

Santi – Peace Beyond Delusion



Teachings on Practising for Tranquillity and Peace
by Luang Por Liem Thitadhammo

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*The list of publications includes the first two of Luang Por Liem's
books, "No Worries – Buddhist teachings and a short biography of
Luang Por Liem Thithadhammo", and "The Ways of the Peaceful –
Teachings about "Samana-Dhamma", the virtues of a Buddhist
monk by Luang Por Liem Thitadhammo"*

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Foreword

The two Dhamma-talks in this book were given by Luang Por Liem Thitadhammo at Wat Nong Pah Pong in the years 1988 and 1991. In both of these talks, Luang Por tells of his practice at Wat Nong Pah Pong some twenty years before, when he first came to the monastery into the care and training of Luang Por Chah. He describes his experience in the monastery at that time, both in its communal aspects, and in terms of his trials and successes in the personal struggle for liberation of mind. Though originally offered for the benefit of resident monks and novices, the content of these talks remains adaptable to modern-day practitioners, both lay and ordained. Recognizing this, a group of monks at Wat Nong Pah Pong requested Luang Por's permission to transcribe and print the talks in Thai. This endeavour came to fruition in the years 2006 ("Watch Your Mind and Escape Mara's Snare"), and 2010 ("Santi"). Since then,



Luang Por Chah

Luang Por Liem

monks at the International Forest Monastery, Wat Pah Nanachat, have translated the talks into English, for the sake of extending their benefit to people around the world.

This volume compiles the talks into an accessible manual to Dhamma practice. It follows on from the previous publications of “No Worries” and “The Ways of the Peaceful”, which introduced Luang Por’s teachings, and the lifestyle and principles of a samana, or renunciant. “Santi – Peace Beyond Delusion” describes the true peace which is the highest of all happiness. It is achievable only through the abandonment of greed, hatred and delusion, by developing the Buddha’s noble path. Luang Por Chah inspired the faith of many Buddhists in Thailand and throughout the world, by embodying the Dhamma and Discipline as it was originally taught. Today Luang Por Liem, one of his close disciples, is a living example of that same Dhamma.

As such, Luang Por Liem’s students, in offering this latest translation, wish for nothing more than that this work be dedicated to both him and his teacher, Luang Por Chah. It is our hope that these directions, both clear and comprehensive, will be of assistance to many faithful practitioners cultivating the path to peace.

*With peace in the Dhamma,
The Translators
(Wat Pah Nanachat, April 2013)*

*Watch Your Mind and
Escape Mara's Snare*

Keep to the principle of always watching yourself. See whether prejudices are developing, and look at others and the society around you in a completely unbiased way: seeing things with equanimity, acting with equanimity, not expressing feelings of liking or disliking.



Watch Your Mind and Escape Mara's Snare

Dhamma-Talk given to the monks and novices of Wat Nong Pah Pong in 1991, relating Luang Por's experiences in his first year practising at Wat Nong Pah Pong with Ajahn Chah in 1969.

The principle teachings of the lord Buddha are indeed vast. Let us simply see them all as skilful means or tools for practice. In my case, I was fortunate to be able to rely on the spiritual qualities (*barami*) of our venerated teacher, Luang Por Chah, from the year 1969 onwards. This was the year I entrusted myself to become his disciple. When one is too weak to be self-reliant, and does not have enough mental energy to help oneself, one needs to find someone to lean on. So I came to fully rely on Ajahn Chah in that year, not only relying on the teachings and advice he gave, but also on the place that he maintained in order for us to be inspired and motivated in our practice. I joined in for the rains retreat at that time, having come from a rather troublesome search with many obstacles.

I had been on a quite unsatisfactory journey without a clear destination and was now really trying to change my direction to be in line with the principles of the Buddha's teachings. I had been looking for *krooba ajahns* in many places, with the question of what I truly wanted to do with my life. I had seen quite a bit of the life of people in the world with my own relatives. They kept

getting involved with the same old things over and over, and I couldn't see anything getting better. Seeing that the circumstances of their lives were rather confused and that there was a lot of delusion involved, I realized that I should try to lead the life of a monk in order to eventually put an end to such conditions.

So I tried to find a teacher, a master, or at least study the various methods that were generally available in the communities I lived in. Together with my monastic friends, I started studying the scriptures, especially the *Abhidhamma*, and gained some knowledge in this field. Because the *Abhidhamma* is based on clear principles and facts, its structure and outline lends itself to study. Having studied it, one can easily speak about it. But although I was able to speak on *Abhidhamma*, for myself, I still felt utterly confused, and stuck in a state that was not at all free. My studies left me feeling unfocused and depleted of energy. So I decided that this was not in keeping with my aspirations, and I came here to Ubon Province.

Before that, I had gone to train in the monastery of Ajahn Mee in Wat Pah Sung Noen. He was a meditation monk, but already quite old. When I arrived in his monastery in Korat province, he told me that his strongly deteriorating physical condition wouldn't permit him to teach. I should search for some other place, where, perhaps, I could meet a suitable teacher. I stayed with him for a while, but after a short time I returned to Ubon. Coming here, I heard about Luang Por Chah's reputation and wanted to have a look at his monastery.

When I visited Ajahn Chah for the first time and paid respects, I saw the monastery with its rules of conduct, and was very pleased and inspired. I thought, "these are really the correct standards of practice". I returned to my former teacher to take leave and handed my duties back to him, so that he wouldn't have to worry any further what I was doing. He issued a letter transferring me to Ajahn Chah, as evidence that I wasn't a vagabond trying to run away after some inappropriate action. Ajahn Chah said, "Let's see first. You have come with the wish to practice, so see how it goes with the practice. We don't know each other. I don't know who you are, or if you have any problems." But he let me stay and arranged a *kuti* for me. So I had a place to stay that provided shelter from the sun and the rain. It was very far away from the others though. There was no bathroom, and when I needed to go to the toilet, I had to walk quite far. At that time, in Wat Nong Pah Pong there weren't many toilets at all, only two or three for all forty of the monks and novices. In that year, if I remember correctly, there were 47 monks who spent the rains-retreat at Wat Nong Pah Pong, and I didn't know anyone. I wasn't interested in anyone. I assumed that all these monks had come to do what they had to do in their practice by themselves, so I took no interest in them. I didn't even know their names. I really wasn't interested. All I was interested in was my own tasks and duties, the ways of practice and the observances. This is what I felt inspiration for and was motivated to do.

When the time to enter the rains-retreat came, Ajahn Chah gave advice and teachings to guide us in our practice. All the

monks were keen on developing their conduct and changing their habits. Ajahn Chah had us work on ourselves, through performing our duties and communal obligations. He had us do various chores and practices. In those days in Wat Pah Pong on the seventh and fourteenth day of the lunar cycle, all the leaves were to be swept. Sweeping was one of the obligations that you couldn't miss. We had to finish within two hours. Actually, the area wasn't as big as it is today – only about the area in front of our present *sala*. We merely swept the *sala* area up to the ordination hall. There weren't many trees, and only small ones, so it was finished quickly.

There was a bell at four in the afternoon for the monks and novices to come together for meditation. Usually, for the meditation sessions, Ajahn Chah would come thirty minutes or an hour earlier to sit. I saw the meditation sittings as something I was happy to do. I was well motivated to sit, as I had already been practicing meditation before, once a day for at least an hour, or a little more. So I sat. I sat, but I didn't get much out of it because my mind was usually in a state where it liked to proliferate. It never settled in itself and kept producing thoughts all the time. Still, most of the time, I came to the *sala* before the others. There was another monk, Ajahn Maha Samran, who came at the same time that I did. The two of us started sitting early, regularly. Ajahn Maha Samran came roughly fifteen or twenty minutes before the bell and I practiced the same way, continuously. It was good, to sit ahead of the bell. There weren't any further duties to do, so from the time we started sitting (around four or four-thirty) until the beginning of the evening–

chanting, we had more than two hours, which was just right. The sitting sometimes hurt a little, but I didn't pay attention. I was only interested to keep on training myself all the time.

I never had any interest when the occasional sweet hot drinks or herbal medicines like *samors* or *makam-bom*¹ were offered. These things stimulate one's bowels, and to have to go to the toilet at night could cause quite a bit of inconvenience. I felt no need to take anything like that, so I didn't join the others when they had them. After evening chanting, I went straight back to my *kuti*. I didn't have much contact with my friends in the monastic life. Not really wanting it, I'd think, "I'd rather go back to my *kuti*, the dwelling place that I had been assigned". I never went to other places, such as the *kutis* of other monks. I simply stayed at my *kuti*. When I left the *kuti*, it was to walk to the *sala*. When I left the *sala*, it was to walk to the *kuti*. Except for going to the toilet or cleaning it. This was all I did in my daily routine. It was good that I didn't speak with the other monks. In return, they didn't start chatting with me. This created a sense of being free. I cut off the problems that can come from socializing with others. Nobody came after me and I had the chance to do my practice on my own.

The daily chores of cleaning and maintaining the monastic dwellings were usually done after returning from the dining hall. The meal was over at about ten in the morning. Returning to my

¹ Traditional Thai herbal medicines to help digestion and provide minerals and vitamins, that are exceptions to the monk's rule to not eat after noon.

kuti right after finishing in the dining hall, and starting to clean it was a nice and relaxing change. It helps to overcome the usual drowsiness after having eaten. Actually, I didn't eat as much as the others, and I was usually finished ahead of them. I found that eating a lot would give rise to the typical hindrances to one's awareness that arise in meditation (*nivarana*). One would feel sluggish and inert throughout the day. So I ate just enough to be able to keep my body going. Thus one then feels light, at ease, and energetic.

