

14 STARVING THE TIGER TO DEATH

Overcoming the Defilements

1st November 2000

It doesn't matter what time of the year it is – before, after, or during the rains retreat – you should always remember that we are here for one reason only: to end suffering and to find the truth that the Buddha sought. We should all have enough faith to realise that this is only done by training the mind. Especially by training the mind firstly to know, and then to weaken and fully overcome, what the Buddha called the *kilesas*, the defilements of the mind.

The Guardian of the Mind

If I think back in time and remember the teachings of Ajahn Chah, Ajahn Mahā Boowa, and all the other great forest monks in the North East of Thailand, I recall that in every talk they spoke about the *kilesas* and how much they affect human beings, creating suffering again and again – immediately, later on, and in the next life. So as monks, instead of getting high over the finer aspects of the Dhamma and talking about emptiness, *jhānas*, Dependent Origination, and non-manifest consciousness, or whatever, it's good to bring yourself back to reality and look at the *kilesas* in your mind.

The biggest of the *kilesas* are *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*, which can be translated as greed, hatred, and delusion. Delusion is the mind which thinks it's doing something right but is actually doing something wrong. That is, it encourages more defilements, which encourages more heat in the mind, and that is not conducive to the path. It doesn't lead to liberation and it doesn't lead to other people having faith in what you are doing.

The only thing that can really oppose that delusion is a sense of *hiri-ottappa* accompanied by mindfulness. *Hiri-ottappa* is the sense of shame. The shame of doing something that is inappropriate, knowing that it is going to create suffering for

you and for others. Just look at what you are doing and why you are doing it, and consider if it is the sort of thing that a monk, a disciple of the Buddha should be doing? Is this something that a novice should be doing? Is this something that an *anagārika* or even a visitor to the monastery should be doing? Is it something that *you* should be doing? If someone saw you doing this, what would they say? How would they look at it?

To practice *hiri-ottappa* means your morality has to be good. Your ethics and your monastic precepts have to be so good that even if you had a video camera following you around for twenty-four hours a day, it would never find anything in your conduct which would cause you a sense of shame. It would never even find anything in your mind that lay-people would find fault with. It means that if you could take out all the thoughts and the moods of the mind so that you could show them to your fellow monastics, you wouldn't be ashamed of them. That's the training you should be doing. *Hiri-ottappa* should be fully developed because it is the guardian for your conduct.

Your position as a monk is not just for your own liberation, it's also for inspiring faith in others. I take that extremely seriously as a teacher and especially in my position as an abbot. I've seen so many monks in whom I had faith for awhile, who I thought were doing marvellous things, giving wonderful talks, and then they misbehaved. That really hurt me quite badly. If it was not for the fact that I have enormous faith in the Dhamma I probably wouldn't have even managed to become a monk, because those monks were saying one thing and doing another. So there was a hypocrisy there, which really hurt me. Unfortunately that has often happened in Western countries.

When a monk goes around talking about the restraint of the senses, simplicity, frugality, and meditation, but then does the opposite, it hurts people who see it. What would his friends in the holy life and the people who support him say? That sense of shame should hurt the monk as well. When you develop this sense of shame there are some things which just don't feel right. You know they are wrong, you know they are

inappropriate for a monk to be doing. With a strong sense of *hiri-ottappa* you've got a chance of fighting these defilements of the mind. If your *hiri-ottappa* is very weak you won't have a feeling for what monastic life is about.

Clearing Away the Distractions

Forest monasteries have changed from the time when I was a young monk. For example, we were just talking this evening about the fact that some of the quite remote forest monasteries, that are close enough to Bangkok, get enormous amounts of drinks and all sorts of edibles for the afternoons. Someone asked me, 'What did you have on the drink tray when you first became a monk?' I answered quite accurately, 'There wasn't a drink tray'. When I first went to Wat Pah Pong – this was before Wat Pah Nanachat was started – it was a long time before we had anything to drink in the afternoons. It was months before I even saw a bag of sugar and there wasn't any coffee. I remember once a visitor came and gave a small jar of coffee to one of the novice monks; it was the first time we had seen anything like that in months. That was what the forest tradition was like.

