

4 LOOKING FOR THE SWEET CHILLI

Seeking Happiness in the World

1st March 2000

When we stay in a monastery to practice meditation, there's a great development of mindfulness which is drawn inside instead of being directed only to the world outside. So the ideal of monastic life includes that part of meditation which we call introspection. We get in touch with ourself and how we feel. We look at what makes us 'tick'. In particular, one starts to get in contact with the happiness and suffering of life. Coming to a monastery, one is very often seeking meaning, seeking wisdom, seeking happiness. And indeed, those quests for meaning, for wisdom, for happiness, are quests that we can see all over the world, amongst all people. Even the animals and beings of other realms are seeking happiness and meaning, and they are all running away from suffering. If one can give life a description, it is just the pursuit of happiness and the running away from pain and suffering.

However, although it is the case that people, and all beings in *samsāra* pursue that happiness, they very rarely find it. They seek pleasure and happiness but they just encounter suffering. This is the truth of life which I have come up against again and again, both in my own life and in the lives of the people I have met, spoken with, and spent time with.

We see that the whole world is just seeking happiness, seeking pleasure, and very rarely finding it. Very often the pleasure that people seek is an empty pleasure, a false pleasure. We're like sheep following each another. When all the sheep commonly agree that this is pleasure, every one goes along with it. No one ever calls the bluff, no one investigates what they feel.

Last night coming back from giving a Dhamma talk in Armadale, we had to stop to fill up with petrol at the service station. Next to us was a group of young men and women, maybe eighteen, nineteen or twenty years old, just 'cruising' as the saying goes. With nothing much to do in the evening they were just acting silly, like a bunch of idiots. Even though to me what they were talking about and how they were cavorting looked crazy and stupid, to them it was supposed to be 'cool'. They thought

it was happy and pleasurable. I think it was commonly agreed that that was the thing to do and so no one ever questioned whether what they were doing was happiness or not.

I recall that in my life I have always asked questions. Questioning and probing leads to real happiness. Questioning and investigating what this life is all about, questioning what pleasure is. Is this real pleasure? What's life all about anyway? This was something that led me to a monastic life, led me to meditation, and led me to where I am now. I've sometimes given talks where I've summed up the Buddha's teaching of the Four Noble Truths into two truths: what is real happiness, and how do I get it. These are basically the two questions that propel human beings and animals through life. Finding out what happiness is and how we can secure it for ourselves.

Is This It?

The first thing I want to point out here is that you cannot always believe what other people say is happiness. I trod that path in my early years. People said that happiness was the rock bands and the drugs. They said happiness was sex and travel. I've been there and done that and to me it wasn't happiness at all. When we are doing all those things we are always just waiting for something to happen. Where is this happiness that people have promised? Is there something wrong with me? Am I not doing it right? There was some happiness, but just for a moment maybe. At the same time, there was a lot of tension from sex and relationships. Getting drunk was supposed to be so much fun and so great. And, talking about drugs, where was the real pleasure or meaning in that? But at least I had a mind that would question. I could look back afterwards and say: "This is stupid, this is meaningless. What am I doing this for? Where is it getting me? Am I really satisfying anything here? I'm just as lost afterwards as I was before".

Whenever I followed any of those pleasures in the world I found that there was always this craving, this hunger and thirst. There was a real fever beforehand and then emptiness afterwards. Is that it? So what! So, 'Is this it?' became a motto for my life in the lay world. Working all those years to get a degree and that's all it is. So what! What have I worked so hard all of these years for? Is this it? Getting into relationships – is that it? So what!

Listening to fine music. Is this it? So what! As soon as the music ended there was a hole and that hole was caused by craving, we just fill in something temporarily. It was like plastering over a crack in the wall, and as soon as the plaster dries the crack reappears. We aren't really solving the problem; we are just plastering it over temporarily. Certainly in my life, due to the search for pleasure, the search for meaning, the search for some sort of happiness, I started to really doubt and question the world out there. I questioned the lay life. At least I had some inspiration – I don't know where from – almost certainly from a past life, I suppose.

