

REC007

Today's talk will be entitled

This Generation is All in a Tangle

Anagarika Tevijjo

In *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*,
Samuttya Nikaya, Chapter IV, 625, in the
Brahmana-samyutta (p.259) edited by Bhikkhu Bodhi,

A Brahmin asks the Buddha:

*

**“A tangle inside, a tangle outside
This generation is entangled in a tangle.
— I ask you this, O Gotama —
Who can disentangle the tangle?”**

*

This is a question/ which we could
well ask about our own generation/

of our own day/
in our own country/, right now.

[But],

before we can answer/ such a question:
[which is framed in a metaphor]
**let's begin/ by explicating
the imagery/, line-by-line-**

the way students of literature/
sometimes do/ with a poem:

[first],

attempting/ to clarify the words/ in the lines,

[before, then,]

going on to explain/

**what they may mean/
within a broader context/**

-
- [within a wider a wider world
- and within today's generation].

The straight-forward/ **paraphrase/ would be
that: —**

**Because there is something wrong
with the way of thinking/ and
way of behaving/ in our own day,**

- we need to figure out/**
- **why/** the problem has arisen/
 - **and/**
 - **who/** can help us/ understand
 - **how** to solve it.

[And]

The **central image/** is a **'tangle,'**

Firstly,

in the sense of a tangled-ball
of string or twine or line —
[like]
a wholly-entangled mesh
of inter-twined fish line

which may be compared

- to a man's head
- or
- [better said]
- to his **mind**

which may be compared with

- to what is going on **inside**
- **the 'entangled-mental sphere'**
- **of**
- **the bewildered, human mind.**

[pause]

[And]

Secondly,

[to use another analogy]

Our thoughts/ may be likened/, **as well**: —

- **To an outside/**
- **and predatory/**
- **totally entangled-web**
- **[a net of entrapment]**
-
- in which we have been/ caught
- and enmeshed, and from which/
- there is no conceivable escape/,
-
- from within the intensity/
- of the tangle-within-the-tangle/,
-
- which is ever becoming
- tighter/ and tighter-and-tighter.

[pause]

[And]

Thirdly,

In a yet wider sense/, **the tangle,**

(both **inside** and **outside**),

may be **likened/ also**

[to]

being **enclosed/ within a jungle,**

- wherein everything in it,
- is desperately grasping/
- upwards/ for light and life,

- whilst/, concurrently/,
- constantly/ and relentlessly/
- being strangled -

- by innumerable numbers/
- of climbing/,
- encroaching vines,
- which/ keep/ creeping-up/ from all-sides.

[pause]

Awareness/ of this jungle/ may be described

[*figuratively*]

-
- **As acute/ conscious/ mental-anxiety,**
- **fraught with/ excruciating/ agitation**
- **[and even dread],**
- **arising out of/**
- **one's desperate/ and compulsive —**
- **fear of/ annihilation/-of-self —**

[which may be better-defined as]

an excruciating-need/ for the assurance/

— of our own/ continuing/ self-existence,”

[And]

— The implication/ is, indeed, **horrific** —
because of the agonizing-inference that:

- Nothing/ in this world/ can continue/ to exist
- except, [*figuratively-speaking*]
- through/ the starkest-struggle —

- **just/to be able/ to keep one’s head/**
- **barely above/ the heads of others, -**
- **just to be able to continue to survive.**

[pause]

[However.]

Rather than discussing/
a broader-and-wider
struggle/ for survival/

constantly continuing/ within/
an expanding/ cosmic processes, ...],

we can [**also**] look at an example
which strikes closer-to-home —

by looking into ourselves
- **within our own generation**
- **within our own times,**
- **within our own minds.**

First,

In this generation/ of today,
- everyone seems/ to be seeking
- to satisfy his/her own desires/,

and everyone seems/ to be/ in conflict/
with everyone else/ to get what —

- each **feels** that
- he/she **wants** and
- he/she **needs** to fulfill
- his/her **requirements** for nourishment
- and fulfilment of his/her **expectations**.

[There are **some exceptions**, of course.]

[And you may one of them.]