I tried to keep the maintenance of my dwelling up to the standards laid down in the monastic rules, but no more. I kept a kettle filled with drinking water. I had one spittoon, my robes, and my bowl. That was all. In those days, not much development had taken place in terms of roads or traffic. All there was, was the sound of a regular pick-up truck passing Bahn Glang Village around two or three in the morning. This was the sign to get up. Alarm clocks weren't available. Having no alarm clocks, the monks would develop a sense of constant alertness. They needed to listen to the sounds of animals like the forest-chicken or night-owls to tell the time. Sometimes one would get the time wrong. Thinking it was three in the morning, one would get up at two or one. One would then simply continue and not go back to sleep. This created a sense of diligence in the practice and supported the spirit of the monastic life, where one needs to be in control of one's mind, day and night. Though I did all these things from time to time I was still insecure, and worries and critical thoughts would come up. When one lacks experience, these things can happen. If I had let my awareness slip, feelings

of insufficiency would arise. So before going to sleep I would firmly establish mindfulness, and prepare myself for waking. Whenever I became aware of waking, I would immediately get up. I found this to be a really good practice. It makes you independent from clocks. You need to maintain the simple feeling of being ready to do things at the appropriate time, straight away, without preferences. Each day I spent at least an hour or an hour and a half doing walking meditation. Referring to the sunlight, I'd stop only when my shadow was directly over my feet. Practices like this made me feel motivated to keep up the training observances, my personal daily practices, and the monastery schedule all by myself.

After having practiced for some time in Wat Pah Pong like this, one day I heard Luang Por Chah give a Dhamma-talk on the *Three Characteristics*: impermanence (*aniccam*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkham*) and not-self (*anatta*). He emphasised contemplating the *Three Characteristics* because he found that they counteract the three *vipallasa-dhammas* (distortions of perception, thought, and views), and the misjudgements that can come up in meditation when one has *nimittas* (visions). *Nimittas* can confuse people and lead them into delusion, and can have them deviate from the teachings and lose the correct path. Luang Por Chah gave advice on this for more than an hour, and when we dispersed after eight in the evening, I was thinking to myself, "The *Three Characteristics* are good principles to take as one's foundation. They are a good basis. No matter what happens, I will ground my attitude in the *Three Characteristics*."

So I made a firm determination to practice meditation unremittingly. After the daily chores when it was time to come together, I meditated. Back at my *kuti*, I put down my personal things and I meditated. A good sense of seclusion developed. When there were sounds, I heard them, taking them merely as sounds. The usual emotional reactions ceased to proliferate and there was a sense of nothing being there. This is how the experience felt. Mindfulness, in the sense of an awareness that there are things happening according to causes and conditions, was however present. But I kept myself established in the thought that this experience is not a sure one. There may be changes. Other experiences may come up. This is the attitude I mindfully upheld.

Regarding the daily routine, when I was going to rest or to sleep, I determined to do just that. But, whenever the time was ripe to get up again, I would immediately get up. At one point I made a specific practice of alternating the time for going to sleep. Being used to going to sleep at 10:00 pm, I would move the time to, say, around 8:00 pm, and then would get up again at 11:00 pm or 1:00 am. Or, sometimes, I would take 1:00 am as the time to go to sleep and then wake up again at 3:00 am. I trained to surrender again and again, not to get stuck in a pattern, not to get used to having a rest or deriving happiness out of sleep, not even allowing the excuse that this practice was ruining my health. I had my thoughts about this and practised accordingly, until I felt determined in myself to such an extent that I was able to say, "Today, I'll sleep two or three hours," and not overstep the set time by even ten or twenty minutes. Most of

the time it ended up being within about five minutes of the set time.

This was a good thing to do. To train oneself like this is for the sake of feeling wide awake in the practice. In fact, in that year things went very smoothly. I was able to do all these things without much concern for the external world. Even regarding people that I had known closely before, my relatives or friends, I didn't experience symptoms of wanting to relate to, or even think of them. I was as unconcerned as a person who has no relatives, no friends, no mother or father, like someone who has nothing left in this world and simply exists, relying solely on himself the whole time. I don't know how these worries fell away to the point of being distant memories, but it was a good opportunity to train entirely by myself, day and night, so I kept doing this. I didn't have much opportunity to go to Luang Por Chah's *kuti*. Usually, after the evening chanting was finished, some of the monks and novices would go to Luang Por's *kuti* to pay respects to him. There were times that he would even inquire where I was, but still I never went. I saw that most of the time, the reason for monks to go was to get some contact and be close to him. I didn't think that that was right. I thought, the correct way to be close to Luang Por means to take on his standards of conduct and practice. So I really didn't go and see him very much – sometimes he would ask: "Where did that monk, that came from somewhere else, go? I never see him here." He asked, but I didn't go and seek contact with him. Rather, I relied on my own motivation to practice, asking myself: "Why did I come here? What do I really want? Do I want friendship or closeness to a

teacher?" In fact, I came because I wanted to practice. The place here is supportive of seclusion in every way, so I should go ahead practicing that way. If anybody says I'm unfriendly – I don't mind. I just understand that to practice in this way is an obligation, a duty that we need to fulfil. That's what all of us wanted to do in the first place anyway.

My practice developed steadily throughout the second and third month of the rains-retreat. With the beginning of the second month, some of the things that occurred seemed quite good – "good" here meaning some parts good, and others not so good. I noticed in myself that sometimes I felt good about things, and sometimes not. So I asked myself, "Why are there always these states of good and bad?" I posed this question to myself and realized its because, if one likes things being a certain way, one calls them "good", and if one doesn't, one calls them "bad". Are only the things one likes right and all the others wrong? What I did was question and investigate myself, in order to get to know what "desire" really was. The ways desires express themselves are characterized by these feelings of good and bad. Feelings of good and bad arise from wanting. So I concluded, "Why bother with these feelings of good and bad? One should take the attitude of not getting involved with these things at all. What one should really take on is the practice of simply having mindfulness in and of itself." So this was the motto I upheld and kept putting into practice.

At the beginning of the second month all my experiences were falling into place: I saw my own mental attitudes, and knew

the state of mind I was in, both the good states of mind, and the bad ones. I saw the states of mind in relation to the mind and saw the mind in relation to the states of mind. In this manner I saw that the mind (*citt*) was one thing and the states of mind (*arom*) were another. Being able to distinguish the way one feels, separating states of mind from that which is the mind, and in this way knowing and seeing one's mind and one's states of mind as separate, one sees "the one who knows", sees the one who knows the mind and who knows the states of mind. This made me experience everything that was happening in a wakeful manner, feeling aware and alert both when I was sleeping and awake. I was witnessing my own experience all by myself. It was not as if I were escaping to some other place, or being aloof, but instead I was following up on things all the time, both the good experiences and the bad ones. That's the way I saw it. I didn't see this experience as anything particularly "good". I simply understood it as something I did that was good enough for keeping myself alert. That was all.

This experience reminded me of a passage of Dhamma. It made a strong impression on me when I studied for the *Nag Thamm* exams. I have frequently mentioned it to you in the past. I learned many other passages, but this one I remember particularly well. It comes easily to mind:

"Whoever watches his mind will be freed from Mara's snare."¹

¹ Dhammapada No. 37

How does one become free from Mara's snare? By watching the mind. This is exactly what I thought, so I established my mindfulness in the observation of the modes of what I was feeling. At the same time, I continued to give attention to a *samadhi*-object of meditation. Its not that I neglected this. It is necessary to hold onto a *samadhi*-object as well. I didn't seek for anything more distant than the in-and out-breath. To watch the breath has an impact on the mind: it enables it to overcome defilements and cravings. I observed the *samadhi*-object, and I observed the modes of the mind, both unwholesome and wholesome. Knowing the *samadhi*-object, and the modes of the mind. These two were joined together and didn't separate whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down. There was the experience of awareness all the time. Sometimes there were states of depression and discouragement - this was also part of the experience. I thought, "Not facing any obstacles is impossible in this world, one can not have everything go smoothly all the time. One has to bear with these obstacles. Whatever happens, one has to endure and pull oneself together. There is no other way." So I tried to be aware of this and patiently endure things. Sometimes I was overcome by the hindrances (*nivarana*). They were quite strong. If one were to give a comparison, it was like being a football that is kicked around. When kicked hard, it shoots off quickly. I couldn't pin it down. The mind kept proliferating here and there, thinking about business, the chores, going on alms-round. The mind was in such a state, but I actually didn't make much of it. I just saw that this is how it feels, and upheld that these are all just states of the mind that arise, stay a while and then cease. I saw it as an experience, a

symptom that the mind displays. Seeing how this feels in the mind, I thought, "This is what the Buddha actually meant when he said: "The mind is like that". It has to express good and bad. One can't blame it for this. One can't say that its all bad, and one can't say that its all good." So I continued observing these things mindfully. If something came up that was really beyond my capacity to endure, I thought, "Its *anicca, dukkha, anatta* again". If one can't fight it any more, one just tells oneself: "*anicca, dukkha, anatta*", and lets go of it all, letting it be. So this is what I did. Sometimes it was good, in that a feeling of inspiration and having patient-endurance would arise from time to time. But I didn't make anything of it. I just considered that this was part of the back and forth of the struggle between coping and not coping. Then, after maintaining this practice for a continuous period, constantly and unremittingly, the various conditions eventually start making sense.

Sometimes, I had strong feelings of *piti* (rapture and bliss) regardless of whether I was walking, sitting or lying down. I was aware that this didn't really mean much, even though it could be all day and night that I was in this mode of *piti*, feeling very happy, whether walking, sitting or lying down. I don't think I was misguided by these feelings of happiness. I kept establishing mindfulness in myself and, just like Luang Por had said in his Dhamma-talks, I directed my mindfulness towards the principles of the *Three Characteristics*. I had a good memory and could easily recall these teachings. They were also part of what I had memorized in the context of my studies of *Nag Thamm* and *Abhidhamma*. I sensed that these were really the principles to

take on as one's reference-point, the ground to stand on when battling with such experiences. So I used these principles of the *Three Characteristics* as the criteria for gauging the happiness one feels within such an experience. I also told myself that happiness is merely happiness. It is a condition that is subject to change.

