

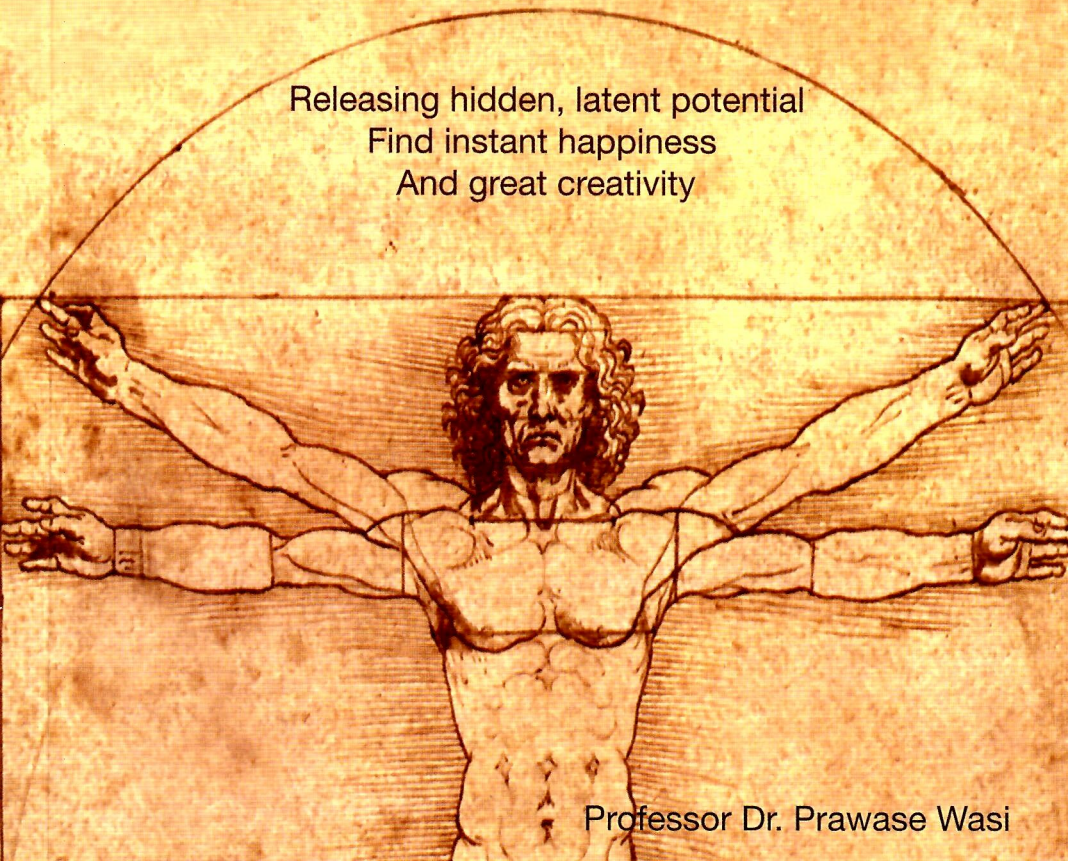


संस्कार
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The Dignity of Human Beings

The Potential of Creativity

Releasing hidden, latent potential
Find instant happiness
And great creativity



Professor Dr. Prawase Wasi

The Dignity of Human Beings

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Translated by Pett Jarupaiboon and Suchanart Boonaneek
Edited by Vira Somboon

The Dignity of Human Beings The Potential of Creativity

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Preface



The Office of the National Human Rights Commission first published the Thai version of this book in 2002 (the book had been published three times before that). And on the occasion that the National Human Rights Commission is the host institution of the 16th Annual Meeting and Biennial Conference of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, which focuses on the right to development, human dignity and development, the Office of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, in collaboration with the National Health Foundation and with the support of the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, arranged for the translation of this book into English for use in this meeting, especially as a supplement to the special opening remarks on ***“Human Rights, People’s Dignity and Equality”*** by Professor Dr. Prawase Wasi.

The essential messages of this book are about the understanding of human dignity, which goes beyond the material, and how every human being should and can create human consciousness by respecting one’s own worth and the humanness of others, which is a great potential that lies hidden in all of us. Liberating one’s mind from narrowness of many kinds and connecting it with nature will enable human beings to attain the greatest creativity possible under the human potential. Such liberated mind will become a great driving force that will lead humanity towards freedom, virtue, beauty, happiness, friendship, peace and sustainable development.

The Office of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand would like to express our gratitude to Professor Dr. Prawase Wasi for kindly giving us the opening remarks and granting us permission to translate this greatly valuable book into English. The Office also wishes to express our sincere thanks to Associate Professor Dr. Vira Somboon of the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University and his team for the excellent translation work despite the available short period of time.

Office of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand
September 2011

Acknowledgement



In rendering the Buddhist terms and teachings used by Professor Dr. Prawase Wasi into English, the translators and the editor consulted and relied heavily on Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), *Dictionary of Buddhism*, 13th printing, (Bangkok: S.R. Printing Mass Products, 2005). They would like to express their highest appreciation for this significant source of reference. Of course, they are solely responsible for any mistake in translation and interpretation.

Appreciation

(for the fourth Thai edition)



Basic morality is the equal respect of the dignity and value of humanness of every human being.

Respect for the dignity and value of humanness is the basis of all the virtues in a society, such as human rights, true democracy, equality, justice in a society, human-oriented development, education that takes humanness into consideration, maintenance of resource bases and equitable use of resources, eradication of poverty, etc.

Without the basic morality of respecting the dignity and value of humanness of every human being equally, a society cannot be truly developed toward prosperity. Human rights are based on this basic morality, and so they are the foundation of all the virtues in a society, as previously mentioned, such as democracy, equality; justice in society, education, and the economy; conservation and equitable use of resources; public health system; and so on.

The Office of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, therefore, has a very important mission to incorporate right or morality as a basis for all development tasks. At the deepest level, people in this country need to grow a new consciousness - the kind of consciousness that recognizes the importance of humanness of every fellow human being. This consciousness of basic morality will emancipate human beings, leading them toward freedom, as well as generating true happiness and progress.

I rejoice in the occasion that Dr. Choochai Supawongse, M.D., Secretary-General of the National Human Rights Commission, decided to publish this book which was previously published by Moh Chao Ban (Community Doctor) Publishing House, and distribute them to a wide audience, with an aim to stimulate the consciousness on the dignity of humanness and the potential of creativity of fellow human beings.

Prawase Wasi
17 June 2002

Preface

(for the fourth Thai edition)



The National Human Rights Commission is an organization established by Articles 199 and 200 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2540 and the National Human Rights Commission Act, B.E. 2542. Its composition and functions are later modified by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2550. At present, the Commission consists of 7 commissioners, whose responsibilities include receiving complaints, investigating human rights violations, acting as mediators, or proposing appropriate measures to address them. In addition, the Commission makes policy recommendations and proposals related to legislation amendments to the Parliament and the Cabinet in order to promote and protect human rights. Another important mission of the Commission is to support education, research and distribution of knowledge on human rights.