[pause]

[But, even then],

Second,

[Because]

-
- such needs/ and desires/
- for self-nourishment,
- often contradict/
-
- and conflict/
- [even internally]
- with one another —

a man's life becomes/, indeed/,
much like a tangle of creepers/
reaching for light/ in a dark-jungle —

- where even the strongest/
- and highest of trees
- are in competition/

- with, yet, other/,
- encroaching/ creepers and vines,
- arising / and entwining together
-
- to block/ and steal their light/ on every side,
- [and, like most people,]
- seeking/ every available/,
- intrusive/ and invasive/
- advantage/ possible.

[So]

Third,

it requires/ a continuous/, arduous,
unrelenting/, and vital-force of energy,

- just for organisms/ and forms of growths,
- (like plants and people),
- to continue to fight/ to survive/ and stay alive.

This may seem an extreme/ [but, perhaps, apt]
example,

[But]

**There is no let-up/ in the personal,
inter-personal/ and cultural jungle: —**

[in which]

- everything seems/ to be getting
- further-enmeshed/ and interlaced
- within/ the tangle of the tangle/,
- becoming/ totally-entwined/
- with mental ties,

- continually arising/
- and **grasping** and **clinging**,

until, [with exasperation],

- we frequently feel
- there is no apparent way
-
- we would ever be able/ to untangle/
- the over-whelming/, totally-entangled
- network/ of tension/ and confusion/
-
- which is continually vibrating/
- and pulsating/ and throbbing/
- within and through our minds.

Our minds get snagged/
knotted/ and intertwined/
with perplexing conflicts/

(which keep/ coming into-consciousness)
[from both inside/ and outside the body.]

[And]

Forth,

[To make things worse] —

- **even our own conflicting/**
- **and contradictory wishes/**
- **and motivations/ continue**
- **to keep pulling us:**
- **this way and that way —**
- **one way and then another —**
-

- **in a whirl of mental processes**
- **which continues swirling**
- **our perceptions and conceptions**
-
- **up-and-down and around,**
- **here-and-there and everywhere: —**
-
- **with no realistic prospect/**
- **of our ever being able/**
- **to do anything about it —**
-
- **other than to just hang-on/**
- **to the drive/ to stay alive/**
- **and somehow survive—**
-
- at least for as long/
- as our mental-energy/continues
- holding-up/ against the stress/ -
-
- of our own/ unrelenting/
- and ultimately/, **self-initiated/**
- **conflicting/ mental/ anguish.**

[Similarly]

Fifth,

In interpersonal relations,

-
- even though people/
- may be attracted-together/
-
- [and thereby]
- — attached to one-another —
- by **mutual needs,**
-
- they will/ frequently/ also find/
- they have/ **conflicting needs,**

- which/ they will/, then/,
- [as separate/ organic-entities],
- often/, blindly/ and selfishly/ follow:

— even/ to the verge/
of absurdity/ and insanity.

[Moreover]

Sixth,

to make things even more-perplexing, —

within society-at-large, we
are often presented with
yet another dilemma: —

**We want to be one thing,
While, at the same time,
we are told to be another.**

[Indeed]

we are presented/ with a exhaustive pallet
of conflicting ideals/ and goals to achieve,

- [and] either we fit-in/
- to such mass-insanity
- of
- **wrong view of the world**
- [or]
- we are shut-out/ and punished – /
- and made to suffer –
- one way or another.

[And]

Seventh,

what is perhaps even much/—
more/ mentally-distracting/
is the bewildering fact that:/ —

As a result/ of vain-hopes of escape
from these networks/ of dilemmas —

— [based on delusive anticipation] —

[Yet other]

- alternative sets of perceived ideals/
- keep arising/
- from somewhere **within** our minds
- or [somehow] sneaking in/
- from somewhere **outside**,

[once again,]

giving us momentary/
false expectations.

- And, so, we blindly continue/
- pursuing/ self-delusive goals, -
- even though/
- we intrinsically know/
- that they are/ wholly unrealistic.

[This is the way it is.]

[This is the way of the world.]