My inspiration was to try and look for that peace and happiness in the monastic life. When I saw Buddhist monks they seemed to be the most peaceful, the happiest and the most together people I'd ever seen. This shocked me a little, because the first thing I had read about Buddhism was the teaching of the Four Noble Truths, which is all about suffering. I couldn't understand why it was that these monks – I'm talking as a lay person, seeing my first monks – were talking about suffering and about giving up things, but they were the happiest people I had ever seen. Their smiles and their serenity was something that made me question my previous life style.

When those monks talked about suffering, they were always smiling and that really intrigued me. What was going on? Later on when I started to meditate, I had a powerful and deep experience of happiness, and that was even more intriguing. Why was it that in the search for happiness in the world, with its many different possibilities of happiness, the one which seemed to work the most, the one which seemed to be the most profound and long lasting, the one which seemed to be the most pure, was experienced in deep meditation during a retreat as a lay person?

That experience really made me consider what these Four Noble Truths were all about. Later when I became a monk I began to explain the Four Noble Truths in a slightly different way, still true to the original teachings but in a way that was a little bit easier for the lay community to understand. I started to talk about the Four Noble Truths as being the Noble Truth of happiness, the cause of happiness, the cessation of unhappiness and the way leading to happiness. I likened happiness with the end of suffering and the way leading to happiness with the Eightfold Path. It was true to the

original teachings, but it was just explained from a slightly different angle.

Certainly to me that made so much sense, because the years that I spent as a young monk, which are supposed to be years of hardship, were in fact years of great fulfilment, of great happiness and great peace. Even having to eat frogs in Thailand, I was a happy monk. I was peaceful and I enjoyed the life style. Now twenty five years on I can look back and understand why there was that enjoyment. That enjoyment was caused by letting go. It is the enjoyment that is caused by ending things. It is the happiness of peace. I found out, certainly for myself, that what we really know as true happiness, true contentment, has to be peacefulness; it is where things end. It is where movement is stilled and the problems are gone; this is true happiness. Knowing that, we find out that there is a path to true happiness. It's the path of stillness. It is the path of letting go. It is the path of giving up attachments, giving up craving.

Some people think that they can't give up attachments, and they can't give up craving. Basically it's not up to you, if you give it time, it has to happen. It's only a matter of giving causes and effects the time to work. It's no more possible than a flower deciding not to bloom, or deciding when it will bloom. The flower just blooms according to its season and that's all there is to it. In the same way a person starts to engage in the path of letting go, of going against craving and going against attachments. When we are on a happy path, it's always a sign that we're beginning to understand some Dhamma, some teachings, some truths. It's a sign that we are putting that understanding into practice because it's giving us greater happiness, greater peace, greater contentment.

Somewhere in this world, somewhere in this life, you're going to have to find some contentment. Otherwise you're going to be running around as if you are being chased by a swarm of bees that are stinging you. Never being able to escape the pressure of suffering in life, one has to find some place where there's contentment, where there's peace, where there's freedom from the struggle. Sometimes when we talk about freedom people don't understand what that word means. It's not freedom to follow defilements, craving and attachments. That's what people in the world call freedom, the freedom to cruise around, get drunk and to 'do drugs' or whatever. That sort of

freedom is not freedom at all because it is just giving in to coarse desires which never lead to anything fulfilling, useful or happy. People have seen that in the world and they've seen that in others. Surely they should be able to see that in themselves. Those things only lead to more suffering, more entanglement, and more problems.

Real freedom is the freedom to say no. The freedom to say no to the forces in the mind that stop one being peaceful, the forces in the mind that keep blowing you from place to place, from person to person. Instead of being blown around in this world there has to come a time, there has to be a place, there has to be a spot, where one stands still like a mountain. Although the wind blows, you don't move. The wind can blow and blow, but you don't move and eventually the wind gives up. That symbol of a mountain is the symbol of an *Arahant* who has let go of moving according to the cravings and the defilements. We have to decide to stand still, just to be here, and not move from the present moment.

