

The Teaching of No Person: Only Dhātus

by Ajahn Buddhādāsa

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In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhādāsa gave regular talks during the monthly international retreats held at Suan Mokkh and then Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage. Usually, Ajahn spoke in Thai and Santikaro Bhikkhu interpreted into English live. Audio recordings are now available from www.suanmokkh.org and www.bia.or.th. The following is a transcription generously made by a Dhamma volunteer. If you noticed possible improvements to the text and would like to contribute, please kindly contact the Buddhādāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok (suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com).

Allow us to continue from yesterday's lecture and explanations.

Yesterday we spoke of the Dharmic life*,¹ the life which is not composed or not based in *attā* (self) and we also spoke of the non-Dharmic life*, the life which is made up, composed of self (*attā*).

Today to investigate this further, we would like to talk about the *dhātus* (natural elements). This is the teaching of ‘no man,’* the teaching of ‘no person.’

If we speak on an even deeper level we could say it's the teaching of no sentient being*. This is the teaching that there is no *satta* (no sentient being, no person, no individual) and that there are merely natural elements.

If you think that this is something strange, and that it is not very interesting, then you won't pay much attention, you won't listen very well and you won't be able to understand.

To see that there is nothing but these *dhātus* (natural elements) is to see that there is no *attā*, no self or no *atman*, but rather there are merely these natural elements which are *anattā* (not-self).

To investigate this subject we need to take some time to consider the word *dhātu* (element).

The word *dhātu* or in Thai *that* has the same root or the same stem as the

¹ * words spoken in English by Ajahn Buddhādāsa

word *dharmā*, and this root means to ‘uphold’ or to ‘cherish,’ to maintain, to cherish.

The difference between these two words *dhātu* and *dharmā* is not so great, but the basic difference is that *dhātu* is something that upholds itself, whereas *dhammā* not only upholds itself, but it upholds anyone who practices it.

The word *dhātu* has a rather scientific character whereas the word *dhammā* has a more moral bent to it. The word *dhammā* lends itself to speaking about moral issues whereas *dhātu* is more easily used for speaking scientifically.

Therefore when we consider the word *dhātu*, we need to study it in a more scientific way, unlike *dhammā* which we study in a moral way.

When we study these things according to philology – the study of the origin of words – then we see that both *dhātu* and *dhammā* have the same root, and their literal meaning is ‘something that upholds itself’ or sustains itself. In speaking of *dhātus* in a more natural way, we mean the last things you come to when you've analyzed or separated things into their smallest parts or aspects. So a *dhātu* is what you've got when you've analyzed something as far as possible.

Even though some *dhātus* can be analyzed into other *dhātus* which make them up, many can be analyzed into their constituent *dhātus* and what we end up with are merely *dhātus*.

Now if we investigate we will discover that there are two categories of *dhātus*. The first is the *saṅkhata* [Thai] or *saṅkhata-dhātu* and the second is the *asaṅkhata-dhātu*.

Literally the word *saṅkhata-dhātu* means ‘something that is concocted or conditioned by causes and conditions,’ or ‘something that has causes and conditions concocting and creating it.’ Anything that has this characteristic of being concocted by and dependent upon causes and conditions is called ‘*saṅkhata-dhātu*.’

Thus the *saṅkhata-dhātu* has the characteristic of constant change. They arise, establish themselves and fade away; they arise, establish themselves and disappear. This constant arising, establishing, and disappearing or ceasing shows the nature of constant change of the *saṅkhata-dhātus*.

The *asaṅkhata-dhātu* is the opposite. There are no causes or conditions concocting it. It doesn't depend on any causes or conditions, therefore it doesn't change and is stable or immutable. This is the *asaṅkhata-dhātu*.

We can understand the *asaṅkhata-dhātu* by its being the opposite of that which changes, that which arises and passes away. The *asaṅkhata-dhātu* is something very profound, very hard to understand. We can understand it

through understanding that which changes, which depends upon causes and conditions, namely the saṅkhata-dhātu.

