

3 DETOXIFYING THE MIND

2nd of February 2000

The ordination ceremony, bringing into being two new bhikkhus, that we performed here on Sunday afternoon is fresh in my mind. Part of that ordination ceremony is a little chant which the *upajjhāya* (preceptor) performs at the very end of the ordination. It is a very lovely chant, an exposition of the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha, on the four things never to be done and the four resources or supports of a monk. That chant in Pāli is one of my favourites, and it's a shame I only do it once a year. It reminds me of the four resources for the basic life style of a Buddhist monk: alms food, lodging at the root of a tree, robes made of rags, and just simple medicine made from fermented urine. The simplicity of those four requisites always inspires me, even though we don't live like that in this monastery. Nevertheless, it does tell us what the original simplicity of monastic life was all about and, when we hear such teachings, it encourages us to lean towards that simplicity, rather than inclining towards abundance and having many possessions.

The way of the world is to have many possessions, the more possessions the better. They may be convenient but usually they become a nuisance. We're always falling over things, preparing things, and maintaining things. The simplicity of the monastic life in the time of the Buddha is something which is worth bearing in mind. It's a simplicity that gives rise to freedom. The more things we have the more complicated our life is, and the less we experience the beautiful spaces that we call freedom. At the very end of the ordination ceremony the Buddha gave a very powerful and very beautiful Dhamma teaching for the new monks. I will focus this evening's talk on those verses.

The Path

There were many different ways that the Buddha taught the Dhamma. *Sīla* (virtue), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom) have all been perfectly expounded. Making them the perfect exposition means we don't really need to look very much further than the Buddha's description of the practice of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. This is the path of Buddhism: to have perfect ethical conduct, perfect concentration in meditation, and perfect wisdom.

Sometimes when we talk about *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* in that way – about virtue, meditation and wisdom – people mistake the root meaning of those terms. *Sīla* is all about letting go, abandoning those tendencies of bodily speech and bodily action that are based upon things like craving, sensuality, anger, pride and jealousy. All of the things that arise out of the negative emotions are cut off by the practice of *sīla*. In the beginning the practice of *sīla* may tend to make you feel that you are confined, because you cannot express yourself as you used to be able to. But really what you are doing is confining the defilements and the cravings in the mind. You're disciplining them and putting them in jail in order to and destroy many of those negative emotions of the mind which create so many problems for yourself and for others. The practice of *sīla* is no more than letting go of sensory desire, ill will and delusion. It's letting go of the coarser manifestations of those things.

When the Buddha talked about meditation he talked about deepening the practice of letting go. Anyone who has practised meditation will know that there are many obstacles to the quiet mind. And those obstacles are only overcome through this aspect, or this movement of the mind, that we call letting go. All the cravings and desires come from a sense of 'self' trying to control the world, trying to manipulate the world in order to seek illusory happiness that it thinks it can manufacture and keep. It's the basic delusion of human beings and of all other beings in the cosmos. All beings think they can manufacture, attain and keep happiness. All beings tend to reach out for happiness, but it's always just a little bit ahead of them. We hang on to the hope that one day we may be able to find this illusive happiness 'out there' somewhere. That is the illusion that keeps the mind thinking, keeps the mind planning. We keep the mind going out into the world, rather than stopping the mind thinking, calming the mind and keeping it in here inside.

The Buddha perfectly expounded *samādhi*, the deep teaching on meditation. *Samādhi* is all encompassing, so powerful, it goes deeply into the 'letting go' states of the mind, into states that are far beyond the world. The *jhāna* states are so different from the way consciousness reacts to the world. *Jhāna* states change from one to the other, into what are called the *arūpa jhānas*: states of infinite space, of infinite

consciousness – or as I would prefer to say, unbounded space, unbounded consciousness, the space of nothingness, neither perception nor non-perception.

All these things are so refined and yet they are no more than stages of ‘letting go’. They are the results of abandoning things temporarily. As *sīla*, or virtue, is abandoning the coarse, so *samādhi* is abandoning the refined. The more we let go the more peace there is in the mind. The more profundity there is in the mind, the closer one gets to that which is truly the goal of religion, just truth and otherworldly reality, that which is profound. We’re going to the root of things, getting to the heart of the things that make this world tick. By going to the root of things you get perfect understanding, perfect wisdom. That perfect understanding differs from the letting go of *samādhi*, of meditation, because the letting go done in *samādhi* is only temporary. But when we come out of *samādhi*, we come out with wisdom. We are cutting off the negative qualities of mind, such as greed, sensory desire; lust; anger, ill will, pride, jealousy, and fear. We’re cutting all these off once and for all. Gone forever!