That sort of simplicity and frugality is encouraged for a purpose. It is to clear away as many distractions as possible so that you have a chance to see the mind and to understand, reduce, and overcome the defilements. Unfortunately sometimes even in this monastery some people seem intent on making more distractions and as a result they give me more to do. There needs to be a sense of *hiri-ottappa*. The Buddha once said to Upāli, 'Whatever certainly leads to *Nibbidā*, to the turning away from the world of the senses, to the fading away of the world of the six senses, that is the Dhamma'. These are words that guide me in my monastic life; Words that tell me what I should be doing and what I shouldn't be doing. They tell me what's Dhamma and what isn't Dhamma. It's Dhamma if it leads to cessation, the ending of things, and that beautiful emptiness that comes with the ending of things.

The ending of things leads to *upasama*, the settling down of the mind, to peace, quiet, and silence. *Sambodhi* is Enlightenment wisdom. *Nibbāna* is the complete going out

of this flame of doing, the end of being concerned and interested in playing around in that world. If what you are doing leads to those things, if it's pointing in those directions, then you can know that this is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, and this is the teaching of the Buddha.

I heard of a nun who went on a very long retreat, and then when she came off the retreat she started listening to music. I thought 'hang on, what are you doing?' That's just looking for delight in the five senses. That's not something that leads to *Nibbidā*, to turning away, to fading away. It doesn't lead to cessation, it doesn't lead to the quieter states of mind, and it doesn't lead to *Nibbāna*, to Enlightenment. It goes in the wrong direction. The Buddha's advice to Upāli – who was originally a barber – was enough for him to know what was appropriate and what was not appropriate for a monk to do. It gave him guidelines to develop *hiri ottappa* and he became an *Arahant*, as well as a Vinaya expert.

So we look at these teachings and use them to overcome the delusion and the misunderstanding about what we are supposed to be doing and then we can understand what the Dhamma is and who's teaching correct Dhamma. Using the standard that the Buddha gave Upāli – which he also gave to Mahāpājapatī Gotamī the first Bhikkhunī – is extremely powerful and it shows us what these *kilesas* really are. Keep it in mind and follow it. Once you have the idea of following the Buddha's teachings to overcome the coarser part of delusion, it becomes much harder for you to justify acts of greed and anger. Often you see people in the world who have these defilements of hatred, ill will, and sensory desire, and they keep justifying them all the time. They say, 'It's good to get angry', or 'They need to be told' and, 'It's good to have fun now and again and to enjoy this and enjoy that'. It gets to the point that people claim "It's the 'kitchen sink path to Enlightenment. You don't need to be a monk or a nun; you can just be in the world, enjoy your family and your job and become Enlightened". As they say in English, that's just trying to 'have your cake and eat it too'. Once you've eaten your cake it's gone, it's disappeared; you can't eat your cake and keep it at the same time. You've got a choice: to preserve it for later on or eat it now. You can't have it both ways.

When a person really understands what the Buddha was talking about, when they understand that there is a way to overcome the defilements of the mind and to become Enlightened, then they won't waste time with the *kilesas*. The defilements stop you from enjoying peace of mind, and they stop you enjoying the liberation of the mind. They prevent wisdom from arising and you just get stuck in *saṃsāra* for many, many more lifetimes. So we've got to do something about these defilements and not just allow them to be. Don't justify them. Know very clearly that the Buddha said that sensory desire is defilement. Sensory desire is pursuing enjoyment in the realm of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. That is not part of the middle way.

When the Buddha taught the middle way between the two extremes, the first extreme was *kāmasukhallikānuyoga*. Here *anuyoga* means attachment, getting into, pursuing, or having a lot to do with. *Kāmasukha* is the happiness of the five senses, including sexuality, food, and entertainment. And that's certainly not the middle way: the Buddha said that it doesn't lead to *Nibbāna*; it leads to more *dukkha*, more suffering. I always have to quote the Buddha because I'm just a monk, just Ajahn Brahm. Who will believe me if I say these things? So, I quote from the sources and that gives what I am saying a bit more authority. I think many of you have heard the great teachers of our tradition say the same things. That's why as disciples of the forest tradition, you should always keep in mind Ajahn Chah, and Ajahn Tate. These are the monks I knew. What do they say? What did they do? How would they act? Asking those questions keeps me in line. If ever I were about to do something I was not sure about, I would think, 'Well what would Ajahn Chah do? What would Ajahn Tate do?' I was around those monks – especially Ajahn Chah – for long enough. I knew what they would do and how they would do it. If it was something they would never do, then I don't want to do it either. That's a sort of *hiri ottappa*. That's what happens when you are around a good teacher for a long time: you know certain things are not right. This is the way you understand *kāmasukha*, the pleasure of the senses.