To understand these two words we can borrow some words from psychology. There is the term ‘phenomena’ which refers to the objects of experience which arise and cease. Anything that arises due to causes and conditions and then ceases, things which have the nature of change and impermanence are called ‘phenomena.’ Then there is that which is the total opposite of phenomena, that which doesn't arise or cease, which doesn't depend on anything and this is called ‘numen.’ The word ‘phenomena’ is plural. Phenomena are endless, countless, and infinite. ‘Numen’ is singular. These two terms will help us quite a bit to understand the meanings of saṅkhata-dhātu and asaṅkhata-dhātu.

Another way of looking at the two terms that will help you to understand them is to understand that the saṅkhata-dhātu has the characteristic or nature of being *saṅkhāra*. *Saṅkhāra* means ‘making together’ or ‘fabricating,’ putting things together to make something new. This is saṅkhāra, which we translate as ‘concocting.’ So the saṅkhata-dhātu has the nature of concocting, of constant change and concoctions. As for the asaṅkhata-dhātu, it has the nature of *visaṅkhāra*. *Visaṅkhāra* is the opposite of *saṅkhāra*. It means ‘non-concocting,’ ‘no concocting’ – there is nothing being fabricated, produced, or anything like that. So the asaṅkhata-dhātu is *visaṅkhāra* (unconcocted, non-concocting).

There are two words that will help us to understand the asaṅkhata-dhātu. These words will be very difficult to understand so please listen carefully, and if you pay proper attention you should be able to understand them.

The first term is *nibbāna-dhātu*. This dhātu is the *dhātu* (natural element) which quenches all saṅkhāras. All the changing, impermanent things are quenched in nibbāna-dhātu. It's the element which quenches all other elements.

The second term is *suññatā-dhātu*. In this element there is no concoction, nothing is concocted by it and so it is void and free. This is the dhātu of voidness, freedom from all concocting and concoction; nothing is concocted by it. Therefore it is void and free.

A third term is *sacca-dhātu* (the dhātu of truth). When we speak of the ‘dhātu of truth’ we mean the law that is unchanging, which is fixed. If it still changes, if it's not fixed, then it's not really true and it really can't be called a law – which is truly unchanging and eternal. So another name of what we are speaking of is the *sacca-dhātu* (the natural element of truth) – which is free and independent within itself, depending on nothing else and therefore never-changing.

Each of these two kinds of dhātus has its own essence. The essence of

saṅkhata-dhātu is that of change and flux – their nature is one of change. The essence of asaṅkhata-dhātu is the opposite, it never changes, is unchanging and immutable.

Another way of comparing the two is in terms of quantity. When speaking of quantity, the saṅkhata-dhātus are countless and infinite. There are so many we could never count them. The asaṅkhata-dhātu is singular, unique, there's only one – just as when we spoke of phenomena which are innumerable and the numen which is singular.

When an ordinary person speaks they say that there are some things which are *dhātus* (elements) and there are other things which are not-*dhātus* (not-elements). In ordinary scientific language there are things which are considered elements and things which are not considered elements, but in Dhamma language, in the language of supreme meaning, of the highest, most profound meaning, then we say that there is nothing which is not-dhātu, there isn't anything which isn't a dhātu in some form. In the Dhamma language all things, without even one exception, are dhātus.

In modern science they speak of elements, but when they speak of the mind, they don't consider it to be an element or dhātu. However in Dhamma or in Buddhism even the mind is a dhātu, made up of dhātus. In Buddhism all things are considered to be dhātus – the physical, the mental, and even the spiritual are nothing but dhātus. Even what is called 'spirituality' is just another dhātu.

In Dhamma language there are some dhātus which are on their own or unmixed with others. There are other dhātus, which are mixed together with other dhātus. In ordinary science they speak only of elements, breaking things down to their smallest bits and pieces to the sub-atomic level, and once the different elements are put together they no longer call it a 'dhātu,' they call it a 'molecule' or on another level an 'alloy.' However in Dhamma language, whether it's a dhātu by itself or many dhātus mixed together, it's still considered to be a dhātu.