It’s strange that in the world people think that lust is good. They sometimes even think that anger is good. They never imagine there could be a state where one can exist without these things. People very often think the best that can be done is to repress or suppress these movements of the mind. But people who have trodden the path of the Buddha know that one can live in this world without lust, without any anger, without any fear, without any pride, and without any ill will towards other living beings, no matter what they do to you. This becomes a very inspiring state, which truly deserves the word ‘saintliness’. The word saint actually comes from the Pāli word *santa*, which means calm, peaceful. Peacefulness is the result of ‘that which moves the mind’ being abandoned. When ‘that which moves and shakes the mind’ is abandoned, there is only the natural peacefulness, not forced but coming as the automatic response to the abandonment of anything that can move the mind. The mind is truly unshaken and unshakable, and only such a person truly deserves the title of saint, or peaceful one.

As the Buddha perfectly explained, the threefold practice of Buddhism is *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* – virtue, meditation and wisdom. The focus of this practice is not

just what you do but why you do it. So often for example, when I give you a task to do in the morning work period, if I explain why you are doing it and what the purpose of it is, it makes it so much easier to do a good job. It's important in the practice of a Buddhist monk, not just to know what you are supposed to do, but to know why you are doing it. That illustrates and makes quite clear just how you are supposed to live this life, what the purpose is, and why. One of my favourite passages is not just in the ordination chant, but is scattered throughout the *suttas* and the Vinaya Pitaka, repeated by the Lord Buddha many times on different occasions. The Buddha said that this whole triple practice of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, which is just a summarization of the Eightfold Path is to overcome the intoxications of the mind. It's a beautiful phrase, the intoxications of the mind.

Overcoming Intoxications

Some people in the world love to be intoxicated. Not just through substances like alcohol or drugs, but also by the beauty of a member of the opposite sex. Intoxicated by the pleasure of a beautiful symphony, or intoxicated by the beauty of a sunset. The Buddha said we should abandon all intoxication, because as the very name suggests, it means you are bringing toxins into the body – you are intoxicating yourself. These are the poisons of the mind. What does it mean, 'poisoning the mind'? It means bringing the mind to a sense of suffering and disease; this is the lack of ease, the lack of peace in the mind. Whenever you become intoxicated there is always a hangover afterwards and it's in the hangover of intoxication where we can really see the suffering of these things. When there is a beautiful relationship it must end one day, but the more you are intoxicated by that relationship, the more severe the hangover will be. The more you enjoyed the beautiful music, the harder you will feel its loss when it ends. Each of these things the Buddha said are intoxications of the mind. To overcome those intoxications one needs a sense of peace and stillness, the happiness of which far exceeds the exhilaration of the five-sense world.

This peace and stillness far exceeds any of the happiness of the world. That's why I keep on pressing the point for monks, novices, *anagārikas* and visitors to the monastery, to deeply experience the stages of 'letting go meditation'. This is not just disengaging from the world because of ill will towards the pleasures of the world. It

is letting go of the pleasures of the world for something which is more pleasurable, more refined. The great bliss of the mind in deep meditation, the sheer pleasure of stillness, is something to be experienced, something to be fully appreciated. The Buddha said the whole purpose of practice is to abandon those intoxicants which blind you to the pleasure of peace and stop you experiencing the pleasures of silence and stillness.

Intoxication is always wanting to go back to get another hit of the drug of the five-sense worlds, wanting to see more things, experience more things, have more relationships, more pleasure. That intoxication with the world is something which is a great problem for humanity, because it stops you appreciating something far more profound. The whole purpose of this threefold practice is to stop that intoxication. It also gives a good explanation for the precept to abandon alcohol, which is why monks don't go partying or have a glass of champagne at the ordination ceremony to celebrate. Instead of celebrating with intoxicants we celebrate with mindfulness.

Intoxicants tend to mess up one's awareness and dull the mind. Pleasures lead to dullness. Once one realizes that, instead of intoxicating the mind and having dullness afterwards – that lack of clarity, almost ill will, the sense of being upset – we develop the even mindedness that can still be happy in a different sense, a more stable sense. The Buddha said mindfulness is for overcoming intoxications, but not just the intoxication for sensory pleasure, but even the intoxication with 'self'. There are different types of *majja*, or intoxication, which is a word that is sometimes translated as pride, just like, pride in youth, pride in health and pride in being alive. For those of you who are not yet old and have the intoxication of youth, you think you'll have this energy for ever. But as soon as you start aging the energy starts to disappear, you just can't lift that axe as high as you did before. You can't drive it into the wood as deeply as you could before. The body just will not do what you tell it.