During this period, mind-states that are aroused by sensuality, and triggered by contact with the senses, didn't arise. They didn't occur. It was just like a tree standing still without the wind moving it – absolutely quiet in itself. The eyes were merely eyes and the ears were merely ears – the waves of sensuality having no impact on them. I took them as specific modes of the mind, and I didn't react strongly towards them or give particular importance to their features. I kept practicing like this, but not without sometimes having a rest. But whenever I rested, it actually felt like I wasn't resting. I was in a state of readiness all the time. I continued to practice like this. Eventually, the happiness that I experienced when the mind was in this state for days, also changed. Sometimes, there was no feeling at all, and I thought, this could point towards liberation. It then turned towards suffering and having feelings of depression, where everything seemed black, like when one travels in the darkness and can't see one's way. But I maintained awareness. Simply that. There was suffering, whether standing, sitting, walking or lying down. I don't know where it all came from, or why it was happening, but I kept asking: "What is this suffering?" Eventually, applying the principle that I had used before with the experience of happiness, I thought, "This feeling of suffering has arisen, so

it must also cease.” Thinking in these terms, I was mindful of these conditions for a day or two, and then, it was over. I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry, so I took it as an experience by itself. Just part of the to-and-fro of the struggle for power. So I practised with it. I didn't let go of the monastic routine and daily personal duties and chores. I took them as my refuge.

Continuing to practice like this, changes came by themselves, mostly around 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon. Things seem to change when one feels that the day is over and the night is coming. The change comes suddenly, in a single moment. But I didn't take it as something special. I just saw it as an effect of the practice itself. I didn't give a thought to anyone, and in the monastery there wasn't anything happening, so things couldn't have happened in relation to anyone or anything external. I was living in real seclusion and kept on practising. When there was suffering, I looked at it, following, observing, and watching it, knowing its arising, and knowing it as it was there; but I didn't get deluded into taking it as something special. I saw everything simply as an expression of suffering – suffering that had arisen and had to cease due to its transient nature. I came to the point of feeling only halfway in control of myself. I asked myself if I was going insane, but that couldn't be, because I was fully aware. So I kept on doing the practice by myself.

Luang Por Chah then announced that the monks and novices should have a break from morning and evening chanting. This came at just the right time for me. He reminded everybody that, when there was no morning or evening chanting, they should

spend their time like practitioners. Now there weren't any communal activities except for water-hauling from the well, which we used to do in those days – hauling and carrying water together. I never spoke with anyone when carrying the water. When it was time, we would simply take the poles and tins for carrying, help each other fetch the water from the well, and then carry it to fill up the jars in the restrooms for flushing the toilets, or to fill up the drinking water. Afterwards I would go have a shower at one of the bathing places and would then carry on with walking or sitting meditation. At times, while I was doing walking meditation, it started raining and I was tempted to stop, but then I thought, “Just let the rain rain. I will keep on walking. Things get wet, but they also become dry again. One shouldn't even be thinking about whether it is going to be sunny or rainy.” I don't know where the faith I had came from. I had no worries about what was going to happen with me. I was fully dedicated and pleased with what I was doing. There was continuous interest and motivation. I didn't shy away from possible obstacles. I wouldn't question or analyze where I was at when I was doing walking meditation. Usually, when doing walking meditation, I wouldn't wear my upper robe in the formal way but would wear only the small shoulder-cloth (*angsa*). But from time to time, I robed-up completely – somehow afraid that my standards were insufficient – putting on my upper robe (*civorn*) and laying the outer robe (*sanghat*) over my shoulder.

During this phase of practice, another change occurred. This change – speaking in proper scholarly terms – might be described as the experience of *vipassanupakilesa* (experiences

which defile insight). I had a feeling of bliss and bright radiance within myself, lasting days and nights. The bright light is not like the light of the sun or any source of light, but it is something you feel inside that has these radiant qualities. I didn't get carried away with it thinking that I was something special. I merely saw what happened as an experience within the practice, happening in and of itself. Things like this can happen. So for my part, I determined to be mindful, and not get lost identifying myself with being this or that. If one harbours these feelings of self-importance, one is almost sure to go crazy from such an experience. This is what happens to some practitioners at this stage. They start feeling special and superior to others, seeing everybody else as inferior to themselves, for example. These feelings can occur, so I was determined to have mindfulness and awareness, and not let myself get involved with feelings of wanting, and giving things personal importance, constantly telling myself, "Experiences like this, having arisen, must cease again." I had mindfulness with regard to this, and focused in this way on what I was experiencing day and night. These experiences can happen. The Buddha even gave them a name: "defilements of insight" (*vipassanupakilesa*). They all occur within the scope of *vipassana*. It seems like, when one enters the realm of "*vipassana*", one has to also enter the realm of "*vipassanu*". That's the way things happen. But I didn't get lost or deluded. I didn't get carried away with myself. All I saw was a situation of arising, existence, and change. I still kept up all the daily routines. Most of the time, when I sat down meditating, I didn't sit all that long. During this phase I sat for only a bit more than an hour. This seemed to be conducive for my body, and I never

had any physical problems; no pains or other frustrating symptoms. Not having health issues, one can practice with ease.

I did not develop feelings of self-importance, regarding the things that arose in my practice. I kept doing the communal chores, keeping to myself while doing the work, looking at my own mind, my own feelings, just the same as before. I was consciously aware of myself, observing and trying to watch myself not only when I was awake, but also when sleeping. As I was practising with unremitting effort, yet another change came. I reached a low and dark spot, feeling that I was under attack again. Sexual desires would flare up every now and again. Other than watching these symptoms suddenly come up, I didn't have any tools to add to my practice. These feelings were displaying themselves but I didn't develop worries and concerns because of them. I simply stayed alert and was very careful. Whatever happened one had to be careful, to be on the watch and always suspicious, just as though one were watching wild animals. One sits quietly and composed, as wild animals constantly run back and forth. I was always on the watch, not trusting the situation, in a way that kept me wide awake and well aware. Physically, this was actually quite tiring at times. I felt exhausted and weak. It was like constantly being in a state where there is no room for relaxation. But I kept doing the practice.

Then, on one of those days, things changed again. They were perpetually changing anyway. Certain questions came up in my mind. The question arose, "This practice - what do we do it for?" I was stunned when the answer came, as if the silence itself was

answering. "This practice? No need to ask. We practise for the sake of practice." This is the way the answer came up. These words appeared expressing something in a certain form, and there was nothing more to it. The answer was there, that was all – the problem was gone. When I got up in the morning, I continued doing my personal chores and routines. I never abandoned the communal work and tried to maintain my personal routine. When a new day came, I did my job. But then another change happened, an experience of a new kind, that I didn't anticipate: something happened that made me feel very energized. My mind felt strong. The body was light. When I walked, it felt as if I wasn't walking. When I sat, it felt as if I wasn't sitting. The body felt indescribably light. Again, I didn't see this as something special. Probably it wasn't. If I were to pin down the experience in scholarly terms, it may not have been anything beyond experiencing the qualities of *pīti*. In fact, the Buddha speaks about many types in which *pīti* can manifest. So I didn't feel concerned about what was happening. I didn't feel I had to analyze it. I simply did what I did, thinking merely that this was what was happening in my experience. One can say it like this: In whatever situation one may have a certain feeling, by the next day, it will have changed. And in fact, the next day things did change again. There were many changes: both happiness and suffering were alternating chaotically, and, with the experience of some happiness here and some suffering there, I didn't know what this happiness and suffering meant. To say that it had a definite cause, wouldn't hold up. What it was, was simply feelings at work. On that day, I was doing walking-meditation, just like I used to do every day. The evening came

and the sun set, and the sound of the cicadas announced the coming darkness. I had no torch or anything, only matches and candles for some light at night. In my *kuti* there wasn't much apart from my inner and outer robe, my bowl, and a bathing cloth. That's about all, except for maybe two or three candles, if I wanted to do some walking-meditation, or had any other urgent reason for using light. I decided to sit and walk meditation, practicing *samadhi* in the same way I had done it every day.

I sat in order to relax a little before going to sleep, and felt I was continually observing and watching. On that day I was physically quite tired and exhausted. My limbs felt painful, and my feet felt as if they were bruised. So I took the opportunity to rest a little in meditation, giving my mind a break. I sat in equanimity, and that was it: I sat not experiencing anything at all - exactly like someone that had no thoughts, only the experience of sitting, sitting with nothing, with no thoughts at all, exclusively possessed of consciousness. The body felt very light - light in the body, light in the mind. What happened felt like being in a certain a state of experience. I wouldn't even call it "good". It was simply something that was happening. It felt very cool and soothing within the body. It felt like my brain - or, to put it in better words: my head - was cool. The experience was one of feeling completely empty, cooled down, and light. It lasted all day and all night, whether I was standing, walking, sitting or lying down. In fact, I was completely indifferent towards the various feelings that I had been subject to all the time before, since long, long ago. Aversion, anger, love, for example, or having all kinds of fantasies and proliferations,

seeing things either positively or negatively, didn't exist. I was in the state of equanimity. There was no experience of any expressions of liking or disliking. To say that things were good or bad - I wouldn't say that. I can only say that this is an experience of how one feels without classifying it as good or bad. The conditioned phenomena of the physical body are recognised as merely phenomena of the material world (*rupa-dhamma*) that eventually have to arrive at the point where they disintegrate and dissolve. The thinking mind, or what we call *sankharas* or mental proliferations, doesn't manifest at all. There is only the faculty of seeing - seeing things in accordance with the truth. Anything which manifests, appears the way it really is. Viewing things in line with truth means the end of problems. This experience has lasted continuously. Since that day, I haven't seen feelings of happiness or suffering occur, or any symptoms of aversion coming up. There is the experience of being in one's own, natural state. Living lightly and silently. At ease in one's mind. This is how it is, without having to force it to be that way. I didn't force anything; it is an experience in and of itself. I understand that this arose and became manifest due to the practice. But I don't consider myself as good, or superior, or being somehow special. I see this as a mode in which the qualities of the Dhamma become evident as a result of one's actions. Leaving everything up to its original cause, one understands physical manifestations (*rupa-khanda*) in terms of what actually happens; that is: arising in the beginning, change in the middle and disintegration in the end. I see my own form and that of other people and beings in this way. I understand that seeing things in this way means "having the view of

Dhamma". When seeing things as Dhamma in this way, there aren't any proliferations (*sankharas*). There is no activity of *sankharas*, or worldly objects of the mind (*dhammarom*) that arise. I understand this as truth, correctness or an expression of the tranquillity and seclusion of my own experience. But I don't attach or identify with this state in any way either. This is just what I have been doing in my practice.

