

# ***The Dependent Origination Farangs don't Know***

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

A Dhamma lecture given at Suan Mokkh on 9 March 1990

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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](http://www.suanmokkh.org) and [www.bia.or.th](http://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 Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok ([suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com](mailto:suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com)).*

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In this second talk we will repeat and review *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination). And we will emphasize it from the perspective of... a means of... as something to reflect upon, to reason about so that we understand it more and more precisely and thoroughly.

That we are having a talk at this time of day, the time when most people are still asleep, is something very reasonable. If we explain it with a metaphor, we say that our tea cups are not yet overflowing. The mind at this time is fresh, clear, bright, the mind is open like a flower, and it's an easy time to add something new and special.

First thing to review are some words, two very important words – the words *paṭiccasamuppāda* and *idappaccayatā* – which both have fundamentally the same meaning: to interdependently arise, to arise/to originate, conditioned by/dependent on other things. This dependent origination is the basic meaning of both words. However, if the meaning is applied generally to all things, then we call it *idappaccayatā*. However, if it's applied specifically to what's going on in the human mind – especially the arising of *dukkha* – we call it *paṭiccasamuppāda*.

You can observe quite easily that there is nothing that can arise or appear by itself. There isn't anything in this universe that appears all by itself. Everything must depend on at least one other thing, on something else, in order to happen,

to appear or exist. This fact, this condition, we call ‘dependent origination.’ We can call it *idappaccayatā* or *paṭiccasamuppāda*.

So we have these two words that point to the fact that things arise dependent upon/conditioned by other things. This, when applied to the world in general, to things in general, is called *idappaccayatā*. When we use it in reference to dukkha – the experience of dukkha, and happiness as well – then we call it in particular *paṭiccasamuppāda*.

The meaning and the use of these two words is quite clear. Unfortunately they are never used very clearly. Often the two are confused or used as replacements for each other without any reason. Even in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Burma it seems that these words are used quite carelessly. Nobody tries to use them systematically to make it easy for people to understand their meaning. Because of this carelessness, many people have become confused about their meaning.

Now in order to understand *paṭiccasamuppāda*, there are two methods and levels for understanding it. The first level is the theoretical. It’s to understand it theoretically, intellectually. The second level or approach is the practical – to actually see it as it occurs in life, in nature. So we must use both of these methods. We must understand it on both levels and not just partially – we need to understand it thoroughly in both of these ways.

We’ll begin by looking at this in terms of knowledge – specifically, theoretical knowledge. First of all we must understand that this *paṭiccasamuppāda* is the law of nature. This is the fundamental basic law of nature. Here when we use the word ‘law,’ in the Pāli we find the word *dhātu* which can be translated ‘element.’ But whether we call it ‘element’ or ‘law,’ the meaning is basically the same – the fundamental truth or reality that everything happens in this way, everything happens through conditionality, through dependent origination. The fact that everything must follow this natural law is something to be very aware of.

In fact there are a number of things – details and aspects of this – that we really don’t need to know. There are many that it’s impossible for us to know and we needn’t waste our time trying to speculate about things we cannot know. For example, the question of where does this law come from. This is not within our ability to know – there’s no way that we can know this so we needn’t worry about it. And even then this law – for most of us we don’t know anything about

it, we don't know what it is, we're not aware of such a law. But then there is the one who tells us about the law, who teaches about the law. And so the first one, the source of the law, that's not really important for us to know and it's beyond our ability. The second one, the law itself, is something that few of us know anything about. But the third one, once we have been told about this law, once we have begun to understand it through being taught, then we can practice in line with and according with this law.

The Christians might collect all of these meanings together and call it 'God.' They might say that the source of the law is God, that the law itself is God, and that the one who teaches the law is also God. So for the Christians, all three of these might be called 'God.' But for the Buddhist, we cannot see it in that way. We can't. There is this source of the law which really we don't need to know about and it's beyond our ability. Then there's the law itself and then the one who teaches about the law. The important thing though is not whether we call it 'God' or whatever. The important thing is to practice correctly according to this law. Once we have been told about the law, if then we are able to practice correctly, then this is the important thing, no matter what we call it or what theoretical scheme we prefer.