In order to widely develop in Thai society a mutual learning process regarding principles, concepts, as well as guidance for human rights related works, the office of the National Human Rights Commission has published a series of books to promote human rights related knowledge. 'The Dignity of Human Beings, the Potential of Creativity,' is part of this series, with the original script and the permission to republish and distribute it kindly given to us by Moh-Chao Ban Publishing House and Professor Dr. Prawase Wasi.

The Office of the National Human Rights Commission highly hopes that the important message of this book will, more or less, contribute to the promotion of human rights culture in the Thai society. This will ultimately result in making the ways of life of the people of this land become ones that are filled with kindness and compassion toward humankind, as well as respect for the value and the dignity of humanness, especially toward marginalized people in the Thai society.

Office of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand

Foreword

(For the third Thai edition)



The human brain is the most exquisitely complex structure in the universe. It is indeed what distinguishes human beings from other animals, even though they are a kind of animal as well.

The human brain makes human beings an animal with a great potential; but this potential has been hidden or obscured. Consequently people cannot recognize or are incapable of using it to its fullest. This makes them sorrowful, lose their dignity, suffer, cause suffering to themselves, cause suffering to one another, destroy the environment and generate social disintegration - all of which contribute to the crises of human beings or the world.

This book was written with a wish to help fellow human beings discover the dignity of humanness and the great potential of creativity within themselves.

Some of the readers have told me that they found “instant happiness” after reading this book. This is indeed its objective, as I believe that there are ways of learning that will enable learners to find instant happiness and great creativity. This can only happen when human beings have freed themselves from narrowness and become connected with nature or sublime truth.

Learning nowadays is trapped in narrowness. It is for this reason that people cannot find freedom or happiness. Education should, therefore, be reformed in ways that will, first of all, enable them to appreciate and understand nature or the truth that greatly connects

everything, understand particular details as the next step, and be able to see all things as connected or integrated at all times.

At present, the learning process starts with the details which are fragmented and sliced up without seeing the whole picture. Since the whole is not seen, things cannot be reconnected. Due to this kind of learning, human beings have “broken wisdom” or “short wisdom,” making them only able to think in a shattered manner, causing frustration, or to learn only to become stuck in narrowness. This kind of learning leads to the lack of freedom, beauty, happiness and creativity. Indeed, “broken wisdom” or “short wisdom” is not really wisdom, as wisdom needs to be long in order to be able to connect things.

Let us help each other to understand learning. Let us make the issue of learning or the issue of wisdom a mainstream of the society. It has now become possible for every human being to learn well and find freedom, beauty, friendship and peace. This will bring about a great transformation of humankind.

May this wish be granted to all my readers.

Professor Dr. Prawase Wasi
18.02.95

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The most important task facing humanity
is to support each human being
to develop his/her full human potential.
This is, indeed, the key to happiness,
peace and sustainable development.



1.

Humanness



*“Manussosi?”*¹

“Are you a human being?”

No one would probably reply, “No, I’m not.”

And in answering the question, one would probably picture **human** features. But human beings are a type of animal, or have evolved from animals. So what is it in **humanness** that makes them different from animals? Please note the two words which differ slightly; but in terms of meanings they differ tremendously. First I use the term **“human,”** and later **“humanness.”**

A phrase (in Thai) has been invented that says: ‘*eat, poop, bang, sleep,*’ to describe basic animal behavior, which consists of eating, excreting, reproducing, and recreating. If human beings do no more than ‘eating, pooping, banging, sleeping,’ they are not any different from animals. Therefore, we can see that in terms of biological characteristics, both physical and behavioral, human beings are not really different from animals. Hence, there must be something in the quality that is called “humanness” that significantly distinguishes human beings from animals.

¹ *Translators’ note:* This is a question in Pali which begins an interview-like process during the ordination ritual performed in order for a person to become a Buddhist monk.

What is this “**humanness**” then?

During the course of human history, human beings have been more animal-like than humanlike. So when did humanness come into being, and on what basis can we say that humanness differs from animality?

Scientific knowledge informs us that the universe was born out of the Big Bang of energy, which had been compressed into a very small unit, around 15,000 million years ago. The earth itself is approximately 4,500 million years old. There had been other living beings long before human beings came into existence, such as dinosaurs which had been extinct 50 - 60 million years before human beings came along. In fact, human beings only started to exist 1- 2 million years ago, and they led their lives like animals for a long period of time.

What obviously differentiates human beings from animals is the ability to make tools. Animals cannot do this, except some monkeys who can poke a stick against something else. Technology transformed human society rapidly. As animals know no technology, their society has hardly undergone any changes.

Technology means the application of knowledge. But it would not be acceptable to say humanness is about inventing and making use of technology. In one of the royal remarks given to medical students, His Royal Highness Prince Mahidol of Songkla, H.M. King Bhumibol’s father, noted:

“I don’t want you to be only a doctor, but I also want you to be a human being.”

Doctors are known to have a full load of technology. But there is more to being human: there is something way “nobler” than that.

This means that in humanness lies something “**noble**.”

So what exactly does this “nobleness” entail? If we were to say that the possession of wealth, beauty or social rank makes one very human, no one would probably accept it.

Humanness therefore is about **noble value**, which has nothing to do with wealth, physical beauty or social rank.

Wealth, physical beauty and social rank are classified as sensual or material qualities.

Human noble value is way beyond materiality. And because it is immaterial, it must be **abstract**.

It is this abstract dimension or value system that is all about being human.

Because animals lack abstraction, and their brains have only material nature, they have neither merit, sin, good nor evil. They only possess mere nature.

At the early stage of human beings, the brain was still undeveloped. It still retained the characteristic of animals; and the abstract dimension or value system did not exist. Once the brain had developed to a certain level (to a certain level here means both physically and functionally), there arose the dimension of abstraction or value system, making this development transcend animality, and finally generating humanness.

The abstract dimension or value system is therefore the special quality of human beings

Anyone who does not possess this trait or has lost it does not have humanness or has lost their humanness.

The human brain is the most exquisitely complex structure in the universe, something that distinguishes human beings from other animals. It is of great capacity, and this is why human beings possess unlimited potential, whereas animals do not distinguish right from wrong and lead their lives out of pure natural instincts.

The human brain enables human beings to have abstraction which goes beyond material conditions. This is how good and evil is conceived. People who have attained goodness are ones with the highest human dignity. One clear illustration is when Prince Siddhartha attained Enlightenment: it was described that all of the elements of the world or the whole universe shook. When someone attained wisdom

which enabled him to rely completely upon himself, it was such a great event that caused the whole universe to tremble. The depiction that angels, Indra and Brahma also came to revere the Buddha is to emphasize the dignity of a human being who attained goodness, showing that even deities or gods worshipped Him.

Such is the extent of human dignity and potential.