This experience continues to this moment. It manifests as a feeling of being grounded in knowing, or an experience of living in the Dhamma, nothing else. The experience of feeling cool and tranquil in the body was ongoing for two or three years. It was something that happened by itself. I hadn't been anticipating it and wasn't making anything more out of it. I upheld that I might as well leave these kinds of things up to their kammic flow. Thinking in this way, wherever things go, one can let them follow the stream of how things feel in themselves. No need to interfere with planning, arranging or seeking all kinds of things. Things unfold in their own way and one should consider any fruits that arise as the result of these processes in and of themselves. If the resulting kamma is to be of use to the world, it necessarily needs to be the fruit of wholesome action. This is what I uphold, although I am not thinking too much about it. Should there be a cause for one to change locations, one still keeps the way one feels grounded in its original state, and does not develop strong reactions. Practice not to force anything whatsoever by yourself, but act in accordance with the Dhamma. That means not allowing biases and prejudices to arise and affect you. Keep to the principle of always watching yourself. See whether prejudices

are developing, and look at others and the society around you in a completely unbiased way: seeing things with equanimity, acting with equanimity, not expressing feelings of liking or disliking. This will give rise to feelings and experiences that are very supportive to living in the Dhamma. This, indeed, is something very good.

From this time on, I haven't spend much time thinking about practice. I just live from day to day. Whenever Luang Por Chah told me to go to some other place, I went, because I wanted to give something back to him out of gratitude. He had supported me, and I wanted to repay him to the best of my capabilities. As long as the kammic situation I was experiencing would allow, I wanted to do my part. After the rains-retreat of 1969, he didn't send me anywhere. I simply stayed here, until the time came when he recruited all the monks and novices to go to Wat Tham Saeng Phet. 'Recruiting' is actually the right word. Luang Por said he would open up the opportunity for anyone who had some strength to go and help building up this new place for practice. When he himself went for a month or two, I also took the opportunity to go and help. After this occasion, Luang Por had me go to various other places, and I always followed his wish. I didn't go anywhere because of my own ideas, so I never faced any problems. I wouldn't have known anyway what would have been helpful for the Sangha or of benefit to Buddhism on the larger scale. So I followed his advice. In 1970 he sent me to Wat Sra Tong in Laos, together with a monk from Laos, another Thai monk, and a samanera from Songkhla. Two of them have since disrobed. It was good, being in Laos. In addition to helping to

organize and look after the monastery buildings and making repairs, I also taught the laypeople. At the end of the next rainy season, I received a letter from Luang Por asking me to return, but there was no immediate opportunity, I wasn't able to go straight away. A little while later I was able to return. After that, Luang Por Chah didn't send me anywhere, so I have stayed at Wat Nong Pah Pong ever since. So I have been helping Luang Por – but in fact, I wasn't really helping him all that much. All I did was keep the standard monastery routines (*korwat*). That's all.

Nowadays, my physical condition has gotten to the point of being quite old, so I sometimes choose to quietly withdraw. Most of the time I will not join in with the other monks to lead the chanting or to perform other such activities. I understand that this kind of routine must depend on each monk's own individual effort. Of course, I could still sit with you, but these days I feel that this would prevent you from becoming more self-reliant. Many times the attitude develops: "If the teacher doesn't do these things, we won't do them either". But you should really ask yourself: "Why should we stop doing the practice just because the teacher isn't around?" Luang Por Chah himself actually didn't lead the meditation all that often. Sometimes he did, but not always. Of course, it is good in one way, to rely on a teacher and to let him guide you. But in another sense, it isn't good. To practice like this merely relies on faith, and a sense of being afraid of the teacher. This, however, is not the kind of faith that supports one in being able to depend on one's own *barami*. One should rather incline one's practice towards developing the kind of faith that supports one's own self-reliance. This is done by

observing one's monastic duties (*kiccavatta*), and by doing them consistently, regardless of the difficulties that may come up. Whether there are difficulties actually depends on our strength. When we aren't strong, there are a lot of problems. But with increasing strength, problems diminish. One can see, for example, that in the periods where we have strong faith and are pleased with our practice, the hindrances aren't a problem, and there are no obstacles. But whenever our faith faculty is weak, it is like everything is twice as difficult. It feels like we don't have anything to fall back on for help.

In this practice, we really need to train by ourselves. If we are going to rely on the teacher, we should do this by taking on his methods and standards. We should take these standards and equip ourselves with them, making them our own regular practices. Here we are not talking about much more than simply observing the daily schedule and routines. But in our attitude towards these things, we need to maintain our mindfulness. Hold on to being mindful as a principle. Yet, our faculty of memory (*sañña*) is such that it may occur that we sometimes are forgetful or deluded about things. That's fine. Let's allow this to happen and yet keep our awareness perfectly ready and be fully alert. I would say, if we can keep our alertness in this way, what we experience is what is called *patibhāna*, ready wit, one of the facets of insight. That can be an excellent refuge for us, even if only to the level of allowing us to be able to question things for ourselves. Question those proliferations that arise and deceive us, appearing to be a problem. Just like when somebody approaches us in a threatening way, we can face him and ask him

to reveal his intentions. With mindfulness and alertness we are able to question ourselves and inquire about the things that arise. If one can inquire about things, one can also stop them. That's the way it is; when problems arise, let them give you the answer by themselves. Revert to peace and tranquillity and things will speak for themselves. If a problem has arisen, it can also be solved. When obstacles come up, they can be overcome. This is the way to approach things. The solutions are there. It's not that there are no solutions... Just like in the saying of the Buddha: "Whenever there is darkness, light also has to exist." We have to look at things in this way. If no light existed at all, the Buddha would not have taught. If it was the case that no one could manage to do these things, the Buddha would not have made the effort to teach and guide people. Those people that are not good, he teaches to be good. Those people that do not know, he teaches to know. Please understand it this way. Don't just wait and be totally dependent on others. That's not the way. One has to rely on oneself. Train yourself to be self-reliant.

Whatever concerns other people, let it be their problem. Whatever concerns one's physical condition, let it be just that. We try not to object to our physical limitations. If the body is weak, or it shows signs of deterioration, then we see this as natural. We know the way the body is, and react appropriately. We adapt and train ourselves to keep making adjustments. But we should always maintain knowledge and understanding – really knowing, developing this all the way until true knowledge arises, as is referred to with the word "Buddha" or "Buddho", "The One Who Knows", "The Awakened One", "The Blissful One". Then,

eventually, all the various problems will disappear: no suffering or drawbacks of any kind. All that is left is freedom. One experiences the freedom of being one's own sole refuge.

The body, however, still relies on external conditions. No absolute freedom in this sense exists. The body still depends on nature. It still depends on certain conditions for support according to its age. One needs to see this independently. Not seeing the physical condition independently means not to have understood it yet. Our experience needs to differentiate these aspects. Everything else depends on how our spiritual potential (*barami*) unfolds, on how much energy we have. If our spiritual powers have matured and reached a certain level of completion, they will find ways of erupting, breaking loose and manifesting by themselves. It is like an egg that cracks open when the temperature becomes just right for it. A chicken egg that is fertilized and is watched over in the correct way will break open at whatever time the right temperature is reached. When it is time, the chick destroys the egg-shell, and comes out. That's the way it is. It overcomes the situation of being confined, constrained, and hindered. It pierces the thick shell, cracks the case and comes out. So we too must undo things that hold us back and free ourselves in a process that is self-evident. Eventually this will culminate in an experience of becoming one's own master.

So seeing the practice in this way, we know: If all of us truly and sincerely keep up our efforts in the training, with practice (*patipati*), eventually there has to be liberation (*pativedi*). That is why the Buddha praised this training, conduct and practice. It is

because of this practice that the True Dhamma still exists as a counterpart to the world. If there wasn't this training, the True Dhamma could not remain established in the world. The same holds regarding ourselves: as long as there is this honesty and sincerity in us, the truth will eventually have to manifest. Without honesty and sincerity, there is no truth. This is why the Buddha praised making effort in practice. This applies to all of us: if this potential for perfection exists, we can't say we are not ready. All of us are ready: each person, each monk, each and every one is well equipped, but will have to do the job of building things up by themselves. Look at your spiritual potential (*barami*). Look at your faculties (*indriya*) and observe uninterruptedly what you are experiencing. Is your awareness continuous? Does it follow up all the time? If not, don't try to force it. These things cannot be forced.

In the story of Venerable Ananda we can clearly see the problem that arises from forcing the practice, from grasping at one's goal. Ananda put forth a lot of effort in the practice but was driven by forces of craving. This originated from the prediction made by the Buddha that he, too, would attain to *arahatship*. Venerable Ananda upheld this in his mind and his desire overtook his practice. In everything he did in his practice he was walking the path of one overcome by craving. He didn't practice using the power of awareness or putting things down, so a lot of obstacles overcame him until he was finally too physically weak and exhausted and thought of having a rest. The simple thought that now the body was too weak to practice caused him to abandon his craving and put down his efforts.

When he was just about to lie down, his feelings changed. This enabled him to relax, and let go of his clinging to the importance of all that he held on to. Eventually he experienced the state of freedom. It all depended on him letting things be. On his putting down the feelings of grasping at his goal, which were driven by *tanha*, craving. Craving had been alongside him, all the time. When he was able to let go of it, nothing was left. He experienced a state of purity, brightness, clarity, and freedom, which was complete in and of itself. Contemplating this story, even though it is a description from the textbooks, can serve as a simile, a parable for our own practice.

So this is the way all of us should practice: continuously. If we practice continuously, our practice will show signs of growth and development by itself. We can compare it to the work of maintenance and caretaking. We have a duty to maintain and take care of the standards of practice (*korwat*), going about our routines in a continuous way so that it becomes *samma-patipada*, complete practice. This will bring about certain qualities by itself, including strength and energy. The experience will let one know for oneself that this is *samma-patipada*. If we keep practicing in this way, there comes a day, there comes a time, where, we too, must eventually come to the point of liberation. If one keeps travelling, it is impossible not to arrive at one's destination. If we keep walking without stopping, this has to be the case. But we need to set our aspirations towards freedom.