Another branch of understanding this is that to see dependent origination is to see the true Buddha. The Buddha said that "He who sees the Dhamma sees me; he who sees me sees the Dhamma." And then later said that "Whoever sees *paṭiccasamuppāda* sees the Dhamma; whoever sees Dhamma sees *paṭiccasamuppāda*." Therefore whoever sees dependent origination sees the Buddha; whoever sees the Buddha sees dependent origination. We can't see one without the other. The only way to know the real Buddha is to realize dependent origination – not just know of it but to truly realize it. Through this realization one finally meets the true Buddha.

You all have read books about the Buddha. Some of you have read many books. But these are just books about the historical Buddha. And then there are the legendary books, the books full of myths and all kinds of stories and folk tales and things. But you have not seen the genuine Buddha, you haven't seen the real Buddha up until you have truly seen dependent origination. The difference is very very important. Until we see dependent origination, we have just seen some historical or legendary Buddha.

Now this real Buddha we can also call the 'Dhammic Buddha' – the Buddha of Dhamma, not the personal historical Buddha. But of course the two are

connected because the historical Buddha, the person, taught about and helps us to see the real Buddha – the Dhammic Buddha.

Please forgive us that we speak a little bit too directly and crudely when we say that this is the Buddha that the white people (the *farang[s]*) don't know anything about. You white people have only heard about these historical Buddhas, these legendary Buddhas but you don't know anything about the real Buddha. All the Europeans, Americans, and what have you, have shown no interest in dependent origination and so you don't have much of a clue about the real Buddha, the dependent origination. Forgive us for being so forward but these are the facts.

The genuine Buddha is eternal. This Buddha has no life and no history. There is the ordinary Buddha, the human Buddha, who of course was a living person and had a history. But all those stories are not the stories of the true Buddha. They're just the stories about the history of one person's life. That's not the Buddha that we want you to know about now.

This human Buddha and all the books about his life, this is not yet the true Buddha and we need to be careful to look more deeply to find the genuine Buddha. The genuine Buddha is eternal, whereas this personal human Buddha was temporary. However, with the help of the temporary... the Buddha who was a person, an ordinary human being, with the help of this Buddha, we can come to know the true eternal Buddha. So we must have great gratitude, be very thankful to the human Buddha. Because although this person is not the genuine Buddha, through his practice he was able to fully realize and to totally awaken to the reality of dependent origination. Because of this complete realization of paṭiccasamuppāda, this human Buddha is able to help us find the real Buddha, the genuine Buddha.

Nonetheless it is amazing that we can find this law of dependent origination within our own bodies. This eternal law of nature can be found within these temporary bodies.

To discover the true Buddha, the law of dependent origination within ourselves, within these bodies, we need to practice. It's not enough to just study or learn it in the ordinary typical sense. But we've come now to practice and we must practice dependent origination if we are to realize it within ourselves. When we practice this law of dependent origination until fully realizing it, then we become a Buddha as well. This is a different sort of Buddha. When we have

found this eternal Buddha within ourselves – we become Anu-buddha, which means the Buddha who is awakened after or following the historical Buddha.

Now we'll talk about the practical – the practice aspect of dependent origination. The theoretical aspects have been discussed already.

The starting point, the beginning of our practice of paṭiccasamuppāda, or the ABCs of our practice, is that we must know and understand the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

You might get angry or annoyed when somebody tells you that you don't even know your own eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. You don't even understand your own.

First of all, you need to see that without the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind that you would not exist, the world would not exist. Without the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind nothing would exist. But once we have these eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, then everything can exist. You can exist, the world, the universe can exist. So we can say that the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind create the world.

A very crucial fact here is that if we don't understand the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind correctly or if we don't know how to control them correctly, then they will create things that are very wrong, that are incorrect, that are nothing but problems one after the other.