That's a great insight and a great shock for some people who are attached to their body. You see how in later life the body lets you down. Instead of being something that you can tell what to do, like an instrument of your will, it just goes its own way; it just will not do things. That's a powerful thing to see for oneself in old age. One doesn't really believe that until one experiences it. I can appreciate that for old people

the body is a prison and it's a very hard prison. It just will not do what you tell it, instead it tells you what to do. When the body wants to sleep, it just sleeps. When it wants to hurt, it just hurts, and you can't do anything about it. The pride of the intoxication of youth is something to be wary of.

The intoxication of health is similar to the intoxication of youth. To think that one is so clever and smart for being healthy, and therefore somehow superior. "If people are ill it's their own fault." Some people in our society think like that. But we know that health, and ill health are a pair and both are our inheritance. When we look upon our inheritance, which is given to us by our parents, what they have really given to us is this body which is going to age, get sick and eventually die. We get all the fun and the pleasures at the beginning and we pay for it at the end. It's not a very good deal!

There is also the intoxication of 'being', the intoxication of life. People love to 'be', but why? If we look at life and the suffering in life, we often think it is other people's fault that they suffer. In the same way we think it's their fault that they get ill. Suffering is as natural to life as illness is; it's no one's fault it just comes. We are genetically disposed to suffering and there is no way you can manipulate those genes to avoid that suffering. It's just 'par for the course', it has to happen. That is why the Buddha said, "Separation from what you want is suffering, and being with what you don't want is suffering". Half of life is being with what you don't want, you can't really avoid it. But the Buddha said that the 'practice' is for the overcoming of the intoxications and pride, and for the overcoming of thirst, or rather the disciplining of craving.

Using the metaphor of thirst, one can actually understand what the Buddha meant by craving; *taṇhā* is the Pāli word for thirst. It is as if one is dehydrated and always wanting to drink, one has to get a drink. That is craving, which is in fact physical suffering. We think our thirst can only be overcome once we've got the glass of water or cup of tea, but as soon as we've had one glass of water we need another one. That's the trouble with thirst; we think that we can overcome thirst by feeding it. There are some thirsts that you have to feed, but many thirsts can never be overcome by feeding them. The only way you overcome the problem is by disciplining the thirst. The more you give in to the mind, the more it wants. That's why you can

never overcome thirst in that way. The thirst I am talking about is for pleasure, and sexuality.

The Buddha once said there are three things you can never get enough of, never find fulfilment in, and never satiate yourself with. If I remember it correctly, one was sex, one was sleep, and the other was alcohol. With those three things we always want some more. This is why thirst can never be overcome, can never be ended. Look upon the way craving works, craving is suffering. As soon as craving manifests in the mind, as soon as we want something, there's a problem. There's business to be done. We have to aspire towards that thing, move towards that thing, try and grab that thing. If we succeed in gaining what we crave for, does the craving end for a little while? If we don't get it we're suffering. With craving, with these thirsts, as soon as we've got one thing we need something else. That's why these sorts of cravings for objects are unfaithful to you; as soon as you have it, it does not satisfy you. You want something else. Craving promises that as soon as we get this thing we'll be happy, but as soon as we get it we want something else, that's the way of craving, the way of thirst. You can understand what it's like to be thirsty, always being thirsty, and then to have a glass of water, and in a few moments you're thirsty again.

Buddhist cosmology has beings called the *petas*. These beings are ghosts, unfortunate beings who because of some past *kamma* in their previous lives have been born into that state. They have very small mouths and very big stomachs, which means they can never eat enough and they are always hungry and thirsty. You can imagine a huge stomach needs a lot of food to fill it up, but with such tiny mouths they can never get enough. Imagine that sort of suffering, never being able to get enough, always being hungry and thirsty. This is the state of human beings, always thirsty for sensory pleasures, for objects, always hungry for experiences, never truly being at peace. That thirst has to be disciplined through the practise of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, through virtuous practice leading to the ability to say no to the cravings in the mind. It's marvellous to see the practise of *sīla*, of restraint, practiced over many years. The result is that one doesn't need sex, and one doesn't need all the experiences that are on offer in the world. One is quite happy without these things.

It's such a release and a relief to know that one can be happy without all of these difficult and dangerous things that are so fraught with problems and suffering.