Santi

*When one's heart is freed from burdens
and attains to purity, it rests within its own
peace and tranquillity – this is called “santi”.*



Santi

Dhamma-Talk given to the monks and novices of Wat Nong Pah Pong on 13 September 1988, during the annual rains-retreat.

The practice of insight meditation (*vipassana*) is for the purpose of making things bright and clear, like turning on a switch to light up a room. In the light, one can see everything as it is, plainly and clearly, in accordance with its characteristics. *Vipassana* is the practice of developing clear seeing, for the purpose of true knowledge, and the ending of delusion. Its development requires determination of mind, restraint, and patience – qualities which are built upon a foundation of faith and confidence. When one's mind is determined, diligence and energy naturally follow; but if one's mind is not determined, laziness and excuses based on self-importance gain the power to drag one into decline. Before the practice of *vipassana* can make one's understanding bright and clear, it is necessary to establish the supporting components. In the practice, one must consider both the external conditions of one's environment, and the internal conditions of one's feelings. If one doesn't consider both, then one won't make progress. As such, one might compare this practice to the work of a farmer.

Farmers need to take the season, the environment, and the location into consideration in order to do their work. The crops

are dependent upon the season, because they require water. The rainy season is therefore the most appropriate season for planting rice. But the field has to be well prepared – the farmer must make it ready first. The tools and methods for working the rice fields are numerous and varied, as one can see. It takes many months of care before the rice will mature, and then much effort must be made in transforming the grains of rice into a useful product. The work must be done carefully, according to the correct methods and appropriate techniques. The work of our practice is the same. It's important for us to understand the purpose for which we are practicing.

The purpose is *santi*. *Santi* means tranquillity, or peace. There are other forms of happiness, which are easy enough to understand. For example, building a dwelling to ward off heat and rain provides comfort for the body – this is material happiness. However, the teachings of the Buddha point towards the happiness of freedom. Freedom from attachment, freedom from the stains of delusion. When one's heart is freed from burdens and attains to purity, it rests within its own peace and tranquillity – this is called "*santi*".

Santi, or peacefulness, is achieved through a process of bringing things to a state of readiness. It requires training in diligence and effort, both on the coarse and the refined level. The coarse level involves taking care of bodily conduct, manners, and speech. The refined level refers to taking care of the

thoughts and feelings which arise, many of which are tainted, unwholesome, or putrid – what the Buddha called the *asavas*. Dealing with these requires the use of refinement. One must understand both the coarse and refined aspects, and make use of methods for sifting and straining, just as with unclean water, which must be filtered. Making use of a coarse straining process will give us coarse water, but if we make use of a refined process, we will get a finer and finer product. As such, filtering with various mineral elements results in increasingly clean water.

Our practice is just the same. We must establish principles and maintain guidelines. In this place, we have a daily routine for practice. When it comes to the appropriate time in the evening, we have a bell to call us to awareness of our responsibility. It's a signal that it's time to put down other activities, both personal and group matters which are external concerns. We cut off our various worries regarding these things. Our task now is to come and work on a more refined level. We must rely on determination of mind, and the application of diligent effort. Therefore we gather together with our minds made up. Having showered at four o'clock, and hearing the bell, one puts on one's upper robe with one's right shoulder uncovered, as a sign of respect. If one is a fully ordained monk, one places one's folded outer robe over one's left shoulder. One also brings along any other necessary requisites. One establishes a wholesome intention and a positive attitude. One's intention is to deactivate selfish views, such as various forms of laziness and unwillingness to participate. One

makes the effort to trim off these negative aspects. One sets one's mind on practicing with reverence and respect, with motivated effort.

But, in spite of this, there may still be obstacles. However, they can only obstruct those who are weak. Those who are strong won't be hindered by obstacles, because they won't see them as matters of significance. Those who are weak or infirm may see such matters as significant, and accordingly they become obstructions. But those with a sense of momentum won't see them as such, won't give them importance, because they aren't matters which lead to internal benefit. Having come to the *sala*, we have made up our minds to sit. We bow, to pay our respects, and then we sit meditation. We apply effort in the sitting posture. This refined posture will lead us into a state of knowing and seeing, at the beginning level. Sitting, we find that there are still difficulties to overcome. At times the body itself presents an obstacle, which the Buddha described as *khanda-mara*.

As we know, the word *khanda* translates as "groups" or "aggregates". This *mara*, or obstruction, then, is known as *khandamara*. It remains an obstacle for those who are not yet steadfast in their dedication. Feelings of weakness, sickness, fever, aches and pains, hunger, thirst, discomfort, flies and mosquitoes, heat and cold can arise. These are feelings which

the weak person sees as obstructions. The strong-minded person, focused, sincere and determined, doesn't see such things as obstacles, but as ordinary worldly matters. If we free ourselves from the conditioned realm, there will be no *khandas*, and therefore no aches and pains. Aches and pains inevitably accompany the *khandas*. Fever, sickness, and threats to one's health come along with this group of elements that we call the body. It's not possible to have a body without having such problems. Where would you have such things arise if not right here with the body? We observe such conditions with the attitude that they don't constitute a problem for us, but are simply a necessary component of life with this body. It's not necessary that we see such things as problems, or obstacles. In our training we must have a sense of restraint and tolerance.

When we sit, the heart may again be prone to the five hindrances, for example attachment to the various strands of sensuality. If one gets lost in anxieties and possessiveness over material objects, afraid they'll be lost or stolen and one will be left lacking, then such compounded thoughts will steal away one's sense of determination. As such we cast aside such external matters. Such matters are like the outer layers of bark, not the heartwood, and won't lead us to peace, to *santi*. So we cut them off and throw them aside. We learn to regard disagreeable physical feelings and discomforts as simply ordinary affairs of the body. We have to experience pain and sickness, because they are a natural part of the ordinary state of all conditioned things,

and as such they cannot be avoided. With this determined mindset, we strive to abandon the hindrances, including the various *khandamaras*, in order to be free from concerns, free of the worries that tarnish the mind. We apply our determination to practicing with diligence, to fulfilling our responsibility of building the causes for knowing and seeing, the causes for *santi*.

Actually, we already have all of the component parts necessary for our practice, it's not the case that we don't have what we need. But the reason that our practice has not yet come to fulfillment is because our mindfulness and clear comprehension are deficient. These two qualities are of great support. They are supportive in giving rise to alertness and self-awareness, which is not an easy matter, because of the distracting power of the mind's objects. Therefore we should work at building up mindfulness and clear comprehension. Previously we've allowed the mind to freely follow its objects, which arouse and incite, not allowing it a stable base. Now we try to build up mindfulness and wisdom by taking up a single mental object as a basis for the struggle. There are obstacles, but we build up a sense of determination and apply our best effort. Focusing our attention on a single object brings energy to our practice, and gives it a solid foundation. It also provides a strong defense against the various distractions. The meditation object that we take as a basis for developing self-awareness, is something which exists within this bodily formation, as one of its elements. The wind element which we breathe in and breathe out makes a suitable means for bringing the mind to peace, free

from the hindrances, ready for the practice of *vipassana*, or insight.

When one pays ones respects before sitting meditation, one should say to oneself, “At this time, I will watch over, supervise, and take care of the mind, warding off all of its formless attackers.” Those attackers are the mental phenomena which arise according to causes and conditions. They have no form but nevertheless must be dealt with. Dealing with them requires the use of a refined, solid and firm mental object. Having selected the breathing process as our object, we focus on knowing the in and out breath. When we breathe in we know – we are breathing in, when we breathe out we know – we are breathing out. We have a feeling of being with both the in and out breath. We must be sure not to allow obstructive things to come in and block the way. Don’t let them stumble into this protected area.

Ordinarily, if we’ve come so far as abandoning the various kinds of worries that tend to arise, we’re apt to lose our attention and allow the hindrance of drowsiness to take over. We must maintain awareness, and keep the activity of the mind clearly in focus. Its thoughts and feelings, impressions and formations can cause us to slip up and lose our awareness. We then get caught in a mood or a mode of thinking, or get distracted by external objects by way of the ears or the eyes. If our awareness isn’t firmly established, we can be led off, away from the path, and then beset by the hindrances on all sides. Proliferation, irritation, restlessness, doubt and hesitation. Even sensations of aches and pains – as if the body is breaking. The urge to urinate, the urge

to defecate. Feelings of sluggishness and unwillingness to make the effort. All of these things come up. If we don't have strong determination of mind such things can carry us away. We should apply our decisiveness of mind. When such symptoms arise, we must quell them with the use of a *parikamma*, or meditation word. We bring it up as a *nimitta*, a sign in the mind.

Without making a sound, but by setting up a sign in the conscious mind, we recite "Bud" on the in breath, and "dho" on the out breath. Once we've worked hard to establish "Buddho" thoroughly, fully and completely, there will be no such thing as obstacles or obstructions. We then change our focus, and give attention to the mind and its objects. We rely on that self-awareness which truly knows with alertness and readiness. But, most commonly, problems will overwhelm us at this point, because we loosen the reins, we slacken our effort. Easing up our attention, craving infiltrates, and takes a hold. If we don't slacken our effort and don't let craving take over, there will be no problem.

We shift our attention to the mind, and focus on knowing what mind-consciousness is. It may seem that we refer to the mind as a material object, but in fact it is not. The process of consciousness is the immaterial function of the mind receiving impressions of the senses, like sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and mental formations. We observe this sense-consciousness,

and recognize it simply as just one part of the material and immaterial components that we take as a “self”.

The knowledge which arises from observing the mind strengthens our awareness, and our sense of readiness to respond. We don't follow the unwholesome mind, we dismiss it. We follow the wholesome mind, which supports those components that create a sense of destroying the world of “self”. We investigate all of the functions of the mind, recognizing them as impersonal, observing them without grasping them as “this” or “that”.