In every human being lies an inherent nature or a great potential which will enable him/her to attain his/her full humanness and achieve a liberated mind, filled with happiness and creativity. Humanity possesses this potential, which is unique to human beings - animals do not have it. Therefore, we may call it the human potential or humanness.

Everyone, as a human being, should have an opportunity to develop his/her human potential to the fullest. It is very unfortunate and highly regrettable if even one person, whoever it is and for whatever reason, does not have or is rid of the opportunity to do so.

The most important task facing humanity is to support each human being to fully develop his/her human potential. This is, indeed, the key to happiness, peace, and sustainable development.

2.

Big Brain, Small Mind



In order to understand the strategies or ways to liberate the great human potential which lies hidden, we should first understand that which obscures this potential.

Consider the state in which the human potential cannot be expressed; imagine what it is like. Physically speaking, human beings possess a “**big brain.**” But a big brain does not mean that the mind is also big.

People who cannot attain the human potential are in the state of what may be termed “**small mind,**” i.e. their brains are big, but their minds are small.

A **small mind** refers to a narrow mind or a mind confined to a narrow space. It is unable to connect with great nature. Nature is endlessly vast.

If human beings can connect their minds to great nature, they will be able to possess a great mind. But human beings often have a small mind. A small mind is a mind imprisoned in a narrow space, of which there are five types:

- **A mind imprisoned within itself**
- **A mind imprisoned in social values**
- **A mind imprisoned in the social system or structure**
- **A mind imprisoned in knowledge**
- **A mind imprisoned in thought**

Such are **the five prisons** that detain the mind in narrowness, keeping it small. In what follows we will examine these five prisons of the mind.

1) A mind imprisoned within itself

A mind imprisoned within itself is a selfish mind. A selfish mind is narrow, low, constantly breeding greed, hatred, fear and drowsiness. A selfish mind is thus a narrow mind, a small mind, unable to enter into great-mindedness, or as Venerable Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto) puts it, “short-sighted, narrow-minded, mean-spirited.” These are the traits that best describe a small mind.

2) A mind imprisoned in social values

Social values are a significant prison of the mind. It is very difficult for human beings to break free from it. Consider the following examples:

In my neighborhood lived a young, diligent boy who always helped his parents to make a living. One day, he shot himself because he failed to pass the university entrance examination. Since society viewed an ability to pass such examination as an honor, the boy felt he was rid of this honor when he failed to pass it. Indeed, the fact that he was a hard-working boy helping his parents earn money was very noble. But then again, it all has very much to do with what society holds as noble. The value assigned to passing university entrance exams has enormously destroyed humanness.

Some years ago while I was strolling about in Siam Square, I saw a good-looking boy of around 17 years old. He avoided eye contact with all passers-by and seemed rather unhappy. This was all because he worked as a shoeblack, which he felt was a lowly job; and Thai people in general look down on those working lowly jobs. I sympathized with him greatly: he was a human being, he should be able to feel proud and

happy with what he did for a living. Indeed his humanness was more complete than many of those passing him by, but he had to suffer because of social **“values.”** Social values that are not right destroy humanness.

There are several values that look down on the poor and hard-working. One example is an old Thai proverb which says **‘love being good, you’ll carry the gable; love being bad, you’ll carry the post.’** It means if you behave well, you will get to have a comfortable job; if you behave badly, you will end up getting a toilsome job. It also implies that those working laborious jobs are not good people. Actually laborious jobs are good and creative. They should be seen as more honorable than jobs that are not creative or jobs that harm others. But then again, the Thai society has values that look down on hard-working people, which greatly destroys humanness.

Another example is - **“may you sit eating, lie eating,”** - a wish made to others that well reflects values about jobs. I do not know exactly how one can “sit eating, lie eating.” Perhaps it is when one sits or lies around, simply collecting interests on money lending or making profits at the expense of others, neither of which is a good thing. Being those who “make a living” is to be engaged in work, and this should reflect the values of humanness better.

“May you be the master and boss” is another blessing which reflects the nobility-serfdom value system. The value related to being “the master and boss” has a significant impact on attitudes and performances of work in the Thai society. Thai people hold this value about having to attain a management position, such as director, head of department, dean, rector, permanent secretary and so on, because these positions mean they are “the master and boss,” bringing honor to their families.

It turns out that people strive to occupy those positions for family honor rather than for the success of their organization. A lot of seniors are unsuitable for management positions; they are more skilled at something else. When they become the management, this adversely

impacts the performance of the organization as a whole. They also do not get to do what they are good at but have to become the management because social value compels them to.

Members of Parliament hardly have any interest in legislation but are keener in becoming appointed ministers, because the latter positions are in effect being “the master and boss.” Hence, the fight over ministerial posts and recurrent arguments and conflicts can still be seen, leaving legislation works falling behind. This is another illustration of the disadvantages resulting from the value of being “the master and boss.”

Even monks are not spared from this. Some monks long for titles and ranks and struggle shamelessly to get them rather than to study the dharma. The thing about honor is that it is a kind of defilement (*kilēsa*) that destroys humanness regardless of who they are.

There are numerous other values that oppress people. And I hope you will continue to think about them on your own.

3) A mind imprisoned in the social system or structure

A system is a prison that confines people to a narrow space. Examples are as follows.

In the Thai police system, police officers are its poor victims. The laws authorize them to bear arms and be in command; and they are subject to a centralized hierarchy. Given such conditions, when some officers commit a wrongful deed, such as extortion, the public detest them and view them as lacking dignity.

Or in the bureaucratic system which is centralized, everything depends on “the master and boss.” People often resort to lobbying, seeking help from a circle of friends or insiders as well as brownnosing, which destroy their humanness enormously.

Meanwhile, the political system lacks proper checks and balances, and so politicians can easily rise to power. The struggle for power is so intense, and wrongdoings are so prevalent, to the extent that the word “politician” itself is somewhat tantamount to meaning “lacking dignity.”

Or even when it comes to the hierarchical ranks of monks, it is rather hard for a monk not to adhere to his position. Clinging to ecclesiastical ranks leads to a narrow mind.

In the culture of our thinking, when a bad thing arises, we often think of an individual’s *karma*, but fail to understand *karma* of the system. In reality, systems determine behavior of human beings and social institutions significantly.

4) A mind imprisoned in knowledge

With regards to knowledge, if we are not careful, our mind will be imprisoned in the narrowness of fragmented knowledge. For example, education today divides knowledge into several parts, leaving them disassociated with one another. It is this disassociation that causes the mind to be trapped within small components, rather than attaining the stage of the great mind. This is why university education lacks a force, both intellectual and ethical.

A mind imprisoned in narrow knowledge is unable to liberate the mind locked up in the other four prisons.

5) A mind imprisoned in thought

All of nature is holistically connected and ever-changing (*aniccam*). But human beings often think in a fragmented manner without integration. They often see things as fixed (*niccama*), leading them to extremism.

“Human beings are conditioned by thinking.”