Take for example, water. In the language of Buddhism – the water is made up of hydrogen* and oxygen – the hydrogen is a dhātu, the oxygen is a dhātu, and when the hydrogen and oxygen are combined into water, that is a dhātu – the water element. So no matter how many dhātus we put together, all we get is another dhātu. This is how we speak in Buddhism, so one needs to be careful not to get confused by the terminology. The more narrow meaning of the modern use of the word 'element' should not confuse this more all-encompassing meaning of the word 'dhātu.'

Now let's look in more detail at the *saṅkhata-dhātu*, because this is the dhātu that is totally involved in our lives, this is what our life is made up of, so

we should examine this dhātu more thoroughly.

When speaking of the saṅkhata-dhātus, if we look at this life here, there is the body which we call *rūpa* or *rūpa-dhātu* (the form); then there is the thing called *citta* (mind); then there are the things which condition the mind, which make the mind happen, and then the things which are connected or associated with the mind – these are called *cetasikas*. So there is the body or form (*rūpa*), and then there is the mind (*citta*), then there are the qualities or characteristics, the qualities of the mind, the things associated with the mind (*cetasikas*).

So we can say that there is this body or form which is a dhātu – *rūpa-dhātu* (the form element). The mind then, is just another dhātu, the dhātu which experiences, feels, and thinks. This we can call the *citta-dhātu* (the mind element). Then there are the things which the mind thinks, feels, experiences – all these things connected with and associated with the mind are called the *cetasika-dhātu*. So in this life there are these three dhātus – the form dhātu, the mind dhātu, and the mental factors dhātu. This way of speaking has not been done before, we haven't come across others saying this, but to say that life is made up of these three dhātus is totally in line with nature and so we are free to say it. It is completely true that life is made of these three dhātus.

There is one more very special dhātu called the *asaṅkhata-dhātu* or the *nibbāna-dhātu*. This is the dhātu which is the quenching point when all other dhātus cease. All the saṅkhata-dhātus just mentioned are quenched in the nibbāna-dhātu. This kind of dhātu is much different than the ordinary dhātus because it's here where all other elements are quenched or extinguished.

When one dhātu gives way to another dhātu, there's one dhātu and then there's another dhātu, for this to happen depends on the element of cessation, for there's one dhātu which must cease for the next dhātu to appear. This dhātu which is the cessation of the ordinary dhātus is called *nirodha-dhātu* (the element of cessation). This isn't the same as the nibbāna-dhātu where the saṅkhata-dhātus are quenched thoroughly, but rather this is a temporary quenching or cessation, and so we call it *nirodha-dhātu*. So all the saṅkhata-dhātus – mental, physical, and what have you – are quenched or ceased in this *nirodha-dhātu*. It's only because of this cessation element, that there is any possibility for change or evolution. If there wasn't this cessation element nothing could change, but this dhātu must cease for another dhātu to arise. The transformation from this dhātu into that dhātu only happens because of the *nirodha-dhātu* (the element of cessation). So all the saṅkhata-dhātus, or all changes, all worldly life depends on not only the saṅkhata-dhātus but this *asaṅkhata-dhātu* (the element of cessation).

Some might be thinking that there are too many of these dhātus now, and it's not worth trying to remember them all, but please don't think like that. We beg

of you not to dismiss this matter of the dhātus, because in our lives there is just the flow of dhātus, one after the other, nothing but dhātus arising and ceasing, arising and ceasing, one after the other so fast that most of us aren't even able to keep track. Whether we speak of the *rūpa-dhātus* (the form elements), or the *citta-dhātus* (the mind elements), or the *cetasika-dhātus* (the mental constituents elements), these arise and cease, arise and cease very rapidly in our life. Since this is what our life is made up of, the arising and cessation of all these different elements or dhātus, one sees that it deserves our fullest attention. It's not something to be dismissed just because we have to remember some new words and pay attention to something that's difficult to understand. So please give the facts of these dhātus which make up our lives your careful attention.