Ajahn Chah would never allow indulgence in *kāmasukha*, he would never encourage or praise that at all. You can see in the *suttas* that neither did the Buddha, because

lobha, the first *kilesa*, means greed or covetousness – getting involved in, pursuing, and indulging in the pleasures of the five senses. If any of you are Pāli experts, you will know that *lobha* is a synonym for *avijjā* or ignorance, a synonym for *kāmacchanda*, the desire for sensual pleasure. It's the foremost hindrance that weakens wisdom and blocks *samādhi*. And, because it blocks *samādhi*, it means you are just putting yourself behind a large obstacle. It's hard enough as it is to get the peaceful states of mind that lead into *samādhi*.

Just Being Inside

We've just finished the rains retreat and many of you have been trying very hard, putting a lot time into developing and creating peaceful states of mind. If you throw away all that good work now you'll just have to start from scratch again. So often we can see those defilements of the mind and yet we justify them by saying, 'It's okay, we can do this, it's alright', but we know we really shouldn't. So when you do see defilements like *lobha* coming up, at least don't act on them. Don't do anything. *Don't turn it into an action of body and speech.* If you confine it to the world of the mind so that it just stays as a thought, as a mood, you are weakening its fuel, its source. As soon as you act on it, it becomes much stronger psychologically and it's more liable to come back again in the future. Also, if you can just keep it in the mind you've got more of a chance to understand it, especially to understand its pain.

If you have anger in the mind you know what it feels like. But if you take that anger out on someone else you forget what *you* feel like because you're only focussed on that other person. It's just the same with sensory desire. If you keep it inside you can feel what it's like, you can know what it's like. But if you externalise it by trying to gain that object of the sensory desire, you've lost all the mindfulness of what's happening inside. You've just gone out into the world and you're not quite sure what is happening in your mind, you can't see the danger in these things; you can't see the negative result of following the defilements. Instead of externalising it into that being or that thing or that person, spend some time just being inside and knowing what it feels like when you've got desire for sensory enjoyment. Do the same when you're

getting angry and upset. This way you will see the danger in sensory pleasures and ill will.

Because we don't see the danger in these things, when we experience suffering, we don't understand why we are suffering. Why am I upset? Why am I not happy? Why am I sick? Why am I doing this? Why is my meditation not going well? Why can't I get into *jhānas*? You know why! It is because you have no sense restraint and you indulge yourself too much. You allow the defilements, the *kilesas* to run riot in the mind. Once the *kilesas* have got hold of you they are not going to just let you go. You can't say, 'Right, I'm going to let you go now, it's my two weeks retreat. Okay? So *kilesas*, just leave me alone!' Once you've started a fire you can't stop it so easily. That's why the Buddha encouraged people to keep the precepts perfectly. See danger in the slightest fault. Keep the rules of the monastery perfectly, practise sense restraint, and be content with little. Be content with your hut, your robes; it doesn't matter whether they are synthetic or cotton. Just have simple requisites, nothing really flash and just a few of them.

Living Simply

Some of you will soon be leaving and going overseas. It will be very interesting to see how many bags you are taking. See if you can be like a monk at the time of the Buddha, just carrying your bowl and robes. See how little you can carry. Ask yourself, 'What do I want all this stuff for? When I go through the airport terminals will I just look like another tourist in funny clothes or am I going to look like a monk, someone who lives simply, someone who can inspire others?' Many lay-people have pointed out to me over the years that, when they see a monk coming to Perth with big cases or big bags, they feel disappointed, especially a few times when they've seen monks coming with their computers. They've said that their hearts drop, because this is not the way a monk should be. Even recently I heard a comment by one of the Thai lay-people about these sorts of monks. He thought monks shouldn't have so many things. It was one of the reasons he thought that the *sāsana*, the teaching of the Buddha, and the Saṅgha in Thailand were becoming so corrupt. They've got too many things. They're being given too much. They should live more simply.