The way we think is therefore very important, although we hardly pay any attention to it. The importance of thinking methods is not taught in school. The *Tripitaka* contains a way of thinking unlike others that can be generally found, yet what is often taught in school is the content, not the thinking method. This is like offering a fruit without offering its seeds, or giving fish without giving a fishnet.

Krishnamurti, a well-known contemporary teacher, proclaimed a number of teachings and authored a number of books. In them he talked about only one thing, i.e. thought. He posited that human thought barred human beings from truth, causing conflicts and violence. Indeed violence is one of the world’s gravest problems.

In one of Krishnamurti’s books, *Beyond Violence*, he discussed how thought brings about violence.

“Suffering arises from thinking.”

When we listen to monks praying, most of the time we do not understand what the prayer means. When they chant the discourse on *Paticcasamuppāda* - Dependent Origination or the Chain of Causation of Suffering, they begin with this first sentence:

“*Avijjā-paccaya saṅkhāra.*”

ignorance conditions mental formations.

Mental formations here refer to false thinking, which occurs continuously one after another, leading to suffering.

Suffering ranges from mild types such as boredom, irritation and annoyance to mental displeasure and despair. All these feelings originate from thought. If we stop thinking - for example, while cultivating mindfulness - suffering cannot do anything to us. In other words, karma cannot do anything to us.

“What kind of thinking causes trouble?”

As previously mentioned, people generally think in a fragmented manner without integration. They often see things as fixed (*niccam*), leading them to extremism. I will clarify this further here.

*In Jāṇusasonī Sutra*², a Brahmin Jānusasonī approached the Buddha and asked,

“Venerable Gotama, do all things exist?”

The Buddha replied,

“Behold, Brahmin. The view that all things exist is one extreme view.”

“Then, Venerable Gotama, all things do not exist?”

The Buddha answered, **“Behold, Brahmin. The view that all things do not exist is the second extreme view.”**

Positing that all things exist or that all things do not exist is fixed and extreme. And then the Buddha further said,

“I proclaim the Dharma that is balanced, avoiding these extremes, as follows:

“... (When this exists, that comes to be. When this does not exist, that does not come to be.)...”

Please note well that the existence and non-existence of a thing are not fixed or absolute in itself. Rather, it is subject to determining conditions or causes.

“When this exists, that comes to be. When this does not exist, that does not come to be.”

Thus, there can be no two things at a point in space and time that are alike, because each relates to other things or other causes dynamically (known as dynamic relativity). To think of things as fixed is therefore to stay far removed from reality or run in contrast to reality, which will lead to other problems.

The Buddha teaches us about impermanence (*aniccam*) or about how things always change. Nothing is stable. Nothing exists on its own, separate from all else. Rather, all things come and cease to be as a result of the stream of specific conditionality (*idappaccayatā*), which goes on endlessly.

² “*Jāṇusasonī Sutra*,” *The Tripitaka*, Thai version, Royal edition, Book 16, p. 83.

Thinking in terms of specific conditionality is indeed the method of thinking found in the Tripitaka. Based on this thinking, for example:

A mind is not something stable. Rather, it is a phenomenon that comes to be as a result of the stream of interdependent arising.

Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is not a fixed entity, either. Instead, it is a phenomenon that comes to be as a result of the stream of interdependent arising.

Likewise, **suffering** and **happiness** are not stable, but impermanent. They are phenomena that come to be as a result of the stream of interdependent arising

In the worldview of specific conditionality, all the things in the universe neither stand still nor exist in isolation. Rather, the whole universe is a surge of specific conditionality in which all are interconnected and in flux. We may call this *universal relativity*.

Understanding nature as it is will enable our mind to flow continuously and in connection with all things. It will no longer be imprisoned in a narrow space or divided in parts.

Science once saw things as stable so that they could be measured accurately. It was only in this century that science has progressed and discovered impermanence (*aniccam*) and interconnect-edness, with Einstein's discovery of the theory of relativity and the advent of quantum mechanics. It was found that things are not fixed or stable. For example, an electron may be a particle and a wave at the same time. Being a particle means it is a material, has an existence, and so is measurable; but being a wave means it is energy, undulating to and fro.

Whereas traditional science gives us a fixed worldview that see things as isolated from one another, the more advanced science offers us a new worldview that sees the world or the universe as undulating and interconnected, which is known as the quantum worldview. At present, the Western world has incorporated this worldview into their

explanations of various phenomena, such as the mind, health, and society, as evidenced by a book named *Quantum Society*³.

The late well-respected Professor Dr. Sem Pringpuangkaew once said, when he was a secondary student at Debsirin School and had lessons on quantum physics, he understood that specific conditionality and quantum physics are one and the same.

The Buddha taught us the worldview of specific conditionality 2,500 years ago, way before scientists discovered that all things are impermanent and the entire universe is a wave that is in constant flux.

I am saying this not for a competitive purpose. Rather, my point is that both specific conditionality and quantum physics do complement each other in making us better understand the nature of the world as it is, i.e. the worldview that sees things as they are.

This discussion has been long because it is indeed of great importance. Worldviews do determine the way we think and our behavior. Most people are of the fixed, fragmented worldview, which leads them to think in a manner that is extremely fixed and fragmented, polarized, conflictual and violent. When the late Venerable Buddhadasa taught us about “neutral correctness,” “beyond good and evil” and “neither positive nor negative,” he was talking about the same thing that we are now.

Nature composes of a variety of things which are immeasurably different. But these things do not stand in conflict with one another. In fact they are interconnected or interact with one another. This may be hard to understand. Even some of those who revere the Venerable Buddhadasa do think in a polarized manner; for example, thinking that “we” are the good people and “they” are the bad people. This kind of thinking always leads to problems, within a family, at the workplace, as well as at the national and global levels.

³ Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, *Quantum Society*. Bloomsbury, 1993.

To think that communism is good, capitalism is bad, or communist capitalism is bad, or that capitalism is the best, or that this party is for the good people and that party is for evil ones - these are all manifestations of polarized thinking. Remember when Khun Chalard Worachat started his hunger strike demanding the amendment of the Constitution. After a while, the society was divided into two poles: one supporting the then Prime Minister Chuan and the other cursing him, and they were on the verge of clash.

To think that we are good and they are evil is to think in an extremely fixed manner which is indeed unreal. Both goodness and evil reside in every one of us. What differs from one to another is what such goodness and evil is about in a particular person, when either of them prevails and why. Thinking in this manner leads to the mind being trapped in a narrow space, ridding it of freedom, which is a kind of mental tension. Having a worldview that enables one to see things as they are will set the mind free, connecting it to the great nature that goes on endlessly.

3.

Awakening Human Dignity and Human Potential



In Chapter 2, we have discussed the things that firmly “dominate” human beings, making them lose their human dignity, behave in ways that do not respect themselves and others, and cause suffering to each other. Although hailed as noble beings, human beings have caused so much destruction in the world that has brought about world crises in such a short period of time, considering the ages of the earth and the universe.