Now let's talk about mental things, the things in your own mind. When your mind is satisfied with sensuality or with sex, when there is this satisfaction with sexuality, that is known as *gama-that* [Thai] or *kāma-dhātu*. It's not *karma-* but rather *kāma-dhātu*. When this *kāma-dhātu* (element of sexuality) dominates your mind, the mind is taken over and is under the power of this element of sexuality. Even sex and sexuality is just another dhātu – *kāma-dhātu*.

There are times when you are bored with sex, when you are tired and weary of sexuality, then you pull yourself out of the world of sexuality and put your attention and interest towards something non-sensual, like taking a quiet walk on the beach or enjoying the beauty of a tree. Here the mind is then concerned with something material but it is no longer sensual or sexual. This is called *rūpa-dhātu* (the material or form element). In moments like this when you are enjoying a sunrise or sunset, the mind is still concerned about the material world, but is not being sensual about it, and so we say the mind is made up by the form elements and is dominated by them.

Sometimes even the *rūpa-dhātu* is too much for us, we've had enough of it, it's too much trouble, and it's too busy. Those are the moments when we don't want to have anything to do with anything, we don't want to mess around with anything. In this example the mind can leave alone the *kāma-* and *rūpa-dhātus* and have nothing, no thoughts, nothing in the mind. This also is a dhātu. Now this is very hard to do. Sometimes it can be done using deep concentration when the mind can absorb totally in nothingness, when the mind is full of nothing, experiencing nothingness, this is still just a dhātu. It's called the *arūpa-dhātu* (the immaterial or formless element). So even that which has no form, which has nothing tangible or material about it, is an element. This is very hard to experience, but there are times when the mind doesn't want to have anything to do with the sensual and material worlds, and when it leaves those dhātus alone, and there is just the dhātu of nothingness, this is when the mind is dominated or taken over by the *arūpadhātu* (the formless element). Now don't mistake this formless element for the *nibbāna-dhātu* or *asaṅkhata-dhātu*. Even though there's

nothing disturbing or troubling the mind it's not the nibbāna dhātu.

In ordinary life most of our time is spent with our minds dominated by the *kāma-dhātu*, that is dominated by sex and sensuality. Our mind is taken over by this very low level of existence. However, there are times when one becomes tired of that because it's so troublesome. When one gets weary of the *kāma-dhātu* then one can get free of it and the mind can rest in the *rūpa-dhātu*. For example you might garden, collect stamps, go mountain climbing, or do some kind of artistic expression or crafts, where the mind is still dealing with material things but in a non-sensual way, and would be then under the power of the *rūpa-dhātu*. To get free of the element of sensuality you have to go against the mind's tendency. It takes effort in order to associate with the form element, but there are times when it can be done. Then there are times when one sees that even the form element is troublesome, it sees the difficulty and hassles of not only sensuality but also forms, and so the mind can leave them both alone and rest in the *arūpa-dhātu* (the formless element). This is even a higher level of consciousness, it's much more subtle and refined. So these are the three levels the mind can live on: the ordinary and crude level of sex and sensuality (the level of *kāma-dhātu*), the more refined and peaceful level of *rūpa-dhātu*, and the level that is even more refined and peaceful *arūpa-dhātu*. These are the three levels in which our minds dwell.