Views and Ideas

People sometimes have the idea that happiness and pleasure is achieved by just following the idiocy of the world. What people in the world say is happiness, the Enlightened ones say is suffering. What the Enlightened ones say is happiness, the world says is suffering. What is it that people in the world say is happiness? If you read the magazines or the newspapers you can see that people say happiness is the new movie, the new relationship, going here, going there, and having children and so on. You haven't lived until you've been up the Amazon! – or whatever people may say is happiness in the world. I've explored many places and experienced many things in my life, and somehow they all seem so empty and meaningless. I can't imagine why people still run after those things, why they haven't seen the suffering and the pain of travel, of sex, and of relationships.

In Buddhism there is the simile of the horse. There was a wise horse, a smart horse, a heedless horse, a stupid horse and a very, very stupid horse, and there is also the trainer with a whip. The wise horse doesn't even need to see the whip: the trainer tells him to do something, and the horse does it straight away. The horse knows that is in its best interest. That's the path to happiness. Sometimes the trainer has to pick up the whip and let the shadow of it fall on the horse. The shadow of the whip falls

on the horse and the smart horse knows, “I’d better do the right thing or it’s going to hurt.” The next horse, being heedless, has to be tapped lightly. Just a little bit of suffering, just a tap, and it’s enough for the horse to know what’s in its interest, what the path to happiness is. The next horse is stupid and the trainer has to whack it once, ‘Ow!’ It hurts once, and when it hurts once, that’s enough; the horse knows which way to go. Of course the very, very stupid horse is the horse that has to be hit again and again, ‘Ow! Ow! Ow!’ It still keeps doing the same stupid things, ‘Ow! Ow! Ow!’ The foolish horse wonders what’s going on, but it’s amazing how many people, even in a monastery, fall into that last category.

Haven’t you suffered enough already? What are you doing this for? It’s easy to be happy, just stop doing anything, be peaceful and go against the stream. Sometimes it’s just habit that holds us back. The horse is so set in its ways, especially in its ways of thinking, that it’s hard to change. The horse thinks that next time the whip won’t hit him or he will be able to escape. Next time he will be able to out-smart the trainer, but of course, ‘Ow! Ow! Ow!’ It happens again!

The Mullah Nasrudin was eating a bunch of chillies, eating one after the other, until his face was red, his eyes were streaming, and his nose was running. That is what happens when you eat too many hot chillies. He was still munching those chillies when someone came up and asked him, “Why are you eating so many hot chillies?” Mullah Nasrudin said “I’m looking for the sweet one.” This is what people do in life, whether it’s a relationship, a place, or a job – even some monks looking for a monastery – they’re still looking for the sweet one. Of course, there is no sweet one. Chillies are chillies, they are all hot, and it’s a waste of time to keep eating, eating, looking for the sweet one in life.

This is something that you have to experience for yourself. If you’re smart you don’t need to be hit many times. But it’s more than just realizing suffering; it’s also realizing the opposite of suffering, which is recognizing happiness. If one just focuses on the suffering of life, that is not enough of an incentive for people to do what’s necessary to find liberation from suffering. We often get used to our suffering, we take it for granted and we think that’s all there is. We become accepting of the suffering in the world.

We have a story in Buddhism of the worm in a pile of dung. Being so attached to that pile of dung, the worm thinks it's in heaven. This is the trouble with people and suffering: they have some suffering and they get used to it. They then think that suffering is heaven.