But in every human being lies an inherent nature or a great potential which will enable him/her to attain his/her full humanness and achieve a liberated mind, filled with happiness and creativity.

Normally we use such a tiny proportion of our potential - perhaps less than 10% of the entire potential that we have. It is such a pity if each human being that is born into this world does not know and cannot find this enormous potential that lies hidden in everyone’s humanness.

It should be the duty of everyone - families, communities, schools, temples, organizations, the media and the entire society - to learn to understand this great human potential and support each and everyone to develop it to the fullest.

Education should serve as a tool to bring out the potential that lies hidden in each and every person so that it can be developed to the fullest. However, present-day education hardly ever does this, or does

quite the contrary. Education today therefore lacks a creative force, and so the kind of education that we have is not yet proper. Hence, serious efforts should be made to review the educational system and make it a tool to enhance the human potential.

Each one of us who realizes this cannot afford to wait for the education system to improve so that things will get better. Each one of us will have to build our own potential immediately.

Starting with an awareness.

An awareness that the possession of human dignity does not depend on wealth, physical beauty or social rank.

On the contrary, these sensual or material qualities can easily destroy human dignity and be used to dominate others, obstructing human dignity and potential.

We should not let wealth, physical beauty or social rank dominate ourselves, nor should we resist them. This is because neither domination nor resistance is freedom - they are but two extremes. Rather, it is awareness that will set us free.

The possession of wealth, physical beauty and social rank is enjoyed only by a handful of people. If we were to take these things as social values as most people do, it would only destroy the dignity of the majority - the majority who do not possess wealth, physical beauty or social rank. Nevertheless they are human beings whose humanness is worth more than wealth, more than physical beauty, and more than social rank.

Only when each and every human being, regardless of his material conditions, is in possession of human dignity can happiness and prosperity prevail. Therefore, each and every one of us ought to be aware of our own humanness' worth, respect our own humanness and be delighted in and pleased with our own humanness.

One manifestation of humanness is the respect for the humanness of others.

To not respect the humanness of others means our humanness is diminished. Hence, respecting the humanness of others and that of our own are one and the same.

Human beings are different from objects and animals in that they can attain freedom.

To attain freedom is to achieve complete humanness.

Freedom, wisdom, peace and happiness are one and the same.

Freedom here does not refer to the ability to do things as one pleases, but to a mind that has been liberated from tension due to selfishness, from tension due to the value system, from tension of social structure and from narrowness of knowledge and thought, as discussed in Chapter 2.

We should free ourselves from selfishness, from false beliefs and practices which we habitually adopted, so that we may move toward freedom, toward love for fellow human beings and nature, onto the great ocean of immense knowledge, which is connected and in flux all over the whole universe.

We will transform ourselves, from ones with a small mind to ones with a great mind.

Divine happiness or spiritual happiness
has enormous impact on the body
and the mind.

It brings about real well-being.
The mind enters into the state
of sufficiency
because it has found true happiness
and will show great compassion
by wishing others to find
this happiness too.



4.

The Great Mind

(Mahattacitta)



The nature of the human mind is not confined only to an ability to perceive materials superficially; its perimeter of perception can be expanded toward nature or a dimension that extends way beyond the material dimension.

Nature, vast as it is, consists of both material and non-material entities. In terms of material entities, we may have been born in a small village and have knowledge of only what is in it. Then we see the sea and are overwhelmed by its vastness. Or when we learn of the size of the earth, we feel that it is such an enormous entity. But then the sun is a million times bigger than the earth, and so we wonder how gigantic a thing that is a million times bigger than the earth can be. But because the sun is so far away, 93 million kilometers away from the earth, it appears rather small to our eyes. This smallness of the sun is unreal. It is an illusion caused by distance. Even though light travels at an extremely fast speed, it takes eight minutes for it to travel from the sun to the earth.

Apart from the earth, there are other planets such as Mars, Mercury, Jupiter and others that orbit the sun. The perimeter of the sun and its satellites is called the solar system. How immense the solar system is! But the solar system is just a tiny spot compared to the vastness of the universe.

The universe began with one singular speck known as “singularity” which was smaller than a pinhead. Then this extremely

dense point exploded with unimaginable force, dubbed as the Big Bang, approximately 15,000 million years ago, creating innumerable stars planted together in clusters called galaxies. There are approximately 10^{11} or 100,000,000,000 galaxies in total, each containing 10^{11} or 100,000,000,000 stars. Thus, the solar system is only a tiny dot in a galaxy.

The vast reaches of outer space and time are a matter of another dimension, one that lies beyond normal human perception.

Not long ago, an astronomer took pictures of a star which had recently exploded, that is, 100,000 light-years ago! Its light has just reached the earth. This star exploded 100,000 light-years ago, but its light has just arrived at the earth. What we see now is something that happened 100,000 light-years ago.

The sun is so far away. It takes eight minutes for light to travel from the sun to the earth, which is indeed very short in terms of distance of the universe which is measured in “light-years,” or the distance that light travels in one year. Imagine how far light can travel in one year. But the said star that exploded is located at a place where it takes 100,000 years for light to get to the earth. Imagine the Buddha died 2554 years ago, which seems very long ago to us. But light travelled from that star 100,000 years ago and only recently got here. Also keep in mind that it did not travel by plane or rocket, but with the speed of light. 100,000 light-years therefore ought to be unimaginably far from us. Moreover, the distance between certain stars and the earth is as far as 1 million light-years. Furthermore, the distance from an edge of the universe to another is 4,000 million light-years. With that massiveness, the entire earth will be so small that it cannot be seen. If the earth is that small, then how tiny us human beings are? We are not the center of the universe but are a tiny little part of it.

But we are in the entire universe and the entire universe is within us, because matter and energy that are within us were part of the singularity that existed before the Big Bang. The entire universe and

we who are parts of it were therefore parts of that singularity. It can be said therefore that the universe is within us and we are in the universe.

The perimeter of the human mind can thus be expanded so that it will perceive the endless vastness of nature. In practicing meditation, once one achieves a stage beyond the fourth stage of serene contemplation (*jhāna*), one is said to enter “*Ākāśānañcāyatana*” in which one attains the sphere of the infinity of space. When one is in another stage beyond that, one enters “*Viññānañcāyatana*” and attains the sphere of the infinity of consciousness. The feelings that space and consciousness are infinite are similar to the previous description about the expansion of the perimeter of the mind so that it can perceive the infinite vastness of nature.

When the mind experiences or connects itself to the immeasurably vast nature, it will be released from the narrowness within itself and other types of narrowness mentioned above.

The endless space-time mentioned above is both material and abstract, but it is neutral by nature. The human dimension can also perceive another type of abstraction which consists of noble values.

This abstract dimension that can be perceived by human beings is also known as **spirit** or **spirituality** or **spiritual dimension**.

The word “spirit” here has a different meaning from “mind” or “consciousness.” When used individually, a mind means feeling-thinking, which animals also have. Consciousness as a Buddhist term refers to perception, for example, to see something and perceive from such seeing, is called “eye-consciousness” (*cakkhu-viññāna*), whereas to perceive from hearing is called “ear-consciousness” (*sota-viññāna*).