Living simply should be one's goal, one's intention. When I went on *tudong* after five years as a monk, I had to carry everything with me. I had to walk out of the monastery – not get a car to the airport, but walk with all the belongings I had. There was a rule in that monastery at that time (it's probably changed now because monasteries get more and more slack; the standard goes down and so does the standard of *samādhī*) that once you left the monastery you couldn't leave anything behind. You couldn't put it in the storeroom and say, 'Can you put this aside for me, I'll be back in a year' or 'put it in the room somewhere over there and if I need it I will send for it'. You really had to let go of everything, all your possessions. Whatever you thought was yours, you had to take with you. You could give as much away as you wanted, but what you took, you had to carry. And you had to walk with it, sometimes for twenty or thirty kilometres a day in Thailand. Even in the cold season it is still hot for walking. You very soon start to see how little you need. I thought I was really down to the minimum but, after walking for two or three days more, I found there were a few more things I could get rid of. After two or three days walking you get it down to a very light pack. The first thing I gave away before I went on *tudong* was the big bag in which my bowl was carried. The reason was that I already had a bag for my bowl: just the little crocheted thing which goes on the outside of the bowl. What do I need another bag for? Another bag just means I can put more things in it. So when I was on *tudong* I didn't have a bowl bag, I just put everything in my monk's shoulder bag and in my metal bowl. The umbrella with the mosquito net and the water bottle were strapped to my back and that was it. It was a marvellous feeling – a feeling of pride, not in the sense of ego, but in the sense of inspiration that one could do this. It was possible to do this and be close to the *tudong* monks of old. The ones who would go through the forests of Thailand: the Ajahn Mun's, the Ajahn Chah's, the Ajahn Juan's, all those great monks. They didn't have lots of stuff to carry. They did not have lay-people going with them to carry things. They would go out by themselves. That's a monk in the lineage of the Buddha – like a bird carrying only the weight of its wings. So those of you, who are going soon, you may have already started packing and getting all your stuff together, but see what you can actually leave behind. It's a challenge for you. See how much you can do without; you can always do without a bit more. That's simplicity.

You will find simplicity means that you are not spending so much time with this requisite or with that requisite, making it more beautiful, more fashionable, or whatever else. It was crazy sometimes in the early years of Wat Pah Nanachat. Even though the monks were supposed to be beyond these things, every now and then someone would make a new design for a bowl stand and some monks would be throwing away their old bowl stands and making a new one because of fashion. They wanted this new type of stand or the new type of mosquito net. It was shameful. It really came to me when 'Tupperware' started to become popular. One of the monks was sent a little Tupperware cup with a lid on it by his mother, so you could drink half of it and take half of it back to your hut. This was a couple of years after Wat Pah Nanachat was started when there were drinks available in the afternoon. In those days when you had a drink it was made in a big kettle and then passed down the row. Then somebody decided to get a bigger cup. So some people had a small size and some had a bigger size. And in a couple of weeks a few other monks had the next size up. I remember one monk had this huge Tupperware cup; it was more like a bowl than a cup. It was just amazing what the monks would get up to. It meant that because someone had this huge cup sometimes the monks at the end of the line wouldn't get anything. The drink would run out before the end of the line, it was gross. But sometimes defilements are like that: always wanting bigger, better, and more rather than less.

The way of a monk should be simpler and smaller, not more extravagant. A monk should be someone who, if a thief goes into his room, there is nothing worth stealing. A monk shouldn't have anything of great worth, that's what being a forest monk is really about.

A monk depends on alms. If there is a person in the community who is poorer than you then you should think that is not right. I remember that because of the conditioning of my parents and also my grandparents. I started feeling that it was wrong when huts being built in the monastery in Thailand were more comfortable than some of the ones that the villagers were living in. I thought, 'It's not right; these

villagers are feeding me and I'm living in a more comfortable hut. If I've got more resources than they have I should be feeding them'. It gave me a sense of *hiri ottappa* about how I was using resources. How are you using resources? Is it an expression of the defilements? Is it an expression of the *kilesas* – of *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*, but especially *lobha*, the desire for material things? Even monks can desire material things, the latest this or the latest that. So, you should try and live simply. Forget about the comforts of the body, the comforts of the hut, the comforts of this way or that way.

