

CONTEMPLATION OF DEATH

A talk given by Ajahn Brahmavamso at Bodhinyana Monastery

on 20th December 2000

("Death: Contemplation of death, Simile of Asoka's brother awaiting Death (J. Strong: 'Asoka' p.135); Simile of the Stick thrown up (S.II. 184)")

Sabbe sattā maranti ca

marīṃsu ca marissare

tatth' evāhaṃ marissāmi

n'atthi me ettha saṃsāyo

Many of you will recall that Pāli *gāthā* (verse) that I chanted at the beginning of this talk. It means 'All beings will die, they are of the nature to die, and I too will also die, of that I have no doubt'. It's one of those beautiful chants that we have in Buddhism. It relates to the fact that every one of us will die. I wanted to use this contemplation of death for today's *Dhamma*¹ talk, because part of our forest tradition is to contemplate death.

I told the people who will be accompanying me to India and Wat Pah Nanachat in the North East of Thailand (the monastery where I spent many years), that if they are lucky they'll be able to see a Buddhist funeral where the body of the person who has died is not sanitised by embalmers. The body is just put into a very simple coffin so that everyone can look at it and touch the person who has died. It is then burnt in the open. Very quickly the cheap wood of the coffin burns away to reveal the body. The body burns away part by part, bit by bit, and

you see the members of the body separate from each other. You see the skull pop and explode, and all the other parts of the body eventually being burnt away, until after many hours all that is left are some scraps of the bones. To be able to see that is a marvellous privilege in one's life, to see death in the raw. By sanitising death we are preserving the illusion of life.

The illusion is that life will go on forever, and that the only purpose of life is seeking pleasure, amusements and an accumulation of wealth. With the perspective of death, all the stupid things that we do in life appear so pointless that we see them as being completely worthless. We heard recently of a couple of monks who have disrobed. If they could only have gone to a funeral when they were thinking of disrobing and been able to look at a body being burnt, and visualize themselves in those flames. That will happen to them one day. All the searching for sensory pleasures, having relationships, getting married, having houses, and accumulating wealth, cars and experiences, going up the Amazon, and trekking in the Himalayas – just what does that really mean in the face of death.

One of my favourite stories, which I think is from the commentaries, or some of the other post commentarial manuals of Buddhism, is the story of Asoka's brother. Once the Emperor Asoka became a Buddhist he was very devout but because he wasn't a very wise Buddhist he tried to convert everybody. He had one brother who proved impossible to convert. His brother was really into sensory pleasures, and being the brother of the Emperor afforded him many opportunities to indulge in them. In order to try and trick his brother into understanding the *Dhamma*, Asoka managed to lay a trap for him. The Emperor was in his bathhouse. He had taken off all of his robes and his insignia, and laid them outside. He arranged for some of his close ministers and advisers to be walking with his brother and, 'just by accident' to come past the bath house. With all the Emperor's robes laying on the bench the advisers said, "Just try these on for size, who knows one day when your brother dies you may be Emperor.

Try them on. Go on". At first the brother would not do it because he knew that it was illegal to do so. But eventually his pride got the better of him. Who wouldn't like to dress up in the Emperor's clothes? It was all pre-planned, so as soon as he was dressed in the Emperor's clothes the Emperor came out of the bathhouse, saw his brother, and asked him, "What are you doing? Are you usurping the throne? Are you being a traitor?" Because of the law the Emperor said, "Even though you are my brother I have to administer the law impartially. The penalty for this is death", and despite the protestations of the brother, the Emperor insisted on applying the law and having his brother killed. "However" he said, "seeing you are my brother, and you would like to be Emperor so much, for the next seven days you can enjoy all the pleasures of being an Emperor, but none of the responsibilities. You can enjoy my harem, you can have whatever you want to eat, and whatever entertainment I enjoy, you can enjoy as well. The pleasures of the Emperor are yours for seven days but after seven days you will be executed". He left him with that, and after seven days when he called his brother in to be executed the Emperor asked him, "Did you enjoy the harem, all those beautiful girls? Did you enjoy the best food from my kitchens, and did you enjoy my musicians and other entertainers?" The brother looked down at the ground, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "Enjoy all that, I couldn't even enjoy a good night's sleep. How can you enjoy those pleasures when you know that you are going to be dead in seven days?" Of course, the Emperor smiled, and said, "Now you understand! Whether it is seven days, seven months, seven years, or seventy years, how can you enjoy the pleasures of the senses?" How can you enjoy sex, watching movies, going travelling, and accumulating possessions when you know that you are going to die? Whether it's seven days, seven months, seven years or seventeen years, in seventy years you are going to be dead. So understanding that, the brother learnt something about the *Dhamma* and he became a devout Buddhist from that time, keeping the precepts, because the reflection of death and the importance of the priorities of life became very apparent to him.