If the mind is wholesome, it will seek to simplify and reduce. It will clear away waste, not permitting feelings of “owning” or “being” to arise. The wholesome mind engages its objects with awareness. It doesn't engage without awareness. Self-awareness is present. As a result, our practice gives rise to increasing firmness and strength. Just as rice seeds, having been scattered throughout the field, with all the supportive environmental conditions of rain, water, fertilizer, atmosphere, sunshine and the correct timing, will not succumb to disease but will sprout, flourish and develop strength and immunity – so too, this practice flourishes in the same way.

One's awareness is well established in every mind-moment, and one has a feeling of resolution and courage. There's no concern for external things such as the body. No matter how

long one sits, it's no cause for concern. One doesn't see it as something of importance. One views seeing and knowing, the state of seeing and knowing, as the thing of importance. Because it is there that one feels that the various problems can be cut off, where one's experience of such problems will be ended.

This, then, is one cause for the arising of knowledge and vision. The Buddha taught that we should maintain mindful awareness, at the moment of sitting, at the moment of observing, at the moment of knowing, and at the moment of seeing. When we are observing or knowing, what is that like? When we see, what is that like? Having seen, what do we take away with us? True seeing, the Buddha said, is seeing with right view, is seeing with emptiness, free from grasping and attachment. When we see mental objects, we see them as insubstantial and unbeneficial for achieving peace. Therefore we set them down, and don't engage with them any further. The mental objects are thus put to rest according to the level of our practice. As far as our practice develops, the mental objects are quenched to that level. Our practice distinguishes the mind from its objects, the mind-objects from the mind. As such, the knower, the "see-er", and the "be-er" are viewed as separate aspects. They exist together as states of knowing, seeing and being, that can be observed in this process. There is the method of our practice, the state of seeing, and the state of being. Once this distinction is made, there is nothing that can stain the mind. The state of the mind and its object can be recognized and identified. The knower is the one who knows the mind as the mind, and the mind-object as the mind-object. Mental objects

are therefore not capable of causing the knower to err or stumble off after them. This is the kind of knowledge which arises. One sees each object of the mind as empty of substance, as mere deceit, mere illusion, something meaningless, like a child's toy. One doesn't see it as having any value. One's inclination is to set such things down. Lay down the mental objects. Delight in the mental objects doesn't occur. Dislike for the mental objects also doesn't occur. There is peace.

This is the peace of seclusion. Just as in the night-time, there is seclusion. Seclusion from people coming and going. Without people around, it is quiet and peaceful. This is just the same. Although our faculty of perception is still in place, mental phenomena simply don't take over. One exists in a state of emptiness, with equanimity, free from "self". There is no being, no person, no liking or disliking, no love, no hate or anger. It's a cool and refreshing abiding, with a feeling of great peace and seclusion. This experience is *santi*, the peace of *santi*. Awareness is still present and complete, but one has no desire or thirst, like a traveller who has reached their destination, and set down their load. One isn't thirsty, one is without thirst. There is no such word as "thirst" – it doesn't exist. Everything shifts, and goes to a state of peace. Self-awareness was the instigator of this process of development. Now, when mental objects appear, our awareness is in place, so they present no danger.

If one faces obstructions, hindrances and difficulties in this practice, and finds oneself unable to see or understand, it's because the determination of mind isn't sufficient. The sweeping

and dusting, wiping and mopping hasn't been done. The feeling of firmness hasn't been achieved. It's as if one's dwelling place isn't clean. One feels apprehensive in such a place. But once it is clean one feels confident and unafraid.

Therefore, as time passes by we try to achieve this. It's not a difficult matter. The Buddha taught that when one practices to the point of attaining to *santi*, meaning peace and seclusion from mental defilements by having cut them off completely, one will then live with a feeling of self-worth, brightness of heart, wakefulness and cheerfulness. Nothing will cause any feeling of impurity or suffering. Even when the bodily formation undergoes change, it's only the elements of nature which change. The state of the internal experience remains unaffected.

This is something we must try to achieve. It is a goal which is not near, yet not far. This can be understood when we read about the four foundations of mindfulness, the qualities of a Dhamma practitioner, practicing for the sake of knowledge and vision. We can see that the Buddha said, if one practices continually without letting up one's mindfulness, one can expect results according to the following timeline: if progress is quick, within seven days; on the moderate level, seven months; and in the slowest case, seven years. This is the time allocation the Buddha gave. It may be only a framework which he outlined, but if we practice continually in this way, then we must surely have the opportunity to attain results. We should give serious thought to this, and put forth much effort. If we don't do it, or feel we can't do it - that's foolish, really foolish. Because the Buddha's

teaching is not something we are unable to practice, it's something we are entirely able to practice, and that's why we should make the effort.

When sitting meditation, try to stay with the object. Try to pacify other things which arise. Don't grasp at states of concentration (*samadhi*), simply aim to pacify arising objects, that much is enough. It's enough to give rise to a feeling of motivated energy – just by putting such objects to peace. If you have difficulties, it's because of the thicket of obstacles and illusions that are rooted in the past. These thoughts and memories will insist that they belong to your “self”, unsettling you to the point that you feel you can't sit or stand still. You perceive no peacefulness, only frustration, restlessness and agitation. This is particularly the case for those who come to ordain for a limited time period. One feels one has already achieved one's goal of ordaining, and left simply waiting for time to run its course. Negative thoughts and feelings inevitably arise. These feelings are an obstacle to one's practice, to fulfilling one's responsibility. But, in spite of these things we must make the effort to train.

I also trained, for a period, as one newly come to the Dhamma and Discipline, according to tradition. But doing the practice soon helped me to see its value. However, I didn't really know what I was doing. I didn't see any sign of peace, or any sign of happiness. All I saw was chaos and frustration. As for peace and seclusion, there was no sign. Sitting down, it was as if I found myself in the most dangerous of places. There was no coming to

grips with my feelings, either sitting or standing. It was a great ordeal. But still I had the feeling that, when the Buddha taught, he didn't teach for any personal gain. He taught only in terms of things that he himself had already experienced. So I made the effort to determine my mind. I would think to myself, whatever must be done today, that is what I'll do. Whatever must be done day by day, according to the time and opportunity, that's what one should do.

My first attempts, when all is said and done, didn't get me anywhere. I didn't know what I was doing, therefore my efforts weren't effective. I was practicing like a trader with no skills who uses only brute force. In the Isahn language they call such a person a "two-fisted tradesman."¹ I was simply putting forth effort, not knowing whether or not I would succeed. When the time came for sitting, I would sit. But I didn't see any peace within. All I saw was chaos, and memories. Images and ideas kept building up in my mind. As I sat, sometimes desire would pull me into developing schemes and projects, as if I must lay a plan to achieve this or that. One moment I was building up an idea – the next moment it would collapse and disintegrate. That's the way it felt. Should I ever act upon such thinking, the proliferation would go on and on without stopping, both day and night. But I kept on making the effort to practice. Even if there were to be no results, I had to keep trying, keep persevering with patient endurance. This is the point where one must dig for the treasure. But having dug in, if there is only dry earth, no sign of

¹ Phor-khah gam-pan

treasure, the earth is hard and there are rocks as well ... one sometimes feels discouraged. But I kept on trying. Sometimes various hindrances and memories would pull me into thinking I was hopeless and out of luck. Sitting there like one with no sense and no mindfulness, wondering what it's all for. But even so, I kept on trying. And when I looked back at the past efforts I had accumulated, it became an increasing source of inspiration.

Sitting, there was nothing else to use as an object of concentration, so I would light a candle as a focus. At first, it wasn't a very long candle, just an ordinary white candle like those that the laypeople offer. I used it as an object, sitting until the candle would burn out. I didn't sit in a windy place - I lit the candle in a place where there was no breeze, where the flame would stand up straight. I would sit and gaze at the flame, thinking, "What is it that causes this flame?..." This was for the sake of clearing away all distractions and memories. Looking at the flame and the halo around the flame... Looking and contemplating... "This flame has fuel, therefore it ignites... with no fuel it would not ignite..." I took fire, and the impression of the flame as my object. It was a means of destroying mental formations based on the past, and an aid to increasing awareness in the present. I made effort with this, both day and night. Whenever there was sufficient time, and I wasn't tied up with external duties, I would train in this way. Four days, five days at a time, constantly chopping and changing. But it was a lot of suffering. Sometimes various feelings would arise, based on defilement and craving. These feelings seemed never-ending. I didn't know where all the desire was coming from. There was

so much of it, so much to endure, like an enormous mountain on top of me, crushing me into dust. There was no way out – no means of escape. Watching and observing brought up the suffering – whether sitting, standing or lying down, there was suffering. But I stood firmly on the principle that the Buddha would not lie, and kept in mind that my teacher also encouraged this very practice. So I practiced, not seeing any avenue which might be a means of breaking through, but simply keeping at it.

Once I came to the point of feeling that the obstructions and distractions had calmed and settled down a little, from time to time I was able to gain a perspective on myself. To some degree I could perceive internal peacefulness. The *samadhi* object, like a distant twinkle, though not yet constant or consistent, would arise when self-awareness was sufficient to establish peace. I carried on practising. By this point I had a few means for overcoming the various obstacles which would arise. I also had a good teacher giving instruction, and leading by example. Therefore the various obstacles weren't too overwhelming.

I carried on doing my own practice in this way. Upon returning from the group meetings and coming to my hut, I went on with my own training. I made use of all means possible to give rise to secluded peace. In those periods of warfare, battling with the proliferations, I would pick up and use as a weapon anything which might be an aid to survival. All of the various reflections and contemplations that we review together, should they bring up any kind of reaction, I would take that reaction as a focus for practice. I would practise to attain peace, and practise

to attain insight. Where one's work of study and investigation lies, the work of contemplation for insight also lies there.