“Mind” or “consciousness” is a neutral word representing natural conditions in the way that is not value-laden. But “spirit” is used in the way that imparts a value; therefore, it refers to an abstraction or a profound value beyond the mind and consciousness.

Today, because much of the spiritual dimension has been lost to human beings, what we have discussed here may be a bit hard to digest. I would therefore like to explain it further using the following examples.

Human beings have long lived with nature and so appreciated its value, creating abstract concepts about Mother Earth, Mother of Water and Tree Deities, all of which are abstractions demonstrating a value that promotes relationships based on respect.

When we respect something, we definitely will not destroy that thing. But when we analyze soil, water or trees under the scientific framework, we will only see matter and minerals; we cannot see Mother Earth, Mother of Water or Tree Deities through the eyes of science.

Therefore, to rely solely on scientific thinking would only destroy the value or the spiritual dimension, reducing things to pure objects. When the mind perceives them only as objects, missing their values, there can be no respect. Without respect, human beings become destructive easily.

Science is actually not an evil thing, but it is merely an intellectual system or a means to get closer to the reality. But we should bear in mind that science as it is understood does not represent all that is real. The issue of value or the spiritual dimension is also real, and this reality is greatly useful and related to humanness. When the human dimension is absent from the kind of science commonly understood and human beings do not realize this, humanity is stuck in a superficial worldview that encompasses only the material dimension. The lack of the value of humanness leads human beings to massive destruction - a crisis of the world today.

The value dimension or humanness is therefore essential. Only human beings possess it. It will be unfortunate and regrettable if human beings are restricted in any way from fulfilling their humanness, or if humanness is diminished or lost, leading them to crises of many sorts. It is therefore of the greatest importance that human beings understand this.

The occurrence of the spiritual dimension brings about **divine experience**.

Divine experience is an experience that is so profound and beyond material experiences. As discussed earlier, animals' experiences are purely material, consisting of "eating, pooping, banging, and sleeping," which are all superficial experiences.

But divine experience or spiritual experience is a profound and delicate type of experience that brings about bliss and happiness all over one's body. There is no single part in the body that such bliss and happiness arising from divine experience cannot reach. Put differently, bliss and happiness radiates to every molecule of the body.

Divine happiness or spiritual happiness has enormous impact on the body and the mind. It brings about real well-being. The mind enters into the state of sufficiency because it has found true happiness and will show great compassion by wishing others to find this happiness too.

Those who have never found spiritual happiness have never known true happiness. This is why they keep searching for it tirelessly, causing destruction along the way. Sustainable development cannot therefore be possible if human beings lack the access to the spiritual dimension or the value of humanness.

“Do whatever that you like.
Try to do it elaborately.
This will improve your mind.
Try to reach deep down to the base,
Then it will be connected with all things.”

Rapee Sakrik



5. Five Paths to Enhancing the Mind



The **five paths** to enhancing the mind comprise the following:

1) Expanding our love to encompass all things to the point of universal love

We should expand the love of self, which is a limited kind of love, toward the love of all fellow human beings and nature. The more inclusive our love and compassion is, the happier and freer our mind becomes.

A mind without love or one filled with hatred is trapped in narrowness and tension. A number of statements in the *Tripitaka* say that if compassion radiates endlessly, the mind will be emancipated and attain freedom.

We should cultivate an unconditional love of fellow human beings, like an unconditional love a mother gives to her child, whether or not s/he is good or bad. A motherly love is pure and unconditional. Everyone has a mother and receives this great kind of love. She has loved us since we were in her womb and raises us up with great care. We should return the favor of the greatest love given to us by showing this great love toward humankind.

Training people to love others and all things is the kind of education that is most important for humanness. Why does education nowadays not do this? We need to understand that we and all other

things are derived from the same singularity, that the whole universe and we are one and the same. In loving ourselves, if we have a great mind, we will also love all other things, because all is within ourselves, too. We are all, and all are us. Let every molecule of our body be blissfully filled with the love of the universe or universal love. With this type of love running through our entire body, all the systems inside will be relaxed, at peace, liberated, happy, filled with wisdom, and ready to learn from all people and all situations as they are.

On the contrary, hatred causes stress, restlessness, tension, suffering, lack of wisdom and makes one unable to learn from anyone in any circumstance, because the mind is obsessed, restless and biased toward hatred.

A love should not be confined to just ourselves, our associates or any particular skin color, class, race, cult or religion. Animosity between religions is a result of depicting one's own God with the narrowness of oneself in mind. God does not belong to a specific race. God governs the entire universe and loves all of us.

A love toward only human beings is not enough. It should also be extended to encompass nature because human beings are parts of nature. We should also love trees, rivers, streams, all animals, as all are parts of nature that are interconnected.

In cultivating compassion for all things on a regular basis until our love becomes a normal, eternal condition, our mind becomes so big that it encompasses the whole universe. It is then that the mind frees itself from narrowness and becomes liberated, peaceful, happy and filled with friendship.

2) Experiencing great nature and great art

In experiencing vastness, our mind will be freed from narrowness. For instance, when we are stunned by the enormity of a forest, a mountain or the sea, this is a manifestation of a mind that has been released from narrowness and connected itself with vast nature.

Nature is vast and infinite. Our mind, by contrast, is imprisoned in narrowness and cannot experience nature that is great and infinite.

Experiencing great nature makes “an inflated mind,” i.e. our mind becomes connected to nature’s greatness, causing deep appreciation and even thrill. This is a sort of divine or spiritual experience. Ancient people who lived in forests all had this spiritual dimension, regardless of the continent they were in. Mother Earth, Mother of Water and Tree Deities are parts of the spiritual dimension, as well as the “Grandfather Spirits” that guard watershed forests. The spirit of Native Americans and local inhabitants elsewhere, which respects nature, is now much referred to by environmentalists.

When a pilot flies the plane up in the sky and remains focused on the infinitely vast sky, the mind will be delightfully at peace. An astronaut on a spaceship while orbiting the earth saw the entire planet. When he returned to the earth, he said he had changed completely. A spiritual dimension had emerged within him. He was no longer the same person that he had been.

There are numerous ways for our mind to have an experience that connects it to great nature. This includes looking at the sky and the stars. If we understand it, our mind will connect itself to the unimaginably vast universe, temporarily releasing itself from selfhood. Now, more than ever, we have a number of tools at hand, such as videos and planetariums, to help us experience or imagine that we are travelling in the universe. This will make it easier for us to expand our mind.

Death is a greatest kind of nature. Those who have faced death will have a transformed mind and possess a deep mental or spiritual dimension. They will obtain a higher level of spiritual development and compassion. Compassion will help expand the mind, as discussed in the previous sub-section. Experience of death therefore elevates the spirit. In discussing this, we can see that education today is merely technical education; it lacks elevation of the spirit which is essential for

humanness. If we develop ways to help human beings cope with death, they will help to improve human beings significantly.