So the heart of our practice is to understand the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind and then be able to control them so they don't cause any problems. To do this we need to see that the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind are *anattā* (not-self) – that none of these are 'me,' are 'I,' are any kind of 'self.' They're merely phenomenon arising naturally. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind are just naturally occurring phenomena – they arise and they pass away.

For example, when the eye sees some form, some sight, when just because of the stimulation of the visual system, the visual part of the nervous system, when this is stimulated by some sight or form, then we say '*I see.*' '*I see the form.*' Or when the ear is stimulated by a sound, we say '*I hear*' the sound. Or '*I smell*' this beautiful fragrance. Or '*I taste*' this delicious food. When the body is touched by something, it becomes '*I am touched.*' And when there is thought, when thought stimulates the mind, then it becomes '*I think.*' This is how we are

misunderstanding even this most basic aspect of life. Whenever we see or hear something, it's taken to be 'I.' 'I see it.' We take it to be *attā*. We regard it all as 'self,' as 'I' and 'me.' This is how we're deluded right from the very start.

If you wish, you'll be able to find out, to see that these are totally different. Between 'the eye seeing a form' and 'me seeing the form' is totally different. When *I* see the form, when *I* hear the sound, when *I* smell the fragrance, when *I* taste, when *I* touch, when *I* think, then the dependent origination of *dukkha* arises instantly. When it's 'I,' 'I,' 'I,' then *dukkha* is dependently originated. But when it's just the eye sees the form, the ear hears the sound, the nose smells the fragrance, the tongue tastes the flavor, the body feels the touch, and the mind thinks the thought, the difference is complete. One, we're deluded and it all happens incorrectly and becomes the immediate dependent origination of *dukkha*. But on the other, there is just *idappaccayatā*, the natural flow of *idappaccayatā*.

If it is just 'the eye sees the sight,' if the mind just thinks that the eye sees the sight instead of 'I see it,' then there is no problem, there is no *dukkha*. But as soon as there arises the idea that *I* see the form, *I* hear the sound, *I* smell the fragrance, *I* taste the flavor, *I* feel the touch, *I* think, when all this 'I,' 'I,' all this *attā*, this 'self,' then there arises the positive & the negative and this is the basis of the dependent origination of *dukkha*. But when there's none of that, when it's just the eye, the physical eye sees, the ear hears, the nose smells, the tongue tastes, the body feels/touches, the mind thinks, when there is this awareness, there's no problem and we just deal with the situation in the best way we can and don't make it into a problem. So we must have *sati* (mindfulness) in order that we see, that it's just the eye seeing, the ear hearing, the tongue tasting, and so on – so that this 'I,' and *attā* and self, doesn't arise.

When seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking, don't let the thought 'I,' 'attā,' 'self' arise, if we allow this self to arise so that it becomes I see, I hear, I smell, I taste, I touch, I think, then this is the basis for the arising of positive & negative, positiveness & negativeness. And this positiveness and negativeness – it grows into or develops into the dependent origination of *dukkha*. We must be very careful right at this point. This is the transmission point. It's a point of choice where things can go either one way, the peaceful way, or the other way, the way of *dukkha*. So we need to practice *ānāpānasati* so that we can develop the necessary mindfulness to be very careful right at this point so that we don't let the 'I,' the ego, the self arise – so then it's just seeing,

just hearing, just smelling, just tasting, just touching, just thinking, and then there's no positive & negative. Positive & negative can't arise and then it doesn't cook up into dukkha.

Now we will examine the condition or activity of dependently arising, dependently originating. This condition or this activity is one that in Thai is called *prung* which is very hard to translate into English. We can use the word 'concoct' or the word 'to condition.' So this activity of concocting, of conditioning is what we'd like to look at.

The first stage of this concocting begins with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and then each of these has their mate outside in the world – the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts. When the eye interacts or associates with a sight, with a form, or when the ear interacts with sound, when the nose interacts with a fragrance or odor, when the tongue interacts with a taste, and so on, then there arises consciousness. Whenever the sense organ and the sense object interact, then there arises consciousness. This is the first stage of concocting.