As such, anything which would help in bringing together my sense of awareness, I practiced diligently. But I was still conscious of obstacles, for example the various feelings which arise relating to little things such as eating. Even small matters like this, though nothing major, are difficult to manage. At that time our community used the system of dishing out each kind of food in equal parts to each member. This took away the opportunity to follow one's wishes, one's feelings or desires. We used this method at that time because there were few monks and novices, and the food was limited, so we had to do it that way. Also the monastic rules regarding the distribution of food required that we do it that way. But these days we can see that the food offered is sufficient for one to select for oneself. But the limitation lies in taking just the right amount for oneself, a skill which is called *bhojane mattaññuta* – this is also difficult to do. Many of us, even practising this method for some time, still can't get it just right. We should consider – this matter of eating is simply what we do to give the body the support it needs to get by for another day. There's no sense in clinging to some foods as good, others as bad, some as refined, others as coarse, or even in seeing what we eat as food at all. It is rather a nutriment for the body, to maintain its state of usefulness. There's no point in making anything of the issue of eating, its not an issue to be concerned about. And there's no point in worrying over the body, whether it will be like this or like that. Its not necessary to burden oneself with such worries. This body shouldn't be taken

as belonging to oneself. It is simply a state of nature, a manifestation of material form, and nothing more. Even if one were to give sustenance to the body to the full satisfaction of one's desires, in the end the time would still come for its inevitable demise. This much we can all see. However, small matters like this remain difficult, its not the case that they are easy.

The feeling that one kind of food is good, another kind not good, one kind of food is suitable, another kind not suitable, was still present within, and not willing to abate. It was still a concern, still an obstacle, even though it shouldn't be. One should be concerned with deeper, more meaningful things than this. This matter concerns only the coarse material elements, and nothing more. Its not a big issue but it is still difficult to manage.

Knowing moderation in eating means not allowing food to become a cause for worry. One consumes what one is given in a simple and orderly fashion, not making oneself a burden for the hearts of lay supporters. If one selects one's own food, one should attempt to take the right amount, suitable for one's body. This is something we should all try to do. As I worked to consolidate my feelings regarding this external matter, my internal awareness became more and more refined.

I tried to build on and make much of this refined awareness, in order to increasingly sift through the various feelings. The feelings kept on arising, and I was weighing them up and evaluating them all the time. While eating, what feelings would

create disturbance? Before eating, what feelings would irritate and interfere? The various disturbances were simply *vedana*, pleasant and unpleasant feelings. The unpleasant feelings of hunger and thirst would arise in various forms. At times, pleasant and unpleasant feelings expressing satisfied and dissatisfied states of the body would compete for my attention. Feelings of liking and disliking, “this is agreeable” and “this is not agreeable”. Luang Por Chah therefore had us contemplate unpleasant feeling. The experience which arises before eating – what is that like? It is unpleasant feeling. One is hungry, one is thirsty – one knows nothing but desire. But one has to have patience and tolerance, and restrain oneself until it is time for eating. When it was almost time to eat, we had the practice of contemplating our food. We didn’t organize our food into separate vessels, all of one’s food was mixed together into one’s bowl.

All of one’s food combined together, discouraging feelings of “this is good”, “this is average”, or “this is not good”. All the different types had to mix together. Then we would contemplate the disgusting nature of food, for the purpose of abandoning delight and giving up feelings of not having enough, and not being content with what one has or what one gets. I contemplated in this way, in order to conquer feelings of hunger, thirst and desire, all of which are demands which present an obstruction to peacefulness. Then, while we were eating, Luang Por had us continue to contemplate and observe. Naturally, when one eats one seeks for pleasant flavour in one’s food. One seeks for the flavour that one likes, that which one finds satisfying. If

one isn't satisfied, sweet is no good, salty is no good, and sour is also no good. Its like that. Then, having eaten, the process continues. Pleasant sensation arises, a pleasant mood arises. The pleasant mood covers up feelings of suffering. Its just the same as, when one changes posture, it conceals the unpleasant feelings of the body. If one doesn't change posture, the body suffers. Happy states and unhappy states of the mind are also like this, constantly changing and concealing each other. In this way hunger and thirst hide pleasant feeling, and pleasant feeling hides unpleasant feeling. Feelings and moods switch back and forth constantly, each preventing the true nature of the other from being revealed.

So I observed, always diligently watching over myself. This was the focal point of my study and practice, continually watching myself with mindfulness. Seeing happiness and suffering both as simply vedana, as feeling or sensation, one of the five khandas which make up the illusion of a "self". In this way I observed my relationship to such feelings. If one engages with feelings in this way, one won't become a slave to wanting, a slave to craving. One is able to accept both gain and loss, and the moods and feelings which follow on from gain and loss. One doesn't delight in, or give importance to arisen mental objects, neither is one intimidated or hindered by them. Such objects and feelings ease, attenuate, and can be abandoned. Just as when the clouds in the sky thin out, the sunlight shines more brightly, one's heart becomes more and more radiant and cheerful. Its as if one has cleared the darkness and impurity out of one's heart.

This practice is a matter that we must apply to our way of living, all the way up to our sleeping and waking. We engage mindful awareness to both our sleeping and waking. We engage with a sense of knowing, not with unknowing. This, in turn, gives rise to a feeling of seeing according to the truth. Whatever should arise, one sees the truth in it. That truth points towards the *tilakkhana*, or *Three Characteristics*. The truth of all things gathers together in these *Three Characteristics* which are consistent from the beginning through to the end. All conditioned things exist within these characteristics. You probably know of these universal characteristics. *Anicca* – all things exist in a state which is impermanent, not lasting, and must undergo change. That’s the state of things. They have to undergo change. We take *anicca* as the basis for *vipassana*. Its the basis for correcting ones view. Therefore we must bring our attention to this point.

Anicca translates as uncertain, unstable and impermanent. Whether it’s happiness, unhappiness, achievement or loss, if we engage in the manner of craving, we can only suffer. We all know about suffering. Suffering means discomfort. When discomfort arises – it comes from desire. Desire comes from a feeling of depletion. Depletion, thirst, not recognizing fullness, not knowing “enough”, all of this the Buddha called *tanha*, or craving. If we don’t know “enough” or recognize fullness, that is a source of suffering. We become slaves to our moods and feelings, to the agreeable and disagreeable mental objects which continually arise according to causes and conditions. This is a matter which we should try to understand. We should investigate the *Three*

Characteristics as much as we can. Investigate *anicca*, instability, both of the material elements and of the immaterial dhammas. Whatever mental objects arise – the Buddha said to take the tilakkhana as a basis. It’s a sword for cutting down the various enemies and *maras* which arise. So, one should have it at the ready. If we engage with states of *dukkha*, of discomfort, under the influence of craving – then we suffer. But if we engage with the power of knowing, there is no suffering. By and large people engage under the influence of craving, and therefore suffer. *Anicca* translates as “unstable”. *Dukkha* consists of those things which are difficult to endure. *Anatta* means not constituting a self. We must take this understanding as our basis. All things are unstable, and whether pleasant or unpleasant, are things without an identity or a self, are *anattadhamma*. We must bring our feelings into accord with these characteristics. Then there won’t be anything which will give rise to churning turmoil, chaos and confusion.

Direct knowledge must depend upon the *Three Characteristics* for its arising. If our view is to become right view, it must depend on the *Three Characteristics*. Without the tool of the *Three Characteristics*, these things are difficult to achieve. The Buddha therefore instructed that we keep this tool on hand for the purpose of our practice. This tool is for Dhamma practitioners, not for people of the world. Its for use by those who are practicing to destroy the various things which constitute obstacles to peace and freedom. Its not something which worldly-minded people can make use of, worldly-minded people aren’t like that. They don’t do what they do for the sake of *santi*,

they simply attempt to achieve what the world sees as happiness. That's what they want. But *santi*, to which the Buddha attained, destroys the root of worldly happiness. The Buddha said this is the path to give rise to *right view*. Therefore, as we develop along the path of practice we must exercise great patience.

I feel very comfortable living alone and secluded. There is nothing to tie one down. There is nothing to give rise to worries. This is a different feeling to that of regular people. This is a feeling of peaceful seclusion within oneself. Its the same as a person with no sickness or disease, who is untroubled by stress and worries. A sick person, whether lying down, standing, sitting or walking, worries all the time. They are afraid that they are in danger of death. But someone with no feeling of stress or worry regarding sickness, experiences peace and ease. There is thus a difference, which I illustrate as a comparison. One person has no feeling of anxiety regarding any issue. But the sick person worries and stresses out, thinking only of their illness, even if one speaks to them of enjoyable and interesting matters.

Regarding this, as each of us still has a task to fulfill, we must make the effort to practise together. We must make increasing effort to carry out the role of a *samana*, a peaceful one. We've been practicing together for some time now – sufficient for each to recognize what they personally are dealing with. But there is a lot of work remaining, it is no small task. When one is cleaning up, the cleaner things get, the more clearly one can see the dirt. In our practice, the more that peace increases, the more that one can see all kinds of danger in every corner. This is the way it is.

This is the meaning of the word *bhikkhu* – one who sees the danger in the rounds of rebirth. One who recognizes danger is able to escape from danger. If one doesn't recognize danger, one is unable to escape. If one has this attitude, then one's feeling of dispassion will increase, but it won't result in disappointment. One simply sees that this is the way things have to be.

Clean water naturally still contains a lot of impurities. In clear and clean water, one can see all the dust particles, no matter how small they are. For as long as our feelings are still coarse, our outlook is also coarse. But if our feelings become more refined, our vision becomes clearer and more refined. Finally, one's sense of caution is ever-present, to the point that dirt is no longer capable of interfering with the cleanliness. The cleanliness exists as cleanliness, the dirt exists as dirt. They are separate. The cleanliness doesn't become involved with the dirt, the dirt doesn't become involved with the cleanliness. This is just the same. The peace of seclusion does not become involved with any kind of disturbance. States of disturbance therefore come to an end. From the perspective of a worldly person, there always has to be disturbance. But from the perspective of one secluded and at peace, there is no trace of disturbance. In the same way, a person whose heart is in a state of having laid down every kind of burden, is left with nothing which will weigh them down. When a person has no more worries tightening and constricting around their heart, a feeling of spaciousness and freedom arises.

This matter is something in which we must practise and train, in order to make it a reality. If there are obstacles, we simply

accept that difficulties must always come with something new. Like a new robe, for example. When a robe is newly dyed, the dye is not yet set fast, and any accidental spills or stains can easily ruin its appearance. Our practice is just the same. We must sift, strain and cleanse the heart in order to reveal its purity. We must work and strive to secure the heart's state of peace. Then all of the time that we've spent will have gone for good result, and caused us to meet with that which we hoped for. We practice according to these teachings for the sake of goodness and for the sake of setting our lives upon the right path. We will then walk on a path which is smooth and straight, and free from harm and danger. As a result, our lives will be rewarded with *santi*, the peace and tranquillity of seclusion.