Practicing mindfulness of death (*maraṇasati*) is also useful in elevating one's spirit. The current Supreme Patriarch always teaches us to practice dying every day so that we will become a better person. In fact, the funeral bathing ceremony, funeral prayers and cremation, all have the purpose of elevating human spirit. People are so busy these days that they fail to develop a spiritual receiver, and so they miss many benefits from the experience of death.

Experiencing great art also releases the mind from the narrowness within itself. It will lead to happiness and profundity - a divine experience and elevation of the mind. Great art means any art that elevates the spirit. This is why art is involved in many religious affairs, such as chapels, assembly halls, pagodas, paintings, music and, Christian hymns. All these calm the mind, connecting it to the "great mind" with ease.

Art can be incorporated into all kinds of work. Professor Rapee Sakrik always says that, in any work, if you pay attention and do it elaborately (as in art), your mind will be elevated. If we understand this, we will be able to engage in any kind of work, may it be sweeping the floor, washing the dishes, cleaning the toilet, publishing books, etc. as if they were art which would enhance our spirit.

In cultivating mindfulness and meditation, when a mind is peaceful at a certain level, it will experience abundant beauty around it. This is a form of art, an art arising from meditation or mental culture (*bhāvanā*). It is a meditative art, a kind of divine experience.

To experience nature's greatness and great art is to expand the perimeter of the mind. It will bring about happiness, peace and an opportunity for one's wisdom development to reach higher stages further.

3) Integrative learning

Nature consists of all things that are infinitely interconnected. With integrative learning, we can connect ourselves to the truth and the greatness of nature and attain a great mind. If we only learn things in a disintegrated manner, our mind will be small and narrow. The story of “six blind men feeling an elephant” is a good illustration of this. Unable to see the whole elephant due to blindness, each of them feels only one part of the elephant and they are in complete disagreement about what they think the beast is. With an ability to see, regardless of the part of an elephant we start knowing, we will be able to know the elephant as a whole by means of integration, because knowledge can flow thoroughly without obstruction.

Education today is conducted in a way much like the above story. People therefore have a small mind because their vision is limited to a certain part. Knowledge cannot flow thoroughly. This brings about narrowness, conflict, quarrel and ineffectiveness. For example, an agricultural expert who only has technical knowledge, such as one related to fertilizers and insecticides, but fails to understand farmers’ life, society and environment, will not be able to connect such techniques to the farmers’ life system. Many agricultural experts hate farmers. Likewise: a teacher who has teaching techniques, an economist who knows economic techniques, a law scholar who takes law as a technique, or a doctor who when seeing the patient understands only the disease but not the human being, and so on.

Such is to take “science” as merely a technique, not as wisdom that enables us to understand something as a whole and see the connections. “Science” therefore becomes a “weapon.”⁴ To give an

⁴ Editor’s note: the author is employing the double use of the Sanskrit word ‘Sastra’ in Thai, which means ‘science’ (a body of knowledge) in one way of spelling/pronunciation, and means ‘weapon’ in another slightly different way of spelling/pronunciation.

education is like giving a weapon to each student. Some have in their possession a spear, others a javelin, others a lance, without an understanding of the reality of life, society and environment, which are all interconnected. As no one understands the reality of life, society and environment and each is given a weapon, it is as though education has produced barbarians. The world is in trouble because of this kind of education. We may call it the kind of education that destroys the human potential.

Learning something should be done in an integrative manner. It does not matter where we start, but we must not stop short at that particular subject or study its details in a myopic way. But we should reconnect it with the whole of nature in a holistic and integrated manner. This kind of learning results in a kind of knowledge that flows continuously without obstruction. It brings about enlightenment, freedom, compassion and spiritual dimension. This kind of connection leads to spiritual development.

I have met a lot of talented Nobel-laureate scientists who are wise and greatly compassionate. They wish their students well and want to help their fellow human beings with their knowledge. I am therefore certain that scientific knowledge, provided that it is thoroughly grasped, is another significant way to enhance our spirit. Knowledge and virtue are not a kind of dilemma, if we understand knowledge in an integrative way.

To specialize in something does not run in contradiction with integrative learning. Indeed, the word “specialist” ought to mean “special expert” rather than “an expert in a particular subject.” The word “special” itself already implies “extra.” Therefore “special expert” means that this person has knowledge in other areas as well, but s/he has an extra knowledge in a particular area; whereas “an expert in a particular subject” implies that the person has knowledge in that subject but not in others. The connection between knowledge and specialty may occur in two ways, i.e. when one has studied a general subject and then becomes interested in a particular subject, and when

one has studied a subject in which one has a particular interest and then connects it to the whole.

Professor Rapee Sakrik often says, *“Do whatever you like. Try to do it elaborately. This will improve your mind. Try to reach deep down to the base, and it will be connected with all other things.”*

This is an important message, which I would like to call “Rapee’s speech” or even “the mantra of Professor Rapee.”

What does he mean by that?

“Do whatever that you like” answers the question of what one should do. Some people try very hard to squeeze their mind to answer this question but they cannot figure what to do. The Rapee’s mantra says we can do anything we like. Doing what we like makes us happy. Doing something we like enables us to concentrate on it for a long time, and is a way to practice meditation. There are more ways of practicing meditation than simply sitting and directing one’s attention to something. We can also do it while working.

“Try to do it elaborately” makes an art out of the thing we do. We should also try to go down to the base so as to be able to connect it with all else. Understanding all things enables us to understand ourselves. “Do whatever” then becomes a way to enhance our mind and spirit.

If we understand the message above, we will be able to see everything we encounter or do as a way of learning in order to develop wisdom, art, and spirit, or to expand the mind and attain a great mind. We will achieve a higher level of freedom and be filled with happiness and creativity every day.

4) Cultivating mindfulness

The mind is normally imprisoned in narrow thought. The cultivation of mindfulness releases the mind toward greatness. To cultivate mindfulness is therefore to create an enormous potential known as the power of mindfulness.

The mind normally enters thought or resides in thought. Of course, thinking is a way to develop wisdom (*cintamayapaññā*); but most of our thoughts are useless, such as wandering thought, worrisome thought, and stressful thought. It may be said that they make us foolish and suffer.

To cultivate mindfulness is to train our mind to stay in the present. This may be physical, such as being aware of each step being taken; every in-and out-breath; sitting, lying, standing and walking postures, and swallowing. It may be an awareness of any feeling that arises; whether it is pleasant, painful or neutral. It may be an awareness of any thought - good or bad - or see it as it arises.

When the mind follows the present closely until it becomes totally aware of the present, our thinking will subside. True peace emerges when thinking ceases. When thinking ceases, the mind becomes neutral or free. When it is free, it will experience nature as it is. Nature, as it is, is great. A mind filled with mindfulness is thus a great mind.

