To the point where it becomes a habit. You just see them and you get angry. And then once you’ve developed the habit, it is very hard to break. So once there occurs a defilement, the first defilement starts something and the next one starts to build up a habit.

So after the defilements there are the tendencies, the habitual defilement. There are many people who write letters or come and ask questions about anger. They complain that they hate to get angry. They hate being angry. But they just can’t help it. They can’t stop it. They complain that, why is it that they can’t stop this anger. The reason is because they don’t know about these tendencies, these habits. That without knowing it for many years, they’ve let themselves get angry. They have gotten angry carelessly until this habit built up. It got bigger and bigger until there is this monstrous habit, you could say in the substratum of the mind, somewhere deep down in the mind they have built up this big habit towards anger. And now the habit is so strong, they have no control over it. They don’t like it anymore, they don’t want it anymore. But they have no control over it because they’ve let it reach this proportion.

The third thing that happens is then that these tendencies, these habits build up, they build up pressure. It’s like there is a big jar in the mind and then every

time a defilement happens, it gets deposited in this jar. And then the mind collects these deposits, and it builds up, and then it gets a pressure. Until the point that if there is just this tiny hole in the jar, this pressure will shoot out, which is called *āsava*, which means it flows back out. If you put enough junk into the jar, then at one point it will start to come out again. These are the *āsavas*. If we carelessly allow these defilements to happen over and over again, then the tendencies build up. And when the pressure gets too much, then they start to come back out.

The meaning of a ‘holy’ man, a ‘holy’ one, is in Buddhism very clear. It is someone in whom there is no defilement, no more these tendencies, and no more of this flowing out of defilement. In a life that is cleaned up, all this mess of defilements, and defiled habits, and defiled outbursts, this is the meaning of the holy one or a holy man.

We think that in other religions it must be fundamentally the same. That how can you call a person ‘holy,’ if they are still getting angry or still have greed and so on?

And if one just gets rid of selfishness, then one can clean up the whole mess. So the Buddhist art of living is to lessen selfishness. Decrease selfishness and we decrease the defilements. The less selfishness there is, the less we collect and store up those habits. And the less there is stored up, the less there is to erupt and burst out. So the art of living is to work at decreasing and eliminating selfishness in order to clean up the defilements, tendencies, and eruptions.

The word ‘defilement’ means something that is dirty, filthy, polluted, and all these aspects of defilement are definitely dirty and polluting. But once the defilements appear and play their game, there is more to them than just being dirty. They have other qualities as well. They are fires that burn and scorch the mind. They are burdens, they are heavy weights that push down on life, that make life burdensome and very painful. They are bonds, they are chains that lock one into a prison. They are like a slavery that denies one of all freedom. So there is more to the defilement than just being low and kind of dirty. They affect life in many different ways. So the purpose of the art of living is to be free of all this, to be totally liberated, so there is nothing defiling, burning, choking, enchaining, enslaving us anymore. Selfishness is the root cause. It’s the cause of all of these things. So the way to be free, is just to be free of the self, which is

the basis of selfishness. When there is no self, then there is no selfishness and one is totally free of all these things.

The concept of ‘I,’ of ‘me’ and the selfishness that comes from this, these are a darkness or blindness in our lives. When our lives exist in this darkness, when we live blindly, then we can barely do anything right. Whatever we do is confused, complicated. The Dhamma of Buddhism is like a light that clears up that darkness, that gets rid of the blindness. The Buddha – the meaning of *buddha* is to ‘wake up,’ Buddha is this light that wakes one up. This waking up, this light that wakes one up, is the Buddha or is Buddha. And having this light, so that one is no longer trapped in this darkness of ‘I,’ ‘mine,’ and selfishness. And then with this light, with this clarity and freedom, then one can live life without mistakes, without making problems for oneself and others.

So we feel that it’s very correct of you to have come here in this way with the intention to study, investigate, and practice Dhamma, the Dhamma in Buddhism. We wish you the best success. So even those of you who came here as tourists, you can leave as pilgrims. Finally we would like to thank you for being good listeners. Thank you for giving us your attention. This will end today’s talk.

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