Therefore, may each of you who have made up your minds to carry out the practice, be firm in your determination and in your efforts.

Glossary *

Abhidhamma (*Pali*): The “Higher Dhamma” teachings. One of the “three baskets” of scriptures in the Pali Tipitika.

aharepatikulasañña (*Pali*): Contemplation of the disgusting nature of food.

anattadhamma (*Pali*): Dhammas which are not self, ie all phenomena.

asava (*Pali*): Mental effluents.

anatta (*Pali*): Non-self, not-self.

anicca (*Pali*): Impermanence, instability, uncertainty.

barami (*Thai*): (*Pali*: paramita) Accumulated spiritual virtues, inner qualities or good kamma.

Bhikkhu (*Pali*): Literally: beggar; or one who sees the danger in *samsara*. Buddhist monk.

bhojane mattaññuta (*Pali*): Knowing the right amount in eating, or in consumption of other requisites.

Dhamma (*Pali*): (*Sanskrit*: Dharma) The ultimate truth of reality; the teachings about this truth; and the practice leading to its realization. Specifically refers to the Buddha’s teaching or doctrine.

Dhamma-Vinaya (*Pali*): The name the Buddha gave to his own dispensation.

dukkha (*Pali*): Suffering, unsatisfactoriness or stress. The central term in the *Four Noble Truths*.

dukkha vedana (*Pali*): Unpleasant or painful feeling.

* For the sake of simplicity, in this edition all Pali-words are given in ordinary English spelling, omitting special diacritical signs.

Four Noble Truths (Pali): The first and central teaching of the Buddha about *dukkha*, its origin, cessation, and the path leading towards its cessation. Complete understanding of the Four Noble Truths is equivalent to the attainment of *nibbana*.

khandha (Pali): The five aggregates, or basic constituents of life: *rupa* (form), *vedana* (feeling), *sañña* (perception or memory), *sankhara* (volitional formations), *viññana* (sense-consciousness).

kilesa (Pali): Defilements, stains, afflictions or obscurations of the heart. Their various forms are traditionally summed up as greed, aversion and delusion.

Krooba Ajahns (Thai): A senior teacher in the forest monastic tradition.

kuti (Thai): A small hut or dwelling place for a forest monk or practitioner.

Luang Por (Thai): Literally venerable father; a respectful way of addressing senior monks who are very old.

magga-phala-nibbana (Pali): The path, fruition and full attainment of *nibbana*.

Mara (Pali): The “destroyer”, or “deceiver” in Buddhist texts. Appears in various forms as an obstruction to success in wholesome endeavours. One example is “Khanda-Mara”, Mara as the five khandas which we take as a “self”.

Nag Thamm (Thai): A basic syllabus and series of examinations for studying Dhamma and Vinaya for Thai monastics.

namadhamma (Pali): Mental phenomena as opposed to *rupadhamma*, the phenomena of the physical world.

nibbana (*Pali*): (Sanskrit: nirvana) The extinction or complete fading away of all defilements, the complete ending of suffering, the ultimate fulfilment of the Buddhist path.

nimitta (*Pali*): A sign, perceived in the mind. Can simply be a light which one “sees” internally when the mind is becoming concentrated, or sometimes refers to various kinds of dreams and visions.

nivarana (*Pali*): The five hindrances in meditation: sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and agitation, doubt and uncertainty.

pansah (*Thai*): (*Pali*: vassa) The three lunar months of the rainy season. The *Bhikkhus* observe an annual “retreat” for this period, passing every dawn within the same monastery or residence.

pañña (*Pali*): Wisdom; discernment.

Right View (*Pali*: *samma ditthi*): The first of the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, the path leading to *nibbana*. In the highest sense to have Right View means to understand the *Four Noble Truths*.

rupa (*Pali*): Physical form.

rupadhamma (*Pali*): The physical world, as opposed to *namadhamma*.

Sangha (*Pali*): The monastic community.

sankhara (*Pali*): Conditioned phenomena of the mind; proliferations of the mind; (occasionally) all conditioned phenomena.

sala (*Pali*): Hall for group meetings, ceremonies, Dhamma teachings, chanting and meditation.

santi (*Pali*): Peace, tranquillity.

samadhi (*Pali*): Concentration. The development of sustained, blissful, unified, one-pointed awareness on a meditation object, leading to tranquillity.

samana (*Pali*): Peaceful one, contemplative, renunciant, ascetic, recluse.

sampajañña (*Pali*): All-around awareness and clear comprehension. The Thai usage as “roo dtua” also means consciousness.

samsara (*Pali*): The round of birth and death.

sati (*Pali*): Mindfulness and recollection.

sati-pañña (*Pali*): Mindfulness and wisdom.

sukha vedana (*Pali*): Pleasant feeling.

tanha (*Pali*): Craving or desire, sometimes translated as wanting.

Tilakkhana (*Pali*): *see Three Characteristics*.

Three characteristics (*Pali*): The three universal characteristics of conditioned phenomena: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

Triple Gem: Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha.

upadana (*Pali*): The tendency to hold on to things, such as thoughts that something is one’s own or belongs to one.

upekkha (*Pali*): Equanimity.

vedana (*Pali*): Feeling, or sensation. Either *sukha-*, *dukkha-*, or *upekkha-vedana*.

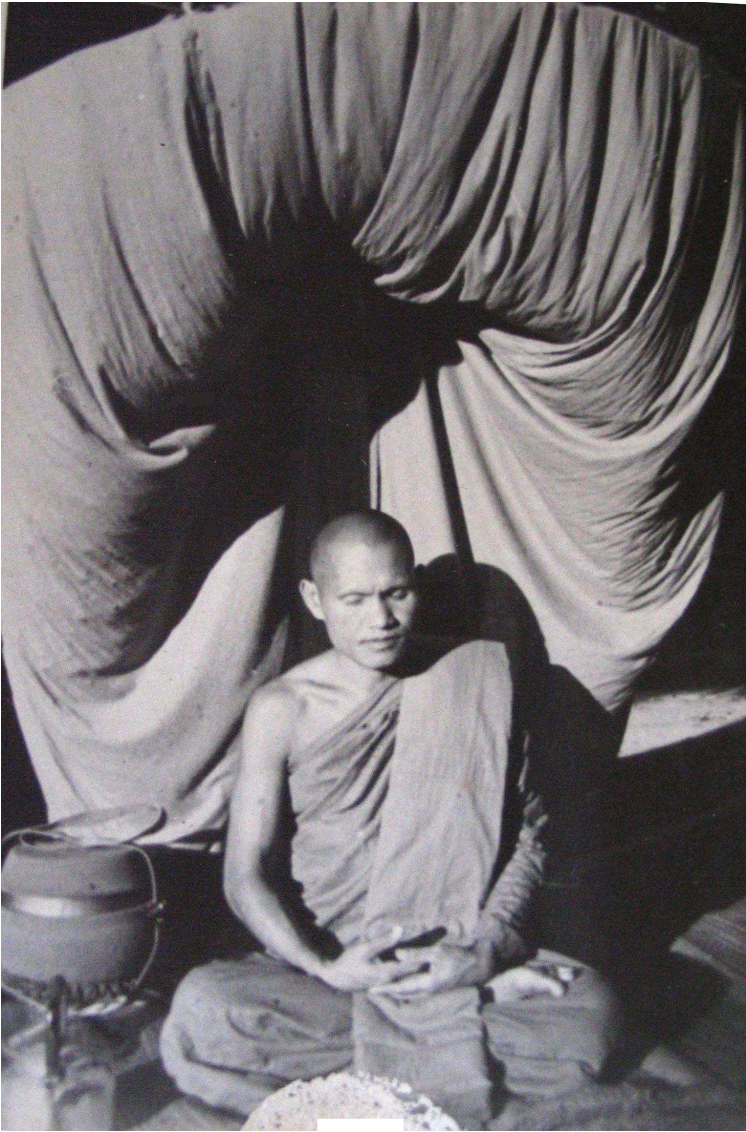
Krooba Ajahns (*Thai*): A senior teacher in the forest monastic tradition.

Vinaya (*Pali*): Training and discipline undertaken by the Buddhist practitioner; or, the *Bhikkhus’* discipline with its 227 major rules.

viññana (*Pali*): Sense consciousness.

vipallasa-dhammas (*Pali*): Distortions of perception, thought, and views.

vipassana (*Pali*): Insight meditation, development of clear seeing.



About Luang Por Liem

Luang Por Liem Thitadhammo is a Buddhist monk in the Thai Forest Tradition. He was born in Sri Saket Province in the Northeast of Thailand on the 5th of November 1941. After higher ordination at twenty years of age, Luang Por practiced in several village monasteries throughout the Northeast until he joined the Forest Tradition in 1969. He took up the training under Luang Por Chah, who later became one of the most famous monks in the country, and whose reputation and influence has continued to spread throughout the world, even today. Living under Luang Por Chah's guidance in Wat Nong Pah Pong in Ubon Province, Luang Por Liem soon became one of his closest disciples. After Luang Por Chah became severely ill in 1982, he entrusted Luang Por Liem to lead the monastery. Shortly thereafter, as Luang Por Chah's illness prevented him from speaking, the Sangha of Wat Nong Pah Pong appointed Luang Por Liem to take over the abbotship. He fulfils this duty up to the present day, keeping the heritage of Luang Por Chah's Dhamma and characteristic ways of monastic training available for monks, nuns and lay disciples.

Luang Por Liem has twice been given an honorary monastic title by His Majesty the King of Thailand. He is presently known as Tan Chao Khun Phra Rachabhavanavigrom. For the Sangha at Wat Pah Nanachat (Luang Por Chah's International Forest Monastery for training monks using English as the language of instruction) Luang Por Liem is not only a dearly respected teacher and guide in the monastic life, but has for the last seventeen years also conducted every monastic ordination ceremony as the preceptor.