When these three things are functioning, are working together, when the three come together and there's experience of these three together – there arises a fourth thing which we call *phassa* (contact). This is the next stage of concocting.

When there is this *phassa*, contact, then there arises *vedanā* (feeling), and this *vedanā* is the basis for the sense of positive & negative, or positiveness & negativeness.

Just this is called 'concocting' or the activity of concocting. That is specifically the concocting associated with the *āyatana* (the sense organs and the sense objects). With the concocting of sense organs and sense objects, this leads to the arising of *vedanā*, of feeling.

Now let's compare it with the ignorant person in whom there is self and ego. When the eye sees the form, the ear hears the sound, and so on, it all becomes self. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are taken to be self, to be 'me,' to be 'I.' And then the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts are taken to be 'mine' – *my* sights, *my* sounds, *my* smells, *my* tastes, *my* touches, *my* thoughts. And then when the consciousness arises – the consciousness is taken to be self, to be ego, to be the 'I.' Then *phassa*, contact, and feeling are taken to

be ‘mine.’ So the whole thing is full of ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ Everything is regarded as ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ in the case of the ignorant person.

We’ve been talking now about the *āyatana*, the sensory level of conditioning – the conditioning of the senses and things directly associated with that. So this is the sensual system of concocting. Now let’s look at the mental system of concocting – the concocting of the mind. When there is feeling, then *taṇhā* arises. *Taṇhā* is desire through the power of ignorance. Remember that this is happening to the person who doesn’t know – the ignorant one. And so this feeling is ignorant. It happens in ignorance. And so the desire that arises due to that feeling is also ignorant.

When there is this ignorant desire, this *taṇhā* – this craving or thirst – then it is taken to be ‘I.’ If ‘I’ contact, if the contact is ‘mine,’ if the sensual contact is experienced by ‘me’ and if the feeling is ‘mine,’ well then the desire must be ‘mine.’ And so there arises the idea of ‘self’ which we call *upādāna*. The concept of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ regarding all these things is called attachment or *upādāna*. Beginning with the sensual system of concocting, then there arises *taṇhā*, and then there arises *upādāna*. This later system of concocting is of the mind. This means the concocting of thoughts, of concepts. So the first system or aspect is sensual and now this is conceptual – the conceptual system being concocted.

Next we come to the attachment system, the *upādāna* system. This is the system where the self gets born. So dependent on the first two systems then, there arises *upādāna*, attachment – clinging to ‘I,’ clinging to things, or anything as ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ And out of this arises ‘becoming’ which is the readiness to be born. The ego is maturing, is becoming. In Pāli this is called *bhava*. We can translate it as ‘becoming.’

The maturation of the ego is compared to the fetus in the womb that has developed until it’s mature and ready to be born. And then, due to becoming, there is a mental birth, a spiritual birth, of ego. The ego, the ‘me,’ is then born full and complete. This complete birth of ego is called *jāti*. *Jāti* is a mental birth, a spiritual birth. Then once the ego is born, everything is taken to be ‘mine.’ All the *dukkha* in life – my work, my home, my wife, my husband, my children, my possessions, my cows, my chickens, my car, all of these. There ego is born and then there is ‘mine, mine, mine’ – and so there is *dukkha*. So this is the third system, the attachment system. There are these three systems of ignorance, three



systems of concocting through ignorance and the last one is the attachment system.

So we hope you can remember that there are these three systems of concocting. There are these three different aspects of this concocting. The first is the concocting, the conditioning of the āyatana. We can call that the sensual system of concocting; then the second is the concocting of the mind, or of thought, which we can call the mental system of concocting; and then there is the concocting... The first one leads up to the concocting of feeling; and then the mental system of concocting leads to the arising of upādāna; and then this is the basis for the third system which we can call the egoistic system of concocting – the concocting of attachment, of becoming, of birth, and of all the forms of dukkha. In this egoistic concocting through ignorance, all kinds of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are born and then all the dukkha that comes with this.