Coming to a place like this – to the monastic life – we have an opportunity to see something else, something deeper, something more. We have the opportunity to see real happiness. Not some happiness which is promised when you die, not some happiness which is somehow in a distant future. “If you make good *kamma*, then you'll be happy. Just believe me and then you'll be okay.” The happiness that you can experience in monastic life is the happiness, which is *sandiṭṭhika*, available in this very life. It's right in this moment if you care to look at it. One of the things that I find in my meditation is that in any moment we can get to that peace. All we need to do is flick the right switch in our mind. It's a momentary attainment. All we need to do is find that 'letting go' switch. Once we know that switch, that movement of the mind, whether it's our meditation or when we're eating our meal, or whatever else we may be doing, it becomes so easy, so peaceful. That is because we've found the Third Noble Truth, the letting go of suffering.

Once we get to that point it's so easy to repeat it and just let go. It's the simplest thing to do once we know how to do it. It's like riding a bike, once we've learned to ride a bike it's the simplest thing in the world. We don't need to think about it. When we first get onto a bike we wobble all over the place. I think many of you can understand, or at least appreciate, what I am saying. The path to real happiness, the path to the ending of suffering is the ability just to open up, to let go and be free from craving. The whole monastery here is shouting out to us to let go and renounce. That's the meaning of this monastery.

Oh What Bliss!

Last night, I was talking to the lay people in Armadale about the conception of emptiness. Emptiness is another word for letting go. If we let go of things we are left with this beautiful, awesome emptiness. Because emptiness is something that is so profound, people often don't realize what it is, so they miss it. They can't see it.

People have got a blind spot to emptiness. That's why in the Cūlasuññata Sutta (MN 121) the Buddha explains the way to develop the perception to recognize what the mind is free from. Recognize that in the monastery this evening we are free from so many burdens. We're free from television, free from relationships. We're free from bills. We're free from having to go to work. We're free from all the bitterness that can so easily oppress us in life.

In one particular *Sutta* the Buddha encouraged the monks to bring up the perception of what we're free from, because that gives us a sense of happiness, the happiness born of freedom. "*Aho sukham! Aho sukham! Aho sukham!*" a monk said this as he sat under a tree. He was an ex-king, and the other monks thought he was remembering his life as a king, with all the sensory pleasures he then had. When they asked him afterwards if that was the case, he said, "No, no", I was saying "*Aho sukham!* Oh what bliss! Oh what bliss!" because now I am free from all of that, free from the concerns, the worries and the bitterness of being a king. "Oh what happiness, oh what bliss!" This is what I encourage you to do in your meditation; remember what you've left behind. "Oh what bliss, oh what bliss, to be free of the streets!" "Oh what bliss, oh what bliss, to be free of the work place!" "Oh what bliss, to be free from the pressures of relationships!" "Oh what bliss, oh what bliss, to be free from concerns about money, and acquiring possessions!"

In a monastery such as this you are free from so many things. Even if you're just here for a few hours or days you're free from many burdens, and the mind dwells upon the perception of what you've let go. This is dwelling on the Third Noble Truth. This is dwelling on cessation, ending and emptiness. This is dwelling on *Nibbāna* itself or, at least, it is leaning in that direction. When you cultivate the perception of the Third Noble Truth in this way, it points out to you what this happiness in monastic life really is. If we forget that perception of emptiness, we just don't see it and we think there is nothing there.

There is a big difference between nothing and emptiness. Nothing is something you can't see, emptiness is something you can really appreciate. Once we start to develop these sorts of perceptions we say: "Hey, this is real happiness! This is real peace!

This is real contentment! This is really fulfilling!” We are noticing the happiness of things ending, not the happiness of things beginning. We’re noticing the happiness of having nothing to do, rather than looking for something to do. We’re noticing the happiness of space rather than the happiness of things. As we begin to focus on the perceptions of emptiness, we’re finding out what real happiness is. The more we empty out, the more happiness we feel. We can empty our mind of thought and see how peaceful, wonderful and blissful it is if our mind is not obsessed or tyrannized by this one thing, which we call thinking.