Someone told me some years ago that the root meaning of marriage comes from a Latin word meaning to take a gamble? I don't know if that is true, but marriage is truly a gamble. You never know really who you are marrying until maybe years after the ceremony. We can understand that sensuality is fraught with danger and by overcoming it and restraining ourselves we're freeing ourselves from that. We are actually disciplining thirst. If we don't drink the thirst disappears. A good example of this is sitting in meditation. When we first sit in meditation we try to get ourselves comfortable, but for people just beginning meditation it's difficult to get comfortable for very long. They have to sit this way or sit that way. They keep on fidgeting, always trying to find the most comfortable position. Usually they discover that if they keep following that thirst of the body for comfort, they will never find peace. Instead of all this moving whenever there's discomfort, they find if they say no to the demands of the body, discipline the demands of the body and just sit still, the aches and itches disappear by themselves. It seems that by not heeding them they fade away. Scratching just makes more itches.

This is what we mean by disciplining the thirst of the body. By not following the demands of the body they disappear. It's just like some person knocking on the door of your house. If you answer the door you may get into a long conversation, and now they know you are in, they will come again. If you don't answer the door they'll think there is no one there, and they will go away never to return. This is the way we discipline the body. When you sit there long enough and say no to all the itches and aches of the body, and simply don't move, the mind turns away from the feelings of the body. For the first time you can sit still and in comfort. It's a strange thing, but if we try and find comfort in the body by scratching, by moving, by putting another cushion underneath the bottom, we never find that comfort. Just leave the body alone. If we don't answer the calls of scratching and moving, the body just disappears and then there is peace. This is what we mean by disciplining the thirsts. By following and indulging them they just get worse. By saying no to them they disappear, and then we have comfort.

Use the triple practice of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* to destroy *ālaya*. My favourite translation of that Pāli word *ālaya* is roosting. Many people translate this word as attachment but that doesn't actually give the full meaning. The roost is a place where birds go at night time, up in the trees where they will be safe from predators. The Buddha said to destroy those roosts, those places where we sit and allow the defilements of the mind to grow and allow the world to grow around us. Destroy those attachments of the mind. The Buddha said that *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* will destroy these things. People often say they like to put down roots. But whenever they put down roots in the world those trees will always fall over whenever there is a storm, whenever there is a strong wind. The aim in Buddhism is not to have such roots but to be able to flow freely from one place to another – to be like a bird or a balloon in the sky, never tethered anywhere, with no weight, being able to float higher and higher, and having no roosting places. That is what we mean by freedom.

The person who is tied down lives in a prison. Many people make prisons of their lives; they make the bars of their prisons with the possessions they own. The prison guards are the relationships that confine and very often torture us. What the Buddha is saying is that we can let go of all of these prisons, all of these roosts, we can abandon them. We can free ourselves from confinement. People who meditate and who live monastic lives experience a great freedom, even though they sometimes stay in one place and don't move. People may say that's attachment. "Why are you fixed at being in this one place, in this one monastery?" And you say, "Because there is nothing to blow me away". That's real freedom, not external freedom but internal freedom, where there is nothing to blow you from one place to another. There are no defilements, there is no craving, and there are no roosting places. Birds go from one branch to another branch, always finding a different roosting place, but that's not what the Buddha meant by 'no roosts'. He meant having nowhere at all, and carrying on to destroy round of rebirth. So this practice of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, the factors of the Eightfold Path, not only destroys the roosts but also destroys rebirth.

Here in a deeper sense we can see the connection between the roosts and rebirth. Where the mind roosts there it grows, where the mind grows there it seeks rebirth. This is the powerful teaching of how the mind goes from one life to another according

to its predilections, its cravings, and its inclinations. *What you want, you will become.* This is a very powerful teaching because we can see that if we incline towards or any aspire for sensory pleasure, and we really work for it, eventually we will get there, if not in this life then in the next one. This is the problem for human beings. *We are actually creating the world.* We are creating our next lives by the roosts that we have. If we roost in pride, if we want to be someone, if we want to be respected, we will seek that in a future life as well. Our will creates these worlds for us and eventually, when we do gain that fame, we will realize just what an empty thing it is. All those people who have gained fame after working so hard for so long wonder why they took so much trouble. All those people who have experienced wealth after so much hard work wonder what it was all for. And even those people who experience relationships, the very highs of love and intimacy, afterwards, when it vanishes so quickly, they wonder why it was all just false promises. But we build up our hopes thinking that the next relationship will be okay.