However, most of the time is spent in the *kāma-dhātu*. Our minds indulge in, are obsessed, and totally lost in the *kāma-dhātu*. Just consider how much this happens and all the troubles and difficulties it causes. The vast majority of the hassles, troubles, and problems of our ordinary lives are because of the *kāma-dhātu*. A few examples are, people get married, they become wife and husband because of the *kāma-dhātu* – we don't have to explain all the difficulties and tribulations of marriage to you – people get divorced because of their ways of dealing with the *kāma-dhātu* – and we're not even talking of the problems of people merely living together without getting married. So all kinds of problems happen to people, the vast majority, because of the *kāma-dhātu*. But sometimes some people have had enough of that, are tired of the struggles and hassles and then one, maybe the wife, will go off to be a nun and the husband a monk in order to leave behind the world of *kāma-dhātu*. Then if they do it properly, they live much more on the level of *rūpa-dhātu* where sensuality and sex are left alone and the mind is on a finer material level, the *rūpa-dhātu*. Now those who are really good at it and are skillful, can leave behind even the *rūpa-dhātu* and live with the *arūpa-dhātu*. For example, those whose mind is always on God, the person who thinks of nothing but God, they are in the *arūpa-dhātu*. To repeat, there are these three elements in our lives; the very troublesome one of *kāma-dhātu*, the less troublesome of *rūpa-dhātu*, and the very refined element of *arūpa-dhātu*.

We'd like to advise you to try out a new sport, to play this sport the way people are playing all the different sports in the world. Let the mind dwell in the *kāma-dhātu*, be under the power of the *kāma-dhātu* and see what that is like, how it dominates the mind, and all the rest. Now on the next level leave the *kāma-dhātu* and raise up the mind a bit so that it's no longer feeling any sensual, sexual connections with things, so that it's in the *rūpa-dhātu*. Try out that level for a while, play with that level of existence. Now move to the next level where the mind has no sexual feelings and no material feelings, where there's just pure mind and consciousness, and experience that for a while. This latter one is very difficult, but we encourage you to give it a try. Try out this new sport of investigating and experiencing *kāma*, *rūpa*, and *arūpa-dhātus*.

Please don't misunderstand these principles and make even more trouble for yourselves. Don't think that to escape from the hassles and troubles of *kāma-dhātu*, one should go out to the movies, go drinking, or go dancing, and so on. This not what we are suggesting. We are not saying that one should escape from the difficulties of *kāma-dhātu* by getting even into more troublesome and more harmful things. Instead of lowering the mind into even cruder levels of *kāma-dhātu* or dealing with material things which are even more troublesome, one organizes life in an orderly way, so that things fit together and go smoothly without being complicated or troublesome. So don't try to escape the problems of the element of sexuality by doing even cruder things, but learn to raise the mind up to a more refined, more peaceful level of *rūpa-dhātu*. If you can do it try to raise the mind up to the even higher level of *arūpa-dhātu*. If you can do this in an orderly, balanced, and peaceful way, it will be very useful for your life.

Sometimes when one is tired and worn out with *kāma-dhātu* one may deal with it by going to sleep. Sleeping is not being in *kāma* or *rūpa-dhātu*, but rather it is being in a rather crude, low level of the *arūpa-dhātu* – the formless element. So when one sleeps and finds peace and happiness in doing so he/she is in the *arūpa-dhātu*. We're just bringing up this point to illustrate that one has to put the different elements in their place. One has to arrange the elements in one's life, so that they are in proper proportion and balance. If we can do that then our life goes quite smoothly and there are no unnecessary hassles and troubles. If the *kāma*, *rūpa*, and *arūpa-dhātus* are not properly balanced or are in a mess and are not organized in an orderly fashion, then we will not have really discovered the potential in life.

Further you should know that even happiness is a *dhātu*. The thing we call *sukha* (happiness or joy) is just another *dhātu*. *Dukkha* (pain) is just another *dhātu*. The feeling that's neither pleasant nor painful which we call *adukkhamasukkha* (the unclassifiable), this too is a *dhātu*. So happiness, pain, and the feelings where we are uncertain if there is pleasantness or painfulness,

all three of these are just dhātus. The *sukha-dhātu* (happiness element) disturbs the mind in one way, the *dukkha-dhātu* (pain element) disturbs the mind in another and creates dukkha in the mind, and the element which is neither pleasant nor painful disturbs the mind because one is uncertain what's going on. So although this may seem like there are even more things to remember you should know that these three – happiness, pain, and that uncertain feeling – are dhātus.