We need to develop the comforts of the mind not the comforts of the body. It's a waste of time worrying about this old body. So, as long as we've got the requisites – a robe to cover our body, and it doesn't have to be the best quality cloth, it can be full of patches –that's good enough. As long as we've got a hut to stay in – again, it doesn't have to be the best, as long as it keeps away the elements and gives seclusion for the practise of meditation, that's good enough. If you have a good hut to stay in, hang out in it, instead of hanging out in the kitchen or the workshop or somewhere else. We have beautiful huts in this monastery, probably some of the best huts in any monastery in the world. So stay in them, make use of them. Otherwise all the people who have spent all this money, donating to the monastery to build these beautiful huts, what merit are they getting out of it? Sometimes you should ask yourself, 'Do I deserve to stay in a hut like this?' These huts cost a lot of money. If you are not practising properly, not walking on those meditation paths regularly, what have you done to earn this? If you're healthy you should be walking on them a lot, and if you are only reasonably healthy, you should be sitting down inside your hut doing a lot of meditation. Make use of these things so that the sacrifice of the people who built the hut will be worth while. So they can look at the gift that they have given, see how it is being used, and feel inspired and happy.

This is a way of overcoming the defilement of laziness, the defilement of just taking things easy in a beautiful hut. The defilement of just sitting around having a big breakfast, having a big lunch, having a big cup of tea, coffee, or whatever else you think you want. All these things can be used, but use them well. Use them frugally –

use them to make progress in your meditation and to develop your wisdom. Otherwise, you'll just be like a lay-person in robes, with the same sort of desires, the same sort of hatreds, and the same sorts of movements of the mind. If you develop a lay-person's mind you won't want to stay in the robes – you will want to leave because you haven't been developing the monk's mind, the mind of a *samaṇa*, a recluse. Eventually that will get the better of you.

Those are some of the dangers of the defilements. That's why a Kruba Ajahn would stop those dangers developing. They would tell you what happens if you develop lust, if you fantasize, sleep too much, eat too much, or if you don't spend enough time sitting, or practising sense restraint. They would point out the dangers again and again.

Sometimes what motivates people are the benefits of resisting the defilements, of overcoming the *kilesas*. Because if you start to resist these *kilesas*, the defilements of the mind, you get more and more happiness. You get *anavajja sukha* (complete, spotless happiness) as you start to keep your precepts and the rules of the monastery perfectly. You realise that there is no cause for blame from any quarter in anything you've done. Each one of you can do that now. Have you got the blameless happiness of *anavajja sukha* yet? Or are there still parts of your ethical conduct that still need to be tightened up a bit? If so, you're just depriving yourself of happiness. So, one of the benefits of keeping the precepts and following the rules of the monastery is that you get this beautiful sense of happiness, freedom from remorse, from *kukkucca*, one of the five hindrances. With that freedom from remorse your meditation gets deeper and you get even more happiness from the practise of sense restraint. If you practise sense restraint you get to the next level of happiness in the gradual training. So by indulging in sitting around or standing around chatting about this, about that, or just reading too many trashy books, you're stopping yourself from getting the happiness of sense restraint.

The happiness of sense restraint means that the mind starts to calm down and you get this beautiful peacefulness inside you and around you. You've all experienced that

peacefulness from time to time. Sometimes you only experience it when you are on retreat and then when you come off the retreat you throw it away again. Wouldn't it be wonderful to just keep that peacefulness and joy from sense restraint all the time? If you really want to indulge in the senses then you can volunteer to go into town at the weekends and I can stay here and do my meditation. You can give the talks if you like talking a lot. I might just put you in front of the microphone at our town centre and you can talk. What I'm saying here is that you've got this marvellous opportunity: you don't have to give talks, you don't have to talk so much. When I had just two 'Rains' I had to give talks. I'm not sure which but after the third or fourth 'Rains', I had to give the *Mahāpūjā* service in Thai at Wat Pah Pong, with Ajahn Chah and a couple of hundred monks and thousands of lay-people there. That was too soon, but I had to do it because Ajahn Chah told me to. In other monasteries you have to do these things. Even those monks who say they don't like to do these things, when they go overseas they have to give talks. You're lucky to have so much freedom, so don't waste that time. Use it not to indulge but to really get into seclusion.