Because even a layperson can understand the meaning of life and death in that context, and can change his own lifestyle, the Buddha always wanted the monks to also contemplate their death in such a way. You are all going to be executed, life is a death sentence. We are all on death row in this monastery, but we don't know how the execution is going to take place, and we don't know exactly when. A lady in one of the *suttas*² once remarked to the Buddha, "I know, but I don't know". The Buddha smiled and acknowledged her wisdom. Someone asked her afterwards, "What do you mean, I know, but I don't know?" and she said, "I know that I will die. I don't know the day I will die". That gives you priorities. You are going to die, and after this death you will be carrying the *kamma*³ of this life into future lives.

Anyone who doesn't believe in rebirth is going to get a great shock when it happens. It is something that is real, and understanding it is going to be real. Understanding that your *kamma* is going to be carried with you gives a different perspective on how you live your life. That's why as monks we have the Ten Reflections⁴ for one who has gone forth. The tenth one of those reflections is the reflection on your deathbed. Your friends in the holy life will ask you, "What states of super human abilities and attainments have you achieved in your life in the robes? What *jhānas*⁵ have you achieved? What stages of liberation, or enlightenment have you reached?" Those are the questions that it is traditional to ask a monk on his deathbed, because usually the monks won't tell you when they are alive. And that's what I encourage each one of you to do here. Ask your friends, every monk in this monastery who you've been living with all this time, "What have you achieved, what have you done?" That brings back a sense of priority to what we are doing in this monastery. We don't want to live years and years in this monastery, or other monasteries, going from place to place in the monastic world of Buddhism, and find at the end of our life that we are no further on than when we started. You don't want to find that you haven't really used this extremely wonderful opportunity to at least get a *jhāna*, to at least become a Stream Winner⁶. The reason I say this is because if you don't do these things, after death who knows what might happen.

We all think that if we make lots and lots of good *kamma* – and you do make good *kamma*, you are all good monks. You keep the precepts very well. The novices are great novices, and even the visitors who come here are all very high minded, pure minded beings for the most part. As beings in the world go, you are the cream. However, even if you live a very good life and have been a monk for many years in this life, if you don't penetrate to Stream Winning, then you don't know what sort of birth is going to follow this life. In the Anamataggasamyutta Sutta (SN 15.9), the Buddha gave the simile of the stick, which says that your future rebirth is so uncertain that it's like throwing a stick up into the air. You cannot be sure which end it is going to fall on, whether it's going to fall in the fortunate realms or the unfortunate realms. All that you can do in life is make lots and lots of good *kamma* and maybe you can make one end heavy, so that the chances are that it will fall on the heavy end, and your good *kamma* will ripen into a beautiful rebirth. But the *sutta* also said very beautifully, that even though one end is heavy, every now and again that stick would land on the lighter end anyway. So even if you do make lots of good *kamma* there is always the bad *kamma* that you have performed in the past, in this life, or in previous lives. Because that bad *kamma* hasn't been used up yet, or made manifest yet, there is always the chance of being reborn in a very unfavourable situation.

That is the fear of *samsāra*⁷. It's not just old age, sickness and death in this life, it's also old age sickness and death in future lives, in less pleasant lives than the one you are in now. The fact is that even though you may be a good monk, novice, or layperson, it's still uncertain what your rebirth is going to be. That should really make you put forth more effort and make the spiritual path more important. It should make you be more diligent, and where does diligence and effort come from? It only comes when you see that it's important.

Using Time Wisely

To be able to let go and do nothing, you have to understand that doing nothing is important and that letting go in the mind is important. Just sitting down and meditating is vital. It is more important than all the other business we get into, more important than our finances, our relationships, our children, our vehicles and our possessions. It is even more important than doing voluntary work at the Buddhist Society of Western Australia, more important than cleaning the hall or the toilet blocks for visitors. It's more important than this because it's the ability to do the practice and follow the Eightfold Path⁸. That is the whole purpose of this life. If life has a meaning it's the only thing that makes any sense.