Modern science, the kind you study in schools and universities probably won't accept that happiness and pain are elements, but in Buddhist science or the science of awakening, happiness and pain, like everything else are merely *dhātus* (natural elements). So if we wish to have a real understanding of life we must go beyond the limits of modern material science, and take an interest in Buddhist science which studies all the dhātus, not just the material elements.

To speak even further there is good and evil, or what in the Pāli language are called *kusala*, which is 'goodness,' 'skillfulness,' or 'wholesomeness,' and *akusala* which is 'evilness,' 'unskillfulness,' or 'unwholesomeness;' and there is *abyākata* which means unclassifiable – that which can't be classified as good or evil, wholesome or unwholesome. Don't be surprised to hear that even these three are elements – the *kusala-dhātu*, the *akusala-dhātu*, and the *abyākata-dhātu*. These are all dhātus. When anything arises and performs its function, then it is considered to be a dhātu. Anything that functions in a way proper to itself, in its own way is a dhātu, including the elements of goodness, unwholesomeness, and the unclassifiable.

The word 'good' can be rather ambiguous, but it comes closest to the Pāli word *kusala*. *Kusala* literally means to 'cut off the enemies.' By 'enemies' we mean 'all undesirable harmful things,' all the low destructive, undesirable things. For example, bad tempers and the bad moods we get into in ordinary life, all kinds of low, evil thoughts. When these undesirable, destructive thoughts, feelings, and moods are cut off, that's the meaning of 'kusala' or 'good.' *Akusala* means that we are not able to cut off these things, that we can't get rid of these bad moods, bad thoughts, bad tempers, and so on. Then *abyākata* is one where we can't classify it as cutting them off or not cutting them off. Even these are dhātus. To clarify this more, when we can cut off, get rid of all the lowly, undesirable, destructive things so the mind doesn't exist on a low harmful level, that's the meaning of *kusala*. *Akusala* is when the mind is still caught up in low, unseemly, undesirable, harmful things. *Abyākata* is when it's all vague and uncertain, where one can't establish it as either kusala or akusala. So whether we call it 'good, bad, and neutral' or *kusala*, *akusala*, and *abyākata*, these three things are merely elements, merely natural dhātus.

Now we'll come to some very silly dhātus – the masculinity dhātu and the

femininity dhātu, the element of being male and the element of being female. In order that you don't misunderstand these, please listen carefully.

When you are born with either a male or a female body, they write on your birth certificate 'male' or 'female.' So you go and think that you're a male all the time or a female all the time. This kind of thinking is not in line with the truth of the dhātus. That's not how it really is.

The ordinary mind as it exists is neutral. When the dhātu of masculinity takes over the mind, then the mind becomes male. When the dhātu of femininity takes over the mind the mind becomes female. Ordinarily the mind is just neutral, it's neither male nor female and it only becomes male or female when the respective elements of masculinity and femininity take it over. Ordinarily it is just neutral. In Pāli this is called the *pabhassara-citta* – *pabhassara* means 'radiant' or 'luminous.' Naturally and ordinarily the mind is luminous and radiant, but if one or the other of these dhātus takes it over, only then does it become male or female. So please understand this first point – that ordinarily the mind is radiant, it's neutral.

So the mind is naturally neutral or luminous. Now let's speak of our bodies. A group of people have bodies that have female sexual organs, female characteristics, and a feminine shape with certain glands and a female hormonal system. Another group of people have bodies with male sexual organs, male characteristics, a male shape with certain glands and a male hormonal system. Now these are just natural, solely natural, nature has created bodies in these ways. These sex organs, glands, and hormones are created by nature to operate once the elements of femininity and masculinity take over the mind. When the female elements take over the mind of a person with a female body, then that female body with its sex organs, hormones, and glands serve and satisfy that female element dominating the mind. Consequently the same happens in the male with the masculine element dominating the mind. This is how it works naturally. We hope that you can understand this, but it's important to see that originally, fundamentally, the mind is neither male nor female. It only becomes male or female when the respective dhātus take it over, and that's when the male and female characteristics come into play. They come into play later, only when stimulated by the mind that has become male or female.