If you can thoroughly understand all three systems of this process, understand this entire process made up of these three systems, then you will be able to live life, to experience things, without giving rise to the *attā*. If you realize how this process occurs, then you will not experience life as *attā*, as self, as ‘I’ and ‘mine’ and then no dukkha will occur.

So now we have sufficient understanding to practice and it’s time to get down to the practice.

The practice is to have mindfulness on time/in time. So there’s to be *sati* – in time *sati* – that is quick enough, fast enough, strong enough, flexible enough, active enough, sufficient. When *sati* is there on time/in time this is the practice.

When the sense organs and sense objects interact and there arises *phassa*, contact, if there is mindfulness on time, right there at that contact, then contact is not taken to be ‘mine’ or ‘me’; and then if feeling arises, there is mindfulness right there at the feeling and it’s not taken to be self, to be *attā*. So in this way the sensual system of concocting doesn’t occur. Because of mindfulness, none of this is taken to be self, to be ‘I’ or ‘mine.’

In this next system – the mental system of concocting – there is both what we can call ‘perceiving’ and what we can call ‘conceiving.’ And here if there is mindfulness, then the mind knows that both the perceiving and the conceiving is neither ‘me’ nor ‘mine.’ When both this mental concocting of perceiving and conceiving is seen as not being ‘me’ or ‘mine,’ then there is no problem.

Now regarding the third system – the egoistic system of concocting – sati doesn't let upādāna turn into ego, doesn't let it turn into 'me' and 'mine,' into ego and egoism. When this doesn't happen there's no way that dukkha can occur. So in regards to the third system of concocting, sati doesn't allow upādāna to happen, it doesn't let upādāna arise regarding anything.

Now let's look at the whole line or thread of dependent origination. The whole thing has eleven kinds of conditioning or eleven stages of concocting, or we can say twelve things happening. There are twelve things and eleven stages of concocting. The overall process or activity of concocting we call *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination) but each of the things that arise, each of the things occurring, are called *paṭiccasamuppanna-dhamma* ('dependently originated things').

They are the things and the linkages, the activity of concocting between them. The activity, the process, the flow is called dependent origination, *paṭiccasamuppāda* and each of these things that happen are called *paṭiccasamuppanna-dhamma*. If there is mindfulness of each of these dependently originated things, if there is mindfulness then none of them is taken to be 'I' or 'mine'; and if there is mindfulness of the entire process or flow of dependent origination, then there is no way that attā can be born, there's no way that the self can arise. To be mindful of each individual step will prevent us from attaching to them and mindfulness of the activity and process – the overall process – does not let the self be born. This is how the knowledge and understanding of dependent origination prevents *attā*, prevents the 'self,' the 'soul idea' from being born.

Now let's consider each of these *paṭiccasamuppanna-dhammas*, or all of these dependently originated things. This is maybe something new or a bit strange for you but please try to understand each of these and maybe some of you will be able to remember them. There are these twelve states – we call them 'things' but don't think of them as being very solid or lasting things, but these phenomena, these very temporary phenomena arising. There are twelve of them.

The first is *avijjā* (ignorance, not knowing). There's no way that you can say that ignorance is self. Ignorance is neither 'me' nor 'mine.' The ignorance itself, the one who feels the ignorance – none of this is 'I' or 'mine.'

Then next arises *saṅkhāra* (concocting, the power of concocting). The concocting, the one concocted, the concocter, the activity of concocting itself,

the causal agent of the concocting, the effect concocted – none of this is ‘I’ or ‘mine.’

Consciousness. Then consciousness – consciousness is not self, it’s not a soul, there’s no ego or ‘me’ or ‘my’ in consciousness or that owns consciousness.

Then arises *nāma-rūpa* (mind-body). And *nāma-rūpa*, there’s nothing in it which is ‘I’ or ‘mine.’ A soul or self cannot be found in it.

Then the *āyatana*. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind; the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts – all of that is not-self, is *anattā*.

Contact arises. Contact is neither ‘me’ nor ‘mine.’