When the Wind Dies Down

We are reborn to experience our hopes and our aspirations and eventually we create a world so we can experience those things. I remember Ajahn Jagaro's famous story from the Mullah Nasrudin. This little man was in front of a pot of chilli peppers with tears streaming down his face, his face was red from eating so much chilli. Someone came by and asked him, "Why are you eating all those hot chillies?", and he said "I'm looking for the sweet one". All the hot chillies, all the pain and suffering he was experiencing, one chilli after another chilli after another chilli, suffering and burning because he was looking for the sweet one. It's a very good metaphor for life. People get reborn because they are still looking for the sweet chilli. The way of *sīla samādhi* and *paññā* is letting go. Letting go through the practice of virtue and letting go further through the practice of *samādhi* we realize we don't need any more chillies. By letting go of the movement of the mind that seeks for more, there we find the sweetness. The sweetness is non-desire, non-craving, the sweetness of not moving outside ourselves, the sweetness of being still, peaceful, and free. Once you understand that sweetness you'll have cut off the very cause of rebirth – the craving, the hope, the desire – that's why this path actually ends rebirth. That thirst, that craving, the force behind rebirth, the 'house builder', has created our lives, one life

after another, hundreds, thousands of lifetimes, and that very force of movement, that craving, has been seen and cut off.

We know the cravings, but this practice ends all of those cravings that cause so many problems to the human mind. The monks who have just joined this monastery, who just ordained last Sunday, want to be peaceful. But during your monastic life many cravings will come up, many desires, many sensory aspirations, and all of those will torture you. What we aspire towards can only be achieved when we discipline and kill the cravings. Only through the practice of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* do the cravings come to an end. Only then can we be free of these things. Craving is the great tyrant of human beings, animals and all other beings. It's a tyrant because it leads us by the nose. We are imprisoned; we are fettered by craving in this world of ours, in this present stage of the world.

Actually it's absolutely crazy that we take the ability to follow our cravings, to experience what we want as freedom. We think that is going to give us peace, give us freedom, but the more that we give free reign to craving, the more imprisoned we feel. *The more we indulge, the more we need to indulge.* We become prisoners, fettered by craving, fettered by attachment. We're fixed to these things and we cannot be free. If we only go to expensive restaurants we can never enjoy eating at home again. We can never get a 'McDonalds' or anything else that is simple. We always have to get the finest food. We're stuck with these things. We've been sucked in. This is why there is no freedom to be found by following craving. *Craving is the tyrant.* Craving is the very cruel prison guard who always tortures us. It's only when that craving is overcome that there is a sense of freedom. Instead of having to buy this, instead of having to go there, instead of having to indulge, we've got complete freedom. People sometimes go to the shops and say, "I just had to buy that!" Or, even though they are already happily married, they meet and are attracted to someone else. They have to hurt their partner and children, as they indulge their desires with someone else. Or we see food that we really like and even though it's bad for our health we have to eat it.

Why is it that our cravings are so strong that they kill us and create so much suffering in the world? It is only when there is the destruction of craving that there can be true freedom, true peace. The path of meditation is experiencing this for yourself. We

never get a peaceful meditation when we follow craving. The Five Hindrances are all about craving. Disciplining those five hindrances, overcoming them, letting them go means there's no craving in the mind, the mind is still. Craving is what moves the mind, what agitates the mind; it's the wind which makes the mind move. When the craving disappears, when the wind dies down, when it's absolutely still, then you are still and in that stillness is peace. In that peace is contentment. In that contentment is happiness. So, this is what we always aim and aspire for, the overcoming of that craving rather than indulging it.

From the overcoming of craving comes *virāga*, dispassion or fading away. I like both of those translations because they are both the meaning of *virāga*. *Virāga* leads to the fading away of things rather than the accumulating of things. It's nice just to fade away, to disappear, and to go off into nothingness, into emptiness. People in the world want to 'be', they want to exist. But Buddhist monks want to disappear, to fade away, and to cease. Where there is dispassion, there is a lack of passionate concern for the sensory world. You fade away from that world. You fade away from the kitchen, from the office, and you fade away into your huts. People don't see you, they don't hear you, and the good monks are those monks who are invisible in the community, the ones who are already fading away so much you hardly ever see them. That's what fading away means and the fading away eventually leads to true cessation.