Normally these elements of masculinity and femininity are not called 'dhātus.' Often they go by another word *indriya*. *Indriya* means 'that which is supreme or dominant.' It's the dominating factor or power which is supreme. So when maleness dominates the mind, that is called the 'male dominating factor,' or the Pāli word is *purisa-indriya*, or *purisindriya*. When femaleness dominates the mind, that's the female dominating factor, or the *itthī-indriya* which is the factor of femininity – we use all these new words for you but we hope that you

can get the meaning. When this *purisindriya* (the dominating factor of masculinity) takes over the mind, then the mind has maleness. When the *itthī-indriya* (the dominating factor of femininity) takes over the mind, then the mind has femaleness or femininity. However, the mind is neither male nor female, it only becomes one or the other when the corresponding *indriya* (dominating factor) takes it over. Now these are also just dhātus. Although we usually say the ‘dominating factor of maleness,’ we can call it the ‘masculine element,’ and we can call the *itthī-indriya* (the dominating factor of femaleness) the ‘feminine element.’ Originally the mind is neither male nor female.

Even though the body's sexual organs, the glands, and hormones – with levels fluctuating – are always there, the mind is not male or female all the time. Please try to understand that there are times when the mind is neither male nor female. For example, after engaging in sexual activity to the point where you are worn out; when you are resting afterwards, there's no maleness or femaleness. While sleeping soundly, although the body remains male or female, the mind is neither male nor female. The mind only becomes male or female, taking on masculine and feminine characteristics when the male dhātu or the female dhātu takes over. It's only when the *itthī-indriya* or the *purisindriya* take over that the mind takes on feminine or masculine qualities. So please pay attention to this, notice the many times in life when the mind is neither male nor female. If you can understand this properly then you will be able to manage this business of male and female properly. If one can manage or control these things of masculinity and femininity, they won't cause any more problems or *dukkha* for us.

Right now you are all listening very intently to what we are saying; you are listening very carefully, and so right at this moment there is no masculinity or femininity in the mind. The *indriyas* of masculinity and femininity aren't dominating the mind because there are other factors which are supreme. For example, one wants to know and so one is listening; one wants to understand; there is *saddhā* (trust, confidence), and because these other factors are dominant with the mind trying its best to listen, there is no space for the femininity or masculinity elements to take over. Therefore the mind is neither male nor female, it doesn't have male or female characteristics. The sex organs may still be there, the glands and the hormones may still be there, the physical apparatus of male and female may still be there, but the mind is neither male nor female. It only becomes so when the element or *indriya*, the dominating factor takes over. So please try to understand this, not just intellectually, but by observing the reality of it in life.

If you are successful in your study and understanding of *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent origination), your investigation and practice of *ānāpāna-sati* (mindfulness with breathing), then you will have sufficient knowledge and

ability to deal wisely and successfully with the dhātus. If you truly understand dependent origination and have thoroughly practiced mindfulness with breathing, then you will be able to manage and control all the dhātus. None of the dhātus, including those of masculinity and femininity will pose any problems for you anymore. None of the dhātus will create any troubles or *dukkha* for you, so we wish you success in your study and practice. Please give it your best and we wish you success.

All of our explanations can be summarized in a few short words. When you thoroughly understand the dhātus then there will not remain any more feelings or thoughts of *attā* (self) or *ātman*, and then you won't have any more problems in life.

Finally thank you for being very good listeners. So please take the things which have been discussed, think them over, reflect upon them, and investigate them to deepen your understanding of what we have been discussing, as well as life. So we hope that you will be very successful and will continue with your practice. There are some more things to talk about, which we will do at a later time.

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Transcribed by Anonymous (3408-2.kkk). Reformatted in 2014

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