The Inner Commentator

People sometimes play really heavy and oppressive music in their cars. If it’s not that sort of music, it’s some other music. In the shopping centres, in the airports or wherever else we go, we hear music. At our City Centre, I often just want to sit quietly, but people come to me and want advice on their problems. There is so much noise in the world! It’s so nice in the evenings, when everyone has left, to go back to my room and be quiet again, “Oh what bliss!” That noise outside, people asking questions, asking you to do things, making arrangements, that’s the same sort of noise as the noise we hear in our mind. It’s the ‘inner commentator’ telling us what to do, telling us to go this way, or that way. That inner commentator telling us we are not good enough, we’re this way, or we’re that way. When that noise stops it’s marvellous. We’re left with just the emptiness, the bliss of no speech, of no thinking; of no one telling us what to do.

I have always rebelled against people telling me what to do. That’s why I’m not a very authoritarian abbot. I don’t really go around telling everyone what to do, not all the time anyway. Because my mind is rebellious, I noticed that in my mind there was always someone telling me what to do. ‘Come on meditate.’ ‘Meditate longer.’ ‘Get up early.’ ‘Come on don’t sleep in so much.’ ‘Come on get your mind together.’ ‘Give better talks.’ ‘Don’t eat so much.’ ‘Be a better example to the younger monks.’ ‘Rah, rah, rah, rah.’ That was just like being told what to do again. Sometimes that would almost drive me crazy.

When we listen to that, it’s very easy to get depressed. That inner commentator can be the cause of depression. Because that inner commentator is always – at least for

me – so fault finding. We really have to watch out for that inner commentator, not just in monastic life, but also in lay life, in all life, because that's someone we just cannot trust. In monastic life at least we have another perspective. We have other people encouraging us to look at that inner commentator with a sense of separation and with mindfulness. Just listen to the rubbish the inner commentator keeps on telling you, again and again. It's only when we believe in that inner commentator that we get into trouble. That inner thought cannot be trusted. It's not the truth, it's not accurate.

I remember once, on a meditation path in a monastery in Thailand. I was watching my thoughts and getting some separation from them. As I watched the thoughts without getting too involved in them, they appeared to me to be so stupid, because I could trace how every thought that came up was conditioned. They were all conditioned; I was just repeating what I had been taught in the past. There wasn't even one original thought. The thoughts weren't really coming from me. I could see the same words coming from my own biological father, or from people who had impressed me. I was just repeating the words like a parrot. When we see that with mindfulness, the inner conversation is seen for what it is, just *the echoes of the past*. We believe in something that has no substance, something that isn't real and which has no truth to it. I just couldn't believe in it anymore and then a wonderful thing happened. When I didn't believe in the thinking, it just stopped and I had one of my most beautiful meditations.

Before that insight I had believed all of my thoughts. I'd argue with my friends but I'd never argue with myself. I'd never doubted any thought that came up into my mind; I'd always take it as absolute truth. If I didn't like something, if that's what the thought was, then I didn't like it and that for me was the truth. Afterwards, because I completely pulled the rug out from beneath my own thinking, I wouldn't easily believe what other people said. I'd be very questioning about what I read in books, I was always challenging it. On the meditation path when we are challenging thought itself, we realize how much of a bubble it is. I pricked the bubble, it went 'pop', and there was nothing left. That's what thinking is! It is thinking that blows you from place to place. It's thinking that creates all the trouble if you believe in it. Watch those thoughts, reflect upon them, and see them from a distance as an observer.

Watch this inner conversation going backwards and forwards with a sense of detachment. The more we watch it with detachment, with mindfulness, the more we will loosen our belief in the accuracy of our thoughts. But if we can't believe in what we think, what can we believe in? The answer is: we can believe in the silence, in that emptiness. That emptiness is far more truthful, far more real than the thinking.