*Vedanā*, feeling – is neither ‘me’ nor ‘mine.’

And *taṇhā*, the ignorant desire, the craving – there is no ‘me’ or ‘mine’ to be found.

*Upādāna*, the clinging to things as ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ Even in the clinging, that condition of clinging – there is nothing which is ‘me’ or ‘mine.’

*Bhava*, the becoming, the development of the ego.

*Jāti*, the birth of ego. Even when the ego is born, it is not ‘me’ or ‘mine.’ There’s no self. That ego is not-self. The concept ‘I am’ is not-self. And then all the forms of *dukkha*, of conflict, of pain, that arise because of ego birth – none of that *dukkha* is self.

So if we observe, if we go study, the entire flow or process of dependent origination we see that each of these conditions, each of these temporary phenomena, all these *paṭiccasamuppanna-dhammas* are not-self. This is called seeing *anattā* in the twelve *paṭiccasamuppanna-dhammas*.

When each of these *paṭiccasamuppanna-dhammas* are not-self, there’s just no way that the whole thing can be a self. When each of these dependently originated – these twelve dependently originated things – are not-self, you can’t just go and lump it all together and think you’ve got a self. So we need to be able to see that each of these links, each of these phenomena, as well as the entire flow and process are *anattā*. We must practice until we genuinely see that all of these are not-self.

Next we will take a look at the *anisonḡ* [*Thai*], the benefits or advantages of seeing that all of the dependently originated things and the dependent origination are not-self.

First when in ordinary life, through mindfulness and understanding the dependent origination, when none of these phenomena – no matter which stage of dependent origination – when none of them are clung to as *attā*, as self, as soul, as ‘me,’ as ego, then when no self or ego can arise, then life is not heavy. There is nothing burdensome – we’re talking about everyday ordinary life – there is nothing heavy, burdensome, or difficult. When there’s nothing weighing down upon life making it heavy, then life is free; and when we are free, there is this lightness and freshness, there is intelligence. We’re able to do what we need to do because there is this freedom. There’s nothing heavy weighing down upon, oppressing life. When we realize that in all of this dependent origination, there is nothing which is a self, which is ‘me,’ which is a soul. Then it’s all light, free, there’s no burdens, no problems in ordinary daily life.

When we say ‘life is heavy’ or ‘life has burdens,’ this means the same thing as when we say ‘life bites its owner.’ As soon as there is something heavy in life, as soon as there is something burdensome, oppressive, then life bites its owner. As soon as life bites its owner, this is *dukkha*, is suffering in all its various manifestations. But if there is mindfulness, if we see this whole process of dependent origination is not-self – then there is nothing heavy or oppressive and life cannot bite its owner.

But for all of us, we don’t have this understanding, we don’t understand it and we’re not practicing, and so we don’t see that none of it is not-self. So then all the time ego is being born, me and mine fills up our lives. Our lives get heavy, there are all these burdensome things, there is all this oppressiveness and so our lives are biting us. We’re being bit by our own lives and so there is all this *dukkha* and suffering.

When we realize that all of life is not-self, then life is cool. This coolness is the meaning of Nibbāna, of Nirvana. Nibbāna doesn’t have anything to do with death. It doesn’t mean eternal death – it means eternal coolness. Nibbāna is eternal coolness which appears when we can see that there’s nothing in life which is self, that it’s all not-self.

Some of you are wondering, well what good is a cool life? Of what value is this coolness? You ought to understand that coolness means freedom from heat.

When life is hot, when life is being disturbed and troubled, then there is no coolness and life becomes heavy and oppressive. But when there is coolness, when there is freedom from this heat, then life is light and there is freedom.

It's only when life is cool that there is freedom. When there is anything disturbing or troubling us, there's no freedom, but when there is freedom, there is also intelligence. We can only be intelligent when we are free. And then there is ability to do whatever has to be done. There is peacefulness, there is coolness, there is this freedom. This is the benefit, this is how good it is to be cool. Otherwise we're unable to really do anything unless we are cool.