Accumulating wealth, what meaning has that? It all disappears when you die. If you manage to enjoy the pleasures of life in great amounts, be aware, even a small amount of pleasure usually has lots of frustrations. And even if you do get lots and lots of pleasure in this life, so what! It always disappears in the pain and smog of old age. One of the things that you notice in life as you get older is that the pleasures in life come early on, and the pain of life is what you're left with at the end. Knowing this, seeing the dangers in life, why does anybody get involved in all of this wasting of time?

We can go around teaching others, or writing books for others and spreading the *Dhamma*, but is that really our duty in this life. So many people are spreading the *Dhamma* but so few are realising the *Dhamma* and that's a great shame for this world. We need more people realising that *Dhamma*. That is the purpose of this life.

When you start reflecting on death, everything becomes so clear. You wonder how you could have been so stupid. During the day I waste so much time, when I really haven't got time to waste. I look back on my early years as a monk, and I wasted too much time. But fortunately I had enough good meditations as well. And now as a forty-nine year old monk, I can't afford to waste any more time. I look at all the opportunities young monks have, and I sometimes think you don't make use of those opportunities. You don't hang around in your hut, or on your

walking path for hour after hour, walking, sitting, walking, sitting, or using the time in between to read the *suttas* and contemplate their meaning. We have one of the best monasteries with the best facilities in the world here. If you are wasting time, isn't that such a shame? So the reflection on death is, "I don't know how long I'll have these facilities. I don't know how long I'll be healthy enough to do this". You know there are enough monks here with bad backs or bad knees, bad this and bad that. If you're a healthy monk, or even reasonably healthy and you can cross your legs, sit meditation, and keep your back straight without too much pain you are extremely fortunate. You won't always be like that. So use this opportunity now.

It's not just your body that is going to die, your health, your energy, and the opportunities will die. So the reflection on death makes you meditators. As it says in the *suttas*, 'it's as if your turban is on fire'. In other words it gives a sense of importance and urgency to the practice. It makes the Eightfold Path the most important thing in the world. It gives it priority over everything else. It would be wonderful if people had that reflection on death to the degree that they were really aware all the time and if they had the mindfulness that remembers that death is always stalking you. Death can happen at any time, therefore what's important to me is to develop the Eightfold Path as much as I can, as deeply as I can, so that I too can experience the *jhānas*, I too can experience the paths and fruits of this practice, I too can be free, firstly from the lower realms, and eventually from rebirth altogether. Otherwise death becomes very scary even for great practitioners. They can fall so easily if they haven't got this security from bondage, as the Buddha used to say 'security from that bad rebirth'.

Let Go – Allow the Path to Just Happen

The reason we use these reflections on death is to make it important. As we practise the Eightfold path, we should not practise with force. When we say we should give the Eightfold Path importance, the Eightfold Path is not something we do, it is something we allow to happen. If we get rid of all the other business

in our lives and allow this path to just happen, it happens so beautifully, powerfully and effectively. The problem is we don't allow the path to just happen. We are so busy doing other things but it's quite clear what we are supposed to be doing. In this monastery we develop virtuous conduct, right speech, right action, and right livelihood. Everyone, even if you are only here temporarily, can tick off those three parts of the Eightfold Path. You're fulfilling them – that's of course, as long as you are keeping the rules and precepts of this monastery.

The sixth factor of the path is right effort. It is unfortunate that we have to translate these terms into English, because as soon as you say right effort, people think of striving, struggling, forcing, controlling, and doing. If we can somehow turn our minds to 'effort without doing', to a practice that is letting go, then we can have some deeper understanding about what right effort truly means. It's the effort to let go, not the effort to add to, or to get rid of. And that perhaps is one of the hardest things for the Western mind to get around. So often, people waste many years and so much of their time, just trying too hard.

Those of you who have read the Pāli *suttas* will again and again have come across the remark that the *jhānas* are easy for the wise person, and they attain these things with no difficulty. You should reflect upon that. How can these things be attained with no difficulty? It is because the person knows the path to enter the *jhānas*. It is the no difficulty path, so don't make it difficult. Let go, and disentangle yourself from the past and the future. Let the past and the future die for you, so that you're only in the present moment. Let all thinking die. When you die, what does all your past mean then? All the things you worried about, they're all gone. And the future, who knows?