When the mind is at peace due to cessation of thinking it will find ample happiness and will understand the statement “happiness is peace.” All in nature will appear as beauty, as meditative art. No suffering can arise, because suffering arises from thought. Wisdom will become so penetrating, and behavioral change will ensue. Normally these things are very difficult to achieve; but they will become easy things, as if they occur automatically.

Such are the benefits of mindfulness cultivation. Let everyone cultivate mindfulness. There are a lot of books and manuals written on this, so I have only discussed it in brief here.

5) Forming groups to carry out activities or building communityness

Forming groups to carry out activities here refers to communityness building. With communityness comes the potential of infinite creativity, which will bring about abundant happiness and success in all endeavors.

Everyone should therefore try to understand communityness building and to build communityness in their life and work. The future of humankind lies in communityness, which is a way to achieve a great mind.

Communityness means the condition in which a number of people, no matter how many, share a common objective, establish contact and communication or join together, have generosity toward one another, participate in a mutual learning process related to their activities, and set up some form of management with a view to achieve the commonly-shared objective.

Any group that falls into this definition is considered as possessing communityness. Communityness may therefore emerge in various places and situations, such as in a family, a company, a monastery, a school, a village, a slum or in any collective activity.

Communityness begins with the first two requirements of *Aparihāniyadharma* or the seven conditions for community welfare, namely:

1. To hold regular and frequent meetings
2. To meet together in harmony, disperse in harmony and conduct business and duties in harmony

To meet regularly and conduct business and duties in harmony are powerful learning procedures. Learning on one's own has its advantages as well as shortcomings. The latter include laziness, inability to understand what is being learnt, and being trapped in false thoughts and having no one to correct them. Collective learning addresses these three problems.

Learning consists of both theory and practice. In practice, one must face various realities that are complicated and ever-changing. There are no two realities that are alike at a single point in space-time. Doing something strictly only with knowledge without adapting to real situations can never be effective. Therefore, it may be said that learning collectively is a powerful learning procedure that will lead to success.

Regular meetings, if done properly, i.e. using information based on what is real, backed by proper sources and references, and governed with politeness, with no one dominating others with his/her own ideas and everyone appreciating each other's worth, will make participants happy and bring out their full potential, because this kind of meeting is democratic and not dictated by any particular person alone.

A meeting that is not held just for the sake of holding a meeting, but is done properly as described above, is indeed a genuine application of dharma, i.e. loosening one's clinging to self or selfishness, growing compassion, seeing the worth of others (*muditā*), having tolerance toward different opinions or seeing the value or beauty of difference among the participants.

When a meeting is properly and frequently held for a while, natural leaders will emerge. **Natural leaders** are those who are wise, have a mind that is ready to sacrifice for common good, are able to communicate with the public, and are automatically accepted and respected by members.

There will be multiple natural leaders, both male and female, in a particular subject area.

I have two observations regarding this.

First, natural leaders are true leaders, whereas appointed or even elected leaders may not be true leaders as they may not be the right person. In order to know who true leaders are, people need to go through a process of cooperation, as the quality of leadership will emerge while so doing. Sometimes true leaders themselves do not recognize their leadership unless they have undergone a process of cooperation.

Groups should be formed to carry out activities, and communityness should be created widely, both in urban and rural areas. This is the key to solving all kinds of problems. Indeed, all types of education should promote the building of communityness, not individualism as they do today. There should be various kinds of institutions that have experts on the building of communityness to train various groups wishing to build it. The government and the private sector should co-establish a “fund for social development” to promote the building of communityness. This fund should be a huge sum of money, say THB 10,000 million or more.

Institutions should rethink this and revive the building of communityness in their organizations, such as monasteries and universities. Indeed, the community of monks (*Sangha*) is a community of learning, but monks today lack communityness. They are isolated from each other, minding their own business and hardly working with one another. Individualism also gradually permeates the monastic world. Likewise, universities now are hardly academic communities. University people lack happiness and creativity. The key to developing a university’s potential lies in the building of an academic community first and foremost.

Cultural assembling is a simple way that leads to happiness and creativity. Cultural assembling may emerge locally, such as in provinces, districts and sub-districts. Assemblies may be formed to carry out public activities, such as natural conservation, art conservation, studying the Dharma, helping the poor, the sick, orphans, the homeless, AIDS patients, etc.

Forming a group to conduct activities for fellow human beings brings about delight and bliss to those conducting such activities. This is an easy start that will lead to a change in humankind’s direction, from one that is ridden in selfishness and materialism to one that is driven by humanitarianism and spiritual development.

problems, such as poverty, environmental issues, and various social ills such as ruinous habits (*apāyamukha*), crime, drugs, prostitution, AIDS and other types of violence. A community also conserves and develops cultures. The strength of a community and a network of community is true democracy.

The strength of a community is tantamount to social immunity.

There is no way that we can stop germs from entering our body. However, if our body has a working immune system, although germs enter our body, they will not spread into a disease state. But if our immune system is impaired, the germs that enter our body will spread into a severe disease state, such as cases of AIDS. The same goes for a society. We cannot stop all problems from emerging, but if a society has immunity, the problems will not deteriorate into social crises as they have these days. Society today lacks immunity because human beings are much too individualistic. The strength of a society is its immunity.

The strength of the society has so much potential because it results from the combination of three elements:

1. Dharma
2. Learning
3. Management

Each of these elements, namely *Dharma*, learning and management, is highly powerful. But each of them alone is not sufficient to deal with the difficulty of a problem. Only when the three elements meet does the great potential arise.

The fact that members of a community are amply happy when communityness emerges is because the community as a group has kindness and compassion toward one another, their selfishness is diminished and so the level of success is high. Therefore, forming a group is also a practice of *Dharma* and spiritual development in a way, enabling the mind to connect itself with noble values.

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The five paths consist of:

1. Expanding our love to encompass all things to the point of universal love
2. Experience of great nature and great art
3. Integrative learning
4. Cultivation of mindfulness
5. Forming groups to carry out activities or building communityness.

The purpose of these five paths is to expand a small mind and make it a great mind, and to connect itself with noble values or spiritual development. This will bring about the potential of great creativity and, ultimately, freedom, virtue, beauty, happiness, friendship, peace and sustainable development.

Conclusion



Human dignity lies in one's true worth - not money, physical beauty or social rank. Humanness lies in values which are nobler than sensual or material qualities.

Every human being should create a consciousness of humanness by respecting his/her own humanness as well as that of others. Hidden in everyone's humanness is great potential. The human brain is big, but the mind is small, as it is trapped in narrowness of many kinds. In order to bring out this human potential and use it in its full capacity, human beings must learn to emancipate themselves from narrowness. They must liberate their mind, connecting it with grand natural truth and expanding the perimeter of the mind to become a great mind. A great mind is one with the greatest potential of creativity possible for the potential of humanness.

The dignity of human beings and the potential of creativity are powerful driving forces that will lead humankind toward freedom, virtue, beauty, happiness, friendship, peace and sustainable development.

Such is also my wish to all of you.