Thinking is just a commentary. I sometimes criticize the commentaries of the Buddhist teachings. The Buddha's teachings are much more real than the commentaries. Commentaries are just people's ideas about what happened, in the same way as the commentary we have about our experiences. That inner conversation is not accurate, it's just a thought that comes up and goes away. It comes conditioned according to the moods of our mind. If we're upset we have rotten thoughts, if we are in a great mood we have nice thoughts. Which thoughts are real? Neither of them, they're all just coloured and bent by conditions. That's why now, when we see that, we don't believe in any of those thoughts. When I want to leave, I don't believe in it; when I want to stay, I don't believe in it. When I'm annoyed because a monk did something really unskilful – 'He shouldn't have done that, he should have known better' – I don't believe in that. When a monk has been really, really, great and done wonderful, marvellous things, I don't believe in that. Instead I believe in the silence.

The Fabric of Reality

If I have faith in anything, it's in silence. When I believe in that silence, it's an experience that is real. It's also an experience which gives much more happiness. It gives perspective to all these thoughts. It puts the thoughts in their proper place. It's not that the thoughts are not real; it's just that the thoughts are disturbers of the silence. Once you let the thoughts go the silence returns. The silence is more like the fabric of reality. That's why in a monastery, if you listen closely enough, you can hear that silence around you and you can hear the silence in your mind.

Once we can hear that silence of the mind and touch that emptiness, there is something about it that we know is real, even before we start thinking this is meaningful, this is peaceful, this is happiness. After a while we become a connoisseur of that peacefulness and we value it. We look upon it as a great jewel, a great gem

that is very valuable. This world doesn't value silence at all, it doesn't value emptiness. Wherever there is nothing people want to put something in. When there is quietness they want to speak. When there is a space they want to fill it up. That's craving; that's foolishness; that's a lack of confidence; it's fear. We think because of fear. We move because of fear. We crave because of fear. It takes courage just to let go.

Because you've come to a monastery, there is something inside each of you, which has sensed that in silence, in letting go, there is peace. Each of you has already lived enough years to have been disappointed many, many times in the search for happiness. But once you start to turn to silence and to emptiness, you will remember it and value it. That silence, that emptiness, begins to be noticed in so many places. You notice the emptiness in your room; that's why the best monks are the monks with the fewest possessions. You notice it in the emptiness of your daily schedule with fewer duties. You notice it in the emptiness of your mind.

In other words, fewer thoughts are needed. We notice that in the emptiness of our movements. We tend to stay still more, rather than always coming and going. We're letting go, we're simplifying. The more things we have, the more things we do. The more places we go, the more complicated we make our life style. Those of you who are travelling will know how complicated it is to travel, the family arrangements and how it involves so many other people. Sometimes we think what are we travelling for? Wherever I go, there I am. What is the point! I sometimes look at that, and it's not for someone else's benefit, I can't see the point in travelling for myself. I might as well just stay here, because whatever is over there is also over here. That emptiness, that silence, that space, you can see it anywhere. Especially the silence, the space between our ears, it's the emptiness of the mind.

It is strange that when some people become quiet in their meditation, even just for a moment, they feel so challenged by that silence that they disturb it. I think many people actually leave a monastery, because they can't stand the silence. They're afraid of it. They want to fill it up with activity or with movement. There's a lot of truth to that in a very deep sense. We can see that sometimes in meditation, when things start to get still, 'Wow!' that's a bit much. But after a while, a person in

monastic life does respect the silence, does value the silence, and when anyone respects and values these things, they meet them more and more.

I know that some monks would like to see *devas*. If you believe in *devas*, perhaps they might come and see you. It's much more important to be able to believe in the silence, so that the silence can come and meet you. That silence is the ending of things, the quietness of the mind. When there is silence in the mind, there's no thinking. When there is no thinking how can there be craving? How can there be the wanting to come this way, or go that way? How can there be wanting anything? How can there be dissatisfaction or elation in the ending of thought?

Of course this is a temporary ending to the movements in the mind. But by actually emptying your mind of things you find that allows greater spaciousness, greater freedom. In the same way, when you empty your hut of things, there's more freedom in that hut to move around. When you empty your mind of things there is more freedom to move around and there's more peace, more happiness. So the aim of the meditation should be to abandon things. The aim is getting rid of things, not accumulating more. The aim of meditation should be stillness, not to keep on moving. There has to come a time when you stand your ground and let go, wherever that place is.