The present moment is the only thing we ever have. When you die your body and all your concerns are taken away from you. So, what are you worried about?

Let it go. Allow your thinking to die. When a person's dead, they are brain dead, there's no brain activity. When a person dies, often in the first moments after death, there is that silence of the mind, until the *mind made body* can start to name things and start to conceptualise about what they are experiencing. For the first few seconds or even longer, it's a time of silence, a different type of perception. This is what one can do in one's meditation, let go of that inner chatter, allow it to die, as if you're dying. Many people have had experiences when they've been close to death. In different traditions they have shamanistic experiences of dying to the world and becoming wise afterwards. The shamanistic experience that Theravada monks of our tradition have is that when they get into *jhānas*, they die to the body. That experience of allowing everything to disappear is so similar to the process of dying that the reflection on dying can very easily be incorporated into the practice that leads into *jhānas*. Die to the past and future. Die to the thoughts, to the body, and eventually die to the breath, as if you take your last breath as you are meditating. In other words you forget, or you completely let go of the breathing, and go into the *nimitta*⁹. When a person dies, they go out of their body and into the light, into the light and through the light, it's so similar to the experience of the *nimittas* and the *jhānas*.

Really you're talking about an *amata* state. This is a Pāli word. It means the deathless state. The word for death is *maraṇa*, and it always refers to the death of the body. The death of the mind is called *Parinibbāna*. You know what really doesn't die if you've contemplated that through deep meditation. It is just this stream of consciousness, because it's that which carries on after death. The stream of consciousness in that sense is *amata*, because it is beyond the physical death. It's that which can be reborn in the *rūpa*¹⁰ realms, or the *arūpa*¹¹ realms. However that's not the end of things. I think that word *amata* was very current in the time of the Buddha because even today, most people when they talk about some sort of salvation mean it in a very materialistic way, a case of going into a state of *amata*, of deathlessness, some sort of a heaven realm, some eternity realm where they can be forever and ever, without having to worry about death. The Buddha used the word *amata*, taking it from common usage and giving it a

different meaning. But in the experience what doesn't die is the stream of consciousness, the *māna*¹² *viññāna*¹³, if you want to call it that, which you can experience in deep meditation. In the *jhānas* you can know what that experience really is.

In the *jhānas* it is as if the body has died along with all the conceptions of the world, all feelings, everything that is concerned with the world and the body. So really the *jhānas* are death like states in the sense that the body has gone, disappeared. The world of past and future has gone, disappeared. All your possessions have gone, disappeared. All your thoughts have gone, disappeared. All the struggling and doing, the coming and going, have gone, disappeared. Can you understand me? Can you understand what the word death means? It means the transcending of the body, the letting go of the body. The problem is of course that when most people die they get born again, and then they have to die again. They keep on doing it because they don't fully die to the world, they die a little bit, but they still want more of the world.

Learn how to develop the meditation of letting go. Make that effort to abandon all of those little fetters, those little knots, which tie you to this worldly body with all the plans and busyness. Sometimes it's fascinating to reflect on just how you've spent your day, and what's occupied your mind today. Doing a statistical analysis, how much of your mind has been occupied today with the body, the world, the monastery and your affairs, and how much has been occupied with the affairs of the deathless? That will give you a good idea why you're not getting Enlightened. So we have to be more occupied with the deathless.

Simplicity Leading to Contentment

I've been struggling for many years to try and make this monastery a place where you don't need to worry about things too much. I've tried to organise it so that all of the basic human needs are provided for. Out there in the world people

have to struggle so much just to survive, just to have a house, and to have the food to get by. It's so complex out there. The whole ethos and meaning behind the monastery is a place of simplicity, where the time you spend looking after this body, feeding it, washing it, and housing it is so small that you can give the majority of your time to the deathless; that which lies beyond the body. However, people always tend to make life more complex, more difficult with the body, taking it from one place to another, getting it healthy, feeding it, washing it or whatever else it is that we do with this body, then they have so little time for the mind. So, when we've developed the perception of death, and the opposite, the deathless, we can spend more time on that which is beyond death. Even though you may not have experienced those states yet, in this life, I'm sure there is something that recognises the existence of that state of mind which is beyond the body. Just knowing that much, having that whiff of the scent of this, is enough to show you what the direction is.