There are three words which you ought to remember – the three Cs. The first is 'clean' – the mind that isn't stained by anything filthy; then 'clear' – the mind that isn't dark or dim; and then 'calm,' calmness – the mind that is at peace, which has a genuinely peaceful joy. You ought to investigate these three words – clean, clear, calm – until you discover their most profound meaning, and then you'll be very appreciative of the cool life, of a life which is cool.

Another way of calling it is 'the immortal life.' When there's nothing in life which is 'I' or 'mine,' which is ego or self, then there's nothing that can die. When there's nothing in life that will die, life is deathless, is immortal.

This way of talking about life is something that you don't yet understand. You don't yet understand it but if you investigate it, if you practice it, you'll begin to truly understand these things – not just have some ideas but really understand this deeply in our hearts. When we say that it's the life where there's no 'me,' a life without 'me,' children don't understand this. You don't understand this but if you really investigate it, if you really practice, you can begin to understand it. When life is based in 'me,' when life is full of 'me,' then there's all this clinging to things as 'me' and 'mine,' as ego and egoism, and then life is full of *dukkha*, of pain and suffering. But when we see that the life without 'me'... Who can understand this? Can you conceive of life without 'you,' life without the 'me'? If we can discover this, if we really understand life without 'me,' we see that it is free, it's fresh, it's cool. There's absolutely no *dukkha* in this life. When there's this life without 'me,' without *dukkha*, then this is the eternal life, this is the immortal life. This is the same as the eternity and immortality of the genuine Buddha.

The life with 'me,' the life of ego, is insane. It's just a bunch of lunacy. When there's this life with 'me' – this life of 'me' and 'mine' – then we're just

crazy and so many of us end up going to psychiatrists and psychotherapists, taking drugs, and ending up in mental institutions because the life of ‘me’ – the egoistic life – is one of insanity. But life without ‘me’ is sane, is intelligent. It’s cool and free. It’s the peaceful life. When we thoroughly understand dependent origination, then life is without ‘me,’ without ego. So we ought to be very thankful to dependent origination, that it gives us the life without ‘me’ – the life of freedom, coolness, joy, and peace.

Why don’t you quit singing some of the songs that you like and instead sing the song that the Buddha liked to sing, the song which the Buddha sang was the formula of dependent origination?

“*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca, uppajjati viññāṇaṃ tiṇṇaṃ dhammānaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, vedanāpaccayā taṇhā, taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ, upādānapaccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā [??] sambhavanti*” [1.00.33]

This is the song that the Buddha would sing sometimes when he was on his own, feeling calm and peaceful. He would sing this song to himself the way that you whistle or sing or hum whatever songs you like. If we can remember this and then sing it to ourselves, it will be much easier for us to remember and understand dependent origination. It’s well worth the time and effort to memorize these words and then to be able to sing it to ourselves from time to time whether on the beach or on the bus or any of the other places where you would sing a song to yourself. So try to learn the Buddha’s song instead of those... whatever other songs you like.

He also called this the *ādibrahmacariya* which means the starting point of the practice for the quenching of dukkha. This is another name for *paṭiccasamuppāda* – the *ādibrahmacariya*. This is the dependent origination that we can control so that it doesn’t turn into dukkha. This is the starting point for the practice of quenching dukkha.

The life of ‘me,’ the life of ego, is clumsy, is foolish, stupid, awkward, slow and heavy, and all kinds of other things like that. Life without ‘me’ is free, it’s light, it’s flexible, it’s fluid, it’s natural, spontaneous. So we ought to find out how to practice dependent origination so that we can have this life of freedom and peace without ‘me.’

And finally thank you all for being good listeners. You’ve been listening for almost two hours. We thank you for your patience and kindness. We hope that

you will be able to practice in line with dependent origination according to your needs and abilities.

Thank you and that's all for today.

The meeting is closed.

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Transcribed by Arthur Brown in 2015

Audio files: 5125330309020.mp3 & 1990-03A (2) The dependent origination Farang don't know.mp3

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