The only thing I remember from Zen Buddhism is a question that a monk asked his pupil. The pupil had just returned to the main monastery after spending a long time on solitary retreat. The monk punched him – that's what Zen monks used to do – and asked the pupil, "When is there going to be an end to all this coming and going?" I always remember that statement, because I used to ask myself, 'When is there going to be an end to all this coming and going', and of course the answer is now.

Now has to be the ending of coming and going. Just let go of all that movement of the mind. It's only when we see the feeling of peacefulness, the feeling of emptiness, as a powerful, sublime, deep happiness that we start to appreciate what makes monastic life tick. Monastic life is all about the happiness of that silence and the happiness of peace. The more we touch it, the more we appreciate it, the more we understand it. We also understand that this is the way to the highest happiness.

Contentment is the highest happiness.

All craving is reaching out trying to achieve happiness. “If I can just get this one more thing, then I’ll be happy. If I can just get that car, then I’ll be happy. If I can just get that beautiful girl, then I’ll be happy. If I can just get my sickness healed, then I’ll be happy. If I can just get my meditation correct, then I’ll be happy.” It’s always craving and it’s always happiness in the future. It’s the same thing that motivates some people to just keep going to church or to the temple, to ensure they’ll go to heaven. It’s just another form of craving that’s all.

These cravings can never lead to the end of suffering. Craving leads to more suffering. We can see that very easily. Craving – wanting something more, something in the future – can only lead to more suffering and more unhappiness. We think that all we need is to satisfy just one more craving, “I’ll just get this one more thing, and then I’ll let go” – but of course it never works that way. There is always one more thing afterwards: another one more thing and one more thing, until you die, and after death, one more thing. There has to be a stopping, a letting go now, a time to say ‘no more craving’. What I’ve got now is enough, my mind is good enough and my body is good enough. It doesn’t matter how old and sick it is, my body is good enough.

One of Ajahn Chah’s meditations was the ‘good enough’ meditation. This food is good enough; this monastery is good enough; this talk is good enough. Once you have that good enough perception, craving stops. If this is good enough what do I want to change it for? What do I want to move for? Why do I want to get anything else? ‘Good enough’ is a cause for contentment. You can try that in your meditation to see if it works. It’s amazing, if we do that, really do it, one hundred percent, not ninety nine percent but one hundred percent good enough, we find that the mind calms down, becomes still, becomes concentrated and peaceful. *Pīṭisukha* comes up, the *nimmittas* come up, and *jhānas* occur. This happens simply because you stop that which causes movement in the mind. Not just craving, but the cause of craving; the delusion that there is something more out there in the future, in the next moment.

The thought that ‘this is not enough’ is a delusion. It’s craving. We know it’s

delusion because it has kept us going for so many lifetimes. It's kept us going for the last twenty-four hours. We're always doing something or else we want something more, we're never standing still. If we realize that this is good enough and we trust in that one hundred percent, we discover that this really is good enough, and we have as much as we'll ever need. We stop wanting more. We stop craving. When we stop craving, we stop thinking and we stop moving. When we stop moving, we're in the present moment, we're silent. The longer we keep that stillness the more chance contentment has to build up. We realize that all the jewels and wealth in the world are right here. All the bliss and happiness we could ever want are right in this moment, and we may even start crying with happiness. We realize we had it all along, but we always throw away the jewel of *Nibbāna* for something else.

We always want something else. But if we just stop, be empty and be still, we will find out that contentment is happiness. The more contentment we have the more happiness we build up. Happiness upon happiness upon happiness! If you do it this way, I'll guarantee that there is so much happiness you won't know how you will be able to take anymore. You get more bliss, more sheer pleasure out of meditation than you do from anything else. That's my experience anyway. We get that, just by stopping, by letting go.