Remember, all the 'doing' that we think is right effort to keep us in with this body, to keep up with the past and the future, is not the correct type of 'doing', it's the effort which leads to more entanglements. The effort which leads to letting go is to remember that this body doesn't belong to me. It's as if you're in a prison and you're not happy where you are. That's why this monastery can be a prison if you want to get out but if you're completely content in prison, if you're completely happy here, it's not a prison any more. It's contentment that frees you. The other type of letting go is, 'I'm content with whatever's happening'; *anālaya* (free from attachment) the Teflon mind, nothing sticks to it, nothing can land on it; and *patinissagga* always giving away, relinquishing, going in the opposite direction to attaching. It's actually throwing things off rather than allowing things to land on you and ingratiate themselves with you. That's the effort of the sixth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path. That's the effort to let go, that's the effort that leads to the transcending of death.

When you let go of these things everything disappears, the body goes, the world goes, the huts go, the book goes, the illnesses go, the Buddhist Society of West Australia disappears. Everything is gone, and you realise what monastic life is all about, what the holy life is all about – at least at the start of it – going into the realms of the mind. And if you’ve attained the *jhānas*, the reflection after you come out of those states, leads to the insight that you’ve died to something, or rather the stream of consciousness of the mind has died to the body. There’s been a separation similar to the Christian idea of the soul leaving the body. The mind has not physically died to the body, because they are on different plains. The realm of the mind, mind space is not something that you can measure in physical space. It’s a parallel universe, if you like. But that parallel universe, the mind space, is independent and can be completely unaffected by the four dimensional world of space-time if it wants to be. To know that much means that there will never be the fear of death, because you know what death is. It’s the death of the body, the five senses, and the ending of that entire world outside and it gives you a different perspective, one of the greatest happiness’ that you have ever had. All the pleasures of the world seem to be so useless, so trivial, and petty. You really wonder why you’ve been messing around with relationships, sex, getting married, accumulating wealth and all this running around, backwards and forwards. What a foolish thing to do, spending your life like that when you could have these beautiful blissful states of mind. That’s why I’ve always encouraged people somehow or other, to get a taste of those states. One taste will change your life and give you a different perspective. Even though it may only be one taste many years ago, you can’t forget it, and you can’t ignore it, because it’s a powerful life changing experience. It gives you an experience of what is possible, what it means to let go of the *kāmaloka*, the world of the body, the world of birth, sickness, old age and death. You look at the world of the mind and ask, “Does the mind get old, and does the mind get sick?” The mind only gets sick if you let it get sick. That’s why the Buddha said, “Even though the body hurts, the mind does not need to hurt”, even though the body gets sick, don’t let the mind get sick. The stream of consciousness can be completely above that. If you can do just that much, and completely let go of the world of the body, then if you do get stuck in the mind you will at least be an *Anāgāmi*¹⁴ a Non Returner.

You will go up to the realm of the mind, play around there for a few eons and then *Nibbāna*¹⁵ from there. I shouldn't really say this but it's not a bad way of exiting from *samsāra*.

Death is Coming, Ready or Not

However, the Buddha would really quite rightly criticise me for advocating any type of existence in the *Anāgāmī* realms. The Buddha said it is not worth it, it's best to *Nibbāna* as soon as you can. *Nibbāna* is, so to speak, another level of death. It is like death, it's the death of the body, of things relating to the body, the death of this world, the losing of all your possessions, and the separation from what you loved. Old age and sickness are just the messengers of death, the precursors, just the signs that death is coming. It's like the first bills you get, the first reminders, saying if you don't pay within a few days you are going to be taken to court. They're the warning notices and then suddenly it just comes. Old age and sickness are all part of death. It's amazing how people can completely neglect, and deny those warning signs. People get old and think they're still going to live for a long time. They get sick, and think they are always going to get better. These are the warning signs that death is coming. If you've got a bad back today, that's a warning sign, death is coming. If you have a headache, stomach ache, or you feel a bit low in energy, or even if you've just had a cold, that's death coming. Always remember that, it's like death knocking on the door, maybe your not quite ready yet, but it doesn't really matter, death will just break in like a home invader, and drag you away, whether you are ready or not.

So it's good to be ready by being able to let go of this world. This world is valuable, in as much as it provides a vehicle for the holy life to be lived. This body is useful in that it provides a vehicle for you to sit down and gain deep meditations and the insight to leave *samsāra*. That's the whole purpose of the body, of the senses, and the purpose of this life. However people who don't know the purpose of life, the meaning of life, just waste their time and do stupid things.