Kāyaviveka is seclusion of the body, *cittaviveka* is seclusion of the mind. Seclusion of the body means getting away from other people: sitting in your hut, walking on your path, and hanging out with yourself. *Vivicca kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*, being aloof, separated, secluded from unwholesome dhamma, which usually means the five hindrances, including the *kilesas*, of greed, hatred, delusion, and sensory desire. When you are in the hut there is nothing much there; that's why it's a place of seclusion. You need to keep it that way, keep it simple with few things. Keep your hut so simple that I can take a visitor there any time and you would expect the visitor to be impressed with the little you have, and how neat and tidy it is. You should be aiming for the simplicity of a forest monk. I have mentioned many times before what a great privilege it was to see Ajahn Chah's room; it gave you so much delight. Even now I remember there was so little in that hut. Here was a monk who was receiving all these gifts from wealthy people in Bangkok and Ubon, but where he slept there was hardly anything at all. A few robes, a mat on the floor, a little pillow and that was all. It was beautiful and inspiring to see that. So if I take a visitor to your hut, will they be as inspired as I was when I was a young monk?

By developing seclusion from all these material and physical possessions, simplifying the mind instead of filling it with more stuff, we get happiness of the mind, freedom of the mind, and the joy of the mind. You're actually getting close to the *jhānas*, seclusion from the five senses. Secluded from unwholesome things you can enter into the first *jhāna* with *pītisukha*, the bliss of such seclusion. The *jhānas* are states of bliss. Don't throw away the opportunity to get that bliss. By having insight into the Dhamma you'll turn your whole life around, especially your monastic life. Remember, just before he sat down under the Bodhi tree the Buddha reflected on the time when he first experienced a *jhāna* under the rose apple tree. He thought, 'Could the *jhānas* be the way to Enlightenment and then insight came up, 'Yes, *jhānas* are the way to Enlightenment'. It's a powerful statement. Afterwards he knew the middle way; the middle way is the *jhāna* way. When you let go of sensory pleasures, get rid of the *kāmasukhalliānuyoga*, (the pursuit of the happiness of sensual pleasures), have no *kāma sukha*. That's straight down the line *jhāna* practice. So don't throw away the opportunity and the chance to do this. This is what leads to Enlightenment. This is the path that the Buddha followed. And for those of you who have faith in the Kruba Ajahns, all of those Kruba Ajahns – to the best of my knowledge – said that such *samādhi* is absolutely necessary to gain Enlightenment.

Overcoming the Defilements

So use this wonderful opportunity in this lifetime, this rare lifetime. Most of you have healthy bodies, and if they're not absolutely healthy they're still good enough to practise. You have the teachings available to you, to encourage you. You're protected from having to deal with too many lay-people. You've good food and all the resources here, so don't just indulge in the defilements. The benefit of resisting those defilements is that they get less and less. Keep them confined to the mind and it's just like putting a tiger in a cage. It might roar and rush against the cage bars at the very beginning but after a while it will stop doing that. It will settle down in the cage and then it will be safe. You'll be safe from being terrorised and eaten by the tigers of the defilements. Eventually, when they're in a cage you can starve them to death – starve them so that they get weaker and weaker and the bliss gets stronger and

stronger. When the mind is blissed out and has that sort of strength, it can kick that tiger in the teeth and the tiger is too weak to do anything. You've got hold of the defilements and you can wring their necks. No more defilements and you get Enlightenment in this lifetime. Each one of you has the possibility to do that, but if you keep indulging in defilements you're just wasting precious time. I'm talking about wasting this precious lifetime. When you know the dangers of these things you will be encouraged to make a bit more effort to resist, to have a bit more *hiri ottappa* and more determination to overcome them.

In the simile of the two fire sticks (MN 36), even if we take the sticks out of the river, they are still wet so we can't start a fire with them. Even if those fire sticks have been lying next to the river, still they're not dry enough – they are too wet inside. They have to be taken from the river for a long time before they dry out, before they can be used to light a fire. The Lord Buddha used that simile for indulging in sensory pleasure in the world of the senses. If you have just left the world and come to the monastery, it takes awhile before you dry out. The sensory world makes you damp and meditation can't really take hold. You can't get really fired up with the meditation. The longer you are outside of the world, away from things, staying in a monastery or in a hermitage, the more you dry out. Sometimes it takes years to dry out. Especially when you are drying out and then you put your stick in the water and make it wet again. So after a couple of years of drying out, if you make it all wet again you have to do another two years, four years, or however long it takes to dry out. You're just holding yourself back, not allowing yourself the opportunity to get into deep meditation. Once those sticks are aflame, once you get into the *jhānas* and the bliss, you'll also have clarity of mind and you'll see how stupid the defilements are. You'll just kick yourself, 'Why on earth did I do those sorts of things when I was a young and stupid monk? To go and find pleasure in the realm of the five senses – what a stupid, silly thing to do! Wasting my time looking out into the world too much. Listening too much; listening to Mozart or whatever. What a stupid waste of time that was. Rather than attaching and becoming entangled in the world, I could have just been sitting down letting go of more and more defilements, and finding the real Dhamma'.