We're not only experiencing pleasure for pleasure's sake. Even as monks we are permitted this pleasure, it's allowable, it's not dangerous. That needs to be said because sometimes people are afraid of that pleasure. They think there must be something wrong with the bliss of *jhāna*. It's really strange how some people are afraid of the beautiful pleasures, the good pleasures. But they are not afraid of the crazy pleasures, the pleasures of sex, the pleasures of food, the pleasures of conversation and the pleasures of craving. People are not afraid of those pleasures, but they are afraid of the really wholesome pleasures. What foolishness!

The pleasures of deep meditation, stillness, letting go, giving up, renouncing; stopping, these are all words referring to the same thing: emptying – going to that emptiness, just fathering that emptiness, and seeing it grow like a beautiful lotus flower. The most beautiful lotus flower we have ever seen in the mind's eye is just opening and opening. We're going to see why. We are going to have the insight and

the wisdom of the Four Noble Truths. We will know what suffering is, what *dukkha* is, not as an intellectual theory, but as an experience. We've been there; we've felt it and we've been burnt up with craving. We've reached out and blown the bliss, and we know that is suffering. We know the suffering of being lost in the illusion of the world, of always having to go backwards and forwards, seeking this and seeking that, trying to build our happiness on other people, on other things, and seeing that all those other things and people are completely unreliable. We cannot depend upon them, they let us down. Our false scaffolding of happiness crashes and we crash and injure ourselves with it.

We've been there and done that so many times. *There is happiness in the world and that happiness is inside of us.* We don't have to go anywhere else to find it. We have to go inside ourselves. We won't find happiness by stepping out into the world or by stepping out to Thailand, or Sri Lanka, or wherever else we want to go. We will only find happiness and liberation inside this body and mind. Wherever we happen to be on this planet that is the only place we can find happiness. We carry it around with us, so what is the need to go elsewhere, except inward? Stop and see that suffering, and know that suffering. How many more years do we have to follow suffering and be a victim of suffering? Instead distrust suffering, distrust craving, distrust thinking; just stop for a few moments and look.

Look into this present moment. Look at what happens when we don't follow craving, when we really let go. Look at what happens when we follow instead the Third Noble Truth: *paṭinissagga*, abandoning, *cāga*, giving up, *mutti*, freeing. Free from attachment, *anālaya*, not providing a roosting place for this craving, being completely empty of any possibility of a perch for craving to hold on to. No thought, no wanting; completely content in this moment. If craving comes in, know it, and just stay still. If any thought comes in, be like people who are quiet in a theatre or in a concert hall, just maintain that peace. We can create that peace within our mind, it's not just an experience of pleasure it's the manifestation of the Dhamma. It is the Four Noble Truths in action. We haven't followed craving, we've let go, we've given up, and 'Wow!'

This is the opposite of suffering. This is freedom, *vimutti*. This is happiness; the best happiness we've ever had. This happiness is what keeps me going as a monk, the serenity, the peace, the letting go. That freedom is what is behind the smile and the peace of all the great mystics, and the great *Arahants* in the world. It's the serenity, the peace, and the understanding of what happiness is. That's the Dhamma being taught to you. It is insight, *vipassanā*, seeing the Buddha's teaching. It's seeing the teaching that the Buddha saw under the Bodhi tree. That, which is the truth of happiness and suffering, you're discovering it for yourself in your letting go. If you repeat that experience as much as you can, you'll be undermining the illusion which keeps you running backwards and forwards, both in this world and between worlds.

We're finally finding out what real happiness is and we're ending suffering. This is something that we can experience for ourselves, that we can appreciate for ourselves. I don't care whether we are going anywhere tomorrow or tonight! We can experience this 'letting go'. Look at the mind! Detach from the mind! See what you're doing and stop 'messing around'. How much longer do you want to be blown around in this way? Isn't it time now for you to be free, to know real peace, real happiness?

Isn't it time to be able to see *Nibbāna* for yourself?