[And thus,]

The Brahmin/

- - **[in the above-quoted text]**
- **is not putting/ an**
- **antiquated or outdated**

- **or foolish question/ to the Buddha.**

He is asking about/
the **root of existence**/,

asking/ the Buddha/ to help,

- **by explaining/ the root cause/**
- **of the pain/ of existence**/,
-
- **which is/**
- **actually present/**
- **in every/ generation of men/**
- **and women/, including our own.**

[pause]

Before the Buddha's time, there was **no answer**/
to such a question: —

- which/ was the determining cause
- **why**/ the Buddha left/ his former teachers/
- and continued-on/ striving alone —
- seeking the cause/ of human suffering.

[And]

[*We should note:*]

The Buddha's answer/
to the question
is a '**formula**'

— or better said —

— a '**prescription**' —
for healing
such mental pain ...

The Buddha says:
[in the second stanza]

**“A man/ established in virtue/, wise/,
Developing/ the mind/ and wisdom -
a bhikkhu/ ardent and discreet -
he can disentangle the tangle.”**

[pause]

While the Buddha’s reply may seem,
just/ a familiar recitation/ of words/ at first, —

- **if** we look more closely,
- at what those words really mean
- [and how they interrelate],
- we will find/ an answer there,

- **which will help us/**
- **to help ourselves/**
- **in ‘this generation’**
- **of our own day.**

[pause]

Closely paraphrased/
(in this second stanza),
the

Buddha’s response/
(paraphrased)
means/ that

- one/ who has learned the path,
 - [an ardent bhikkhu],
 - established/ in virtue/ and wisdom/
 - knows the way /to disentangle the tangle.

In other words/

-

- there have been many
- bhikkhus, bhikkhunis and Noble Ones/,
- (besides the Buddha himself),
- who have been able/
- to disentangle the tangle.

[pause]

In the succeeding stanza,
he proceeds to explain/
the above-mentioned formula,

which, (if properly perceived),
answers the Brahmin's query/

— [even more specifically]: —

[pause]

The Buddha continues:

**“Those for whom lust and hatred
Along with ignorance has been expunged,
The arahants/ with taints destroyed:
For them/ the tangle/ is disentangled.”**

[Now,]

**There are some “words” in this stanza,
which should be explained and defined.**

— which need to be properly explicated: —

[So]

[Let's start]

by *explicating*/ the terms:
“lust” and hatred,” first,

and/, then/, go on /
to work our way/
all the way/ [back],
through/ the mental-purification process/
of mind-development/ (*bhavana*)/
to the achievement/ of “virtue” and “wisdom.”

[pause]

“Lust” and “hatred”
— are intrinsic —
within the way things/
commonly work/
in the mundane world,

[in stark contrast]

- **to the wholesome practice —**
- **[the mentally-pure practice]**
- **of the Noble Ones/ who,**
- **“with little dust in their eyes,” —**

- **[Who]**

- **see/ ‘the way things really are’**
- **and the way the world really is.**

[pause]

[To further explain]:

The reason/ that **the worldly-mind**
gets all enmeshed/ and entangled
in feelings of ‘lusting/ and hating’ —

The root cause of mental distraction
comes from seeing, or viewing’ things

— as other/ than / they, actually are —

- and, *then*, becoming/ attached/ to
- wrong-minded/ subjective/, mental/,
- emotional, moods/ and views

- in a way/ [which leads-into/ and]
- causes/
- the **distress/ of mental-suffering**.

[Whereas]

By Contrast,

- the bhikkhu/, whose mind is trained/
- will not fall/ into the trap
- of mental ties/ and attachments/.

- He will not get snagged/ on senses and views.

- He will not give-in/ to urges and impulses,

- because he knows
- that **they/** will, **inevitably**, cause/ continuing
- dissatisfaction/, frustration/, anxiety/ and pain.

[And,]

[To continue our word-analysis],

- The word **‘lust’** means just
- what you might imagine it to be,
- in your wildest imagination/,
- — **plus a few things** — which
- you/ may not have imagined/ too.