People in the world say everything is Dhamma, even sexual intercourse and soccer. That's stupid! The only Dhamma is that which is conducive to Enlightenment; that is, the Buddha's teaching which leads to *nibbidā*, *virāga*, and *Nirodha*. What leads to that? Those of you who know your *suttas*, know that what precedes *nibbidā* is seeing things as they truly are. And seeing things as they truly are is preceded by *samādhi*. So don't forget the practise of *samādhi*. It's such a delicate plant and it needs so much nurturing, so much protection until it's strong. If it's not strong yet you can't really afford to be careless. Look after *samādhi*. Of all of the things I've talked about it's much better to look after your *samādhi* than to look after your wisdom.

I say that because it is much easier to know whether you've got *samādhi* or not. As for wisdom, everyone thinks they're wise, everyone thinks they know. That's why there is so much delusion in the world. Many people write books on Buddhism and only a fraction really know what they are talking about, but all the others think they know, think they are wise. Are you one of those who think they know? Be careful because it is so hard to know what real wisdom is. At least with *samādhi* you know whether you've got a peaceful mind or not: you know whether you can sit still in bliss or whether you're distracted all the time and can't sit still for more than half an hour. That's easy to know! *Samādhi*, the stillness of the mind, is a sign of real wisdom, not intellectual wisdom but real wisdom.

Let Go

Wisdom is the understanding of how to let go, the understanding of *anattā* or non-self and of *dukkha*, which means that you don't play around with the fire of the five senses. Wisdom is knowing *anicca*, impermanence. Wisdom is knowing that all things that arise – including all of nature – will cease. Let it cease now, let it go, understand that wisdom. If you really understand that wisdom it means that you can let go. You can just sit down and let go of the body, let go of all the thoughts, let go of the *āsavas*, the out-flowings of the mind. Let go of this mind that seeks its happiness outside. You can let go of the *āsavas*, which take you outside of yourself into the past and the future, into the five sense world, to this, that and the other. Go in the opposite direction don't indulge.

If you go in the opposite direction you will get all the beautiful happiness. You will get the inspiration, the knowledge that the Buddha was an *Arahant*, and that's a difficult thing to know. You may think you know it, but you only know that when Stream Winning happens. What actually is a Buddha? What is an *Arahant*? Why is the Dhamma *svākkhāto* and what is the *Ariya* Saṅgha? You've got these beautiful things just waiting for you: an amazing banquet of insights, releases, freedoms, *jhānas*, *magga* and *phala*, path and the fruit – a beautiful banquet with delicious food. But we keep on eating dog poo instead. So what are you doing that for? Surely you've got enough nous, wisdom, and understanding to know what Enlightenment is. If you are really ready to let go enough and abandon you don't need to just follow what I'm saying. You have read all of this stuff in the *suttas* and this is what all the Kruba Ajahns say.

So why don't you do it? Don't wait for tomorrow; don't wait until you get to your next monastery in a few weeks time. Those of you who are going tomorrow, you might not make it until tomorrow: *anicca maraṇa sati*, mindfulness of impermanence and death – do it now. Those of you leaving on the weekend, get Enlightened before you go, don't wait. Otherwise you'll die and you'll wonder why you wasted so much time. It's probably what happened to you in your last lifetime. Why waste so much time now and in the lifetime before and the one before that? It's just wasted time. So please don't allow these defilements to run riot over you. For your own happiness resist them. Dry out and have the beautiful flames of *jhāna* coming into the mind, rather than the restlessness and distraction of the *kilesas*. Be an inspiration to the world. There are so many stupid people out there teaching Dhamma – we need more *Ariyas*. These beautiful teachings of the Buddha are real, but there are not enough people who have *realised* them to be able to present them to others. If there are not more *Ariyas* in this world, this beautiful Dhamma is going to die out eventually and it's going to be a place for all sorts of strange and weird things. Think of others if not yourself. Practise diligently, and don't waste time. You all know what to do, just go ahead and do it.