They go around like children on a merry-go-round, thinking that it's so good, so wonderful and so enjoyable. By doing the reflection on death again and again, one lets go of a lot of useless pursuits in one's life. Even those of you who are senior monks in this monastery, you might die tonight, so what do you really want to achieve? What's important to you? Is it sort of finishing off that letter or is it meditating and getting into deep meditation. You may only have another week or two, who knows? What's really important to you? When you're dying, do you want to look back, and be able to say, "I've used this life properly"? At least if you've had a *jhāna*, you've got *maggaphala* (the fruition of the Eightfold Path), then you can die at ease, and you've used this life as it's supposed to be used. You've made the best of your opportunities. So be diligent, know the path and know what works.

Make that so called effort that is letting go. Remember, 'This doesn't belong to you'. The body doesn't belong to you. This monastery, your letters, your family, your past don't belong to you, and neither does your future. You own nothing in this world. Death teaches you how little you really own. The body belongs to nature, the past belongs to fantasy, the future just belongs to stupidity, and you own nothing. All your thoughts are just the result of conditioning. You own nothing. My robes belong to the earth, and all the possessions in my hut belong to the earth as well. All that is mine will one day go to the rubbish dump. It will be incinerated. I thought when I first came here that I would build this monastery, and make it really strong so that it would last for hundreds, and thousands of years. Already you see it's falling apart. Cracks are appearing in the walls of your huts. To the monk who told me he saw cracks appearing in the wall of his hut, "I say look at your own body and see the cracks right down your body. You're falling apart, you're crumbling and soon you'll be dust like that hut".

So when you look at it in that way, you get everything into perspective and the crack in the wall of your hut is showing you death. You're grateful to the

harbinger of death for encouraging you to let go, and develop the deep meditations by dying to the body, dying to world, and dying to the defilements that keep you in the world. Liberate yourself, own nothing and be content with owning nothing. When you're content you need nothing. You're dead to desires when you're content. When people die you write on their gravestone, "Rest in Peace". When you're in *jhānas* you are resting in peace. *Nibbāna* is the only true peace. Please be diligent, life is fading away so fast.

¹ *Dhamma*: The teachings of the Buddha; the truth; the Norm.

² *Sutta*: Discourse of the Lord Buddha, or one of his chief disciples, as recorded in the Pāli Canon.

³ *Kamma*: Action, or activity created by volition

⁴ Reflections of a Monk, The Ten:

1. I have entered upon a classless condition.
2. My life is dependent on the generosity of others.
3. My conduct must be different from that of a householder.
4. Do I reproach myself in regard to virtue?
5. Do my wise fellow monks reproach me in regard to virtue?
6. I must be separated and parted from all that is dear and beloved to me.
7. I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions ...
8. How do I spend my days and nights?
9. Do I delight in empty huts?
10. If I am questioned by my fellow monks at the time of my death shall I be dismayed?

⁵ *Jhāna*: The deep meditation states of letting go.

⁶ *Sotāpanna*: Stream Winner, the first stage of Enlightenment. One guaranteed to attain Full Enlightenment within seven lifetimes at most.

⁷ *Samsāra*: The round of rebirth (Literally: 'wandering on').

⁸ Eightfold Path, The:

1. Right View or Understanding.
2. Right Thoughts or Intentions.
3. Right Speech.
4. Right Action.
5. Right Livelihood.
6. Right Effort.
7. Right Mindfulness.
8. Right Concentration, i.e. *jhāna*.

⁹ *Nimitta*: A sign, characteristic. In the context of Buddhist meditation, a mental sign.

¹⁰ *Rūpa*: 1) Form as seen by the eye faculty. 2) Materiality i.e. the four primary elements of earth,

water, air and fire, and that which arises dependent on them.

¹¹ *Arūpa-samāpatti*: Immaterial Attainment; the four Immaterial Attainments of meditation, Mind

bases, beyond the four *jhānas*.

¹² *Māna*: Conceit, in particular the three types of conceit: I am better, I am worse and I am equal.

¹³ *Viññāna*: Consciousness.

¹⁴ *Anāgāmī*: Non Returner, one who has attained the third stage of Enlightenment

¹⁵ *Nibbāna*: Literally; “Extinction” (as in the going out of a flame). The supreme goal for Buddhists – it is the destruction of greed, hatred, and delusion – thus, the end of all suffering.