- In this stanza/, ‘lust’ means/,
- in the first place,
- full-blown **sexual desire**: —

[And]

- Once we come-of-age/, and start responding/
- to our regenerative-inclinations and impulses/,
-
- there is no-knowing/ where the mind will stop:
- in trying/ to fulfil/ the full-range/ of/ its
- hidden yearnings for mental-sensual fantasies.
-

*

- The Sakyan princes/ knew enough about that/,
- so let's leave 'lust' there/ and ask/, rather/: —
- **“Why those/ who came to the Buddha**
- **for acceptance/ as bhikkhus**
- **could leave/ such a world/**
- **of potential/ sensual-satiation/ behind.”**

[pause]

The answer is that, [with time,]

-
- **one becomes ‘disenchanted’ with it/ —**
- **once one ‘knows’/ it does not bring**
- **any sort of/ ‘permanent’ happiness.**
- **[mentally or physically]**

Quite paradoxically: —

-
- after a sense/
- of bodily-satisfaction/ ceases,
-
- **(because sensual satisfaction/**
- **is always only temporary)**
- **the mind keeps**
- **continually/ seeking/ and craving**
- **and pursuing/ mental conceptions/**

- of 'refreshed' satisfactions/
- to fill the empty moment/ —
- following the ceasing/
- of pleasant sensations.

[To repeat the point,]

- — following the ceasing/
- of pleasurable sensations/ —
-
- the mind keeps
- **compulsively seeking**
- [and]
- wanting to replace them —
-
- With, yet, new/, fleeting/,
- and satisfying sensations/
-
- [and] the mind keeps
- compulsively
- going-on grasping —
-
- [and]
-
- — always alternating, between
- satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

[This is something worth thinking about, isn't it?]

[Have you ever had that problem?]

[If you have, you are not the only one.]

[Ironically],

- the untrained mind/
- will not be satisfied
-

- until such/
- newly-arisen
- [but]
- merely momentary sensations/
- have been fulfilled,
- again, and again, and again/,

- and,

- thus/, the vicious cycle/ of frustration runs —

**because of the lust/
for sensual-gratification
being/ ultimately/ endless/ and insatiable/
like a, [figuratively],
insatiable-fiery-dragon.]**

.....
[pause]

This is the lesson we have got to learn: —

- Either one sees the emptiness/ of it all
- or one finally runs-out-of energy/
- and is left/, in the end,/

- in a dissatisfied-state/
- [of worn-out]
- bodily deterioration.

[Just like me and some of you.]

[pause]

“There must be/ something/ better than this,”
one mutters to oneself,/

and/, indeed/, there is,
as will/ now/ be explained: —

[pause]

**Today's generation/ needs no
introduction/ to sensual lust/,**

[So]

let's go on/ to other forms of
'lusting-after-things'
which promise satisfaction

[but]

which cause/ dissatisfaction.

[and]

We can start with/ seemingly little things:

-
- like lusts for/ certain tastes or smells/
- or sounds or sights/ or sensations of touch/
- or mental cravings/ arising in the mind: —

- **People get really hooked/**
- **on mental-sensual 'lusts'/'**
-
- **and will go to/**
- **great lengths/**
- **and expense/**
-
- **to get the things/**
- **they like/ and want/ and desire.**

[And]

- **This has always been so —**
-
- since men have lived in towns,
- cities and communities: —
-

- in which other people/ could benefit/
- from supplying/ the satisfaction/
- of others'/ self-centred needs.

**[Indeed], this generation/ seems/
to live/ in a fast-running stream
of such mental-sensual desires, —**

- **and people's minds**
- **are filled with/**
- **so many/ such unfulfilled/**
- **dreams and desires —**

- **[that]**

- **few would ever/ seriously consider/**
- **trying/ to free and empty the mind**
- **of such imaginary, 'sense-desires,' -**

- **because the world,**
- **(as they view/ and perceive/ it),**
- **simply doesn't work that way—**

People/ don't think like that/ these days—

- **[A few do but not many.]**

- **Very few/ ever develop/ the wisdom/**
- **to know/ that 'false expectation'/**
- **is, always, by nature/,**
- **- contradictory/ and unsatisfactory.**

[And that's why]

"This generation/ is entangled/

in such a tangle."

[pause]

[Nowadays]

-
- everybody seems/
to have big dreams/
-
- about
-
- getting/ an impressive education/
and earning/ a lot of money/,
buying land/, and then
-
- building an expensive home/,
[and]
-
- **‘being somebody in this world.’**

[This is a familiar picture.]

- We see it everywhere/ [and]/