Nirodha is one of the most beautiful of Pāli words; it is where all of the defilements come to a complete end, where craving comes to an end, where suffering comes to an end. *Nibbāna* – the flame has gone out, the fire is quelled. So, this is actually what we are saying in the ordination chant, how this three-fold practise of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* leads to all these beautiful things. The Buddha mentioned this because he wanted the old monks, the young monks, and the visitors to know the purpose of this monastic life, and where it's leading. One of the reasons people find it difficult to meditate is not because they haven't trained enough, or haven't been on enough retreats, it is because their practice of virtue isn't strong enough. That doesn't just mean keeping rules; it means there is too much craving, too much attachment to the world. So despite their best wishes they cannot keep the precepts, because there's too

much fire in their minds. This is where we all need to discipline ourselves with *sīla*, virtuous conduct. It's a strange thing but as people join a place like this monastery, as they become *anagārikas*, novices and monks, they find that just keeping the practice of the precepts, keeping good *sīla*, actually leads to a peaceful mind and it makes it easier to meditate. If you're keeping the precepts the mind is easier to concentrate, and so it's easier to let go. When you let go of one thing it's easier to let go of others. If you have a very well developed practice of *sīla* then *samādhi* is a great fruit, and a great benefit. If you've got really good *sīla*, then *samādhi* has the fruit of *jhānas*, the benefit of deep peace and the beautiful happiness of bliss.

When wisdom is founded on *samādhi* then that too is a great fruit, a great benefit. Wisdom not based on *samādhi*, not based upon *jhānas*, not based on those peaceful states of mind is not of great fruit, is not of great benefit. There are many wise people in this world but it is not a wisdom based on *samādhi*. There are many people in the universities, many smart people in business, many slick lawyers, but their *paññā*, their wisdom, because it's not based on *samādhi* is not of really great fruit, of great benefit, and more importantly is not certain to lead to happiness. If it is wisdom, deep understanding, based on those stages of *samādhi*, the Buddha said it is of great fruit, of great benefit. It's the wisdom that sees the path to ending suffering. Not following defilements, not following craving but disciplining, quelling, overcoming craving, and letting go of the source, this is what wisdom sees. Wisdom sees that craving is the cause for rebirth. Wisdom sees that the happiness one aspires towards is not found out there but lives inside. By letting go, by being still, by being at peace, by being content, not arguing with the world but just letting the world disappear, that sort of wisdom is based on *samādhi*.

It is said that a mind which is endowed with such wisdom, a mind which is founded on wisdom, overcomes the *āsavas*, the out-flowings of the mind. Namely, that tendency to go seeking for sensory pleasures, that tendency to go seeking for more existence, *bhavāsava*, and that tendency to go out based on delusion, the *avijjāsava*. These three things are abandoned in a mind that is founded on the wisdom which is founded on *samādhi*, which is founded on *sīla*. This is the powerful teaching of the Buddha telling us the way to overcome the defilements, to overcome these out-

flowings, telling us what makes us move, what makes us suffer, what takes us out of the inner happiness which is right there if we can only be content.

In Conclusion

So the Buddha said that each one of you, especially new monks, should practice assiduously, diligently, in the *adhisīla*, higher morality, *adhicitta*, concentration of mind, and *adhipaññā*, higher wisdom, which the Buddha has expounded. The *adhisīla* for monks are the Pātimokkha Precepts of the Vinaya together with sense restraint. The precepts which you have undertaken should never be seen as burdens, but they should be seen as vehicles which take you to freedom. The *adhicitta* training is the training in *jhānas* nothing less. And the *adhipaññā* is the wisdom which leads to the Enlightenment stages of Stream Winner, Once Returner, Non Returner and *Arahant*. Train yourselves in these things.

In the ordination procedure the Buddha not only taught the young monks to be simple and to watch out to not transgress these major rules of the Pātimokkha, but he also taught in a very beautiful and brief little sermon what monastic life is all about and how it leads to these beautiful happiness' and is and peace and freedom through the practice of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. So make sure in your life as a monk, that you perfect the *sīla*, so that it is a solid, beautiful, sound foundation for *samādhi*, so that you can experience those blissful, beautiful, peaceful states of meditation. Make sure your wisdom is endowed with such experiences, so that the mind can overcome the defilements and be free, be an *Arahant*, be fully Enlightened in this world.

That should be your goal, your aspiration. Never forget that goal, that aspiration, and realize that goal, because that's the best thing that you can do for yourself, and for all other beings. Be an Enlightened being in this world that truly understands the Buddha, truly understands the Dhamma, and the power of an *Ariya* Saṅgha.

May you also join the *Ariya* Saṅgha later on in your life as a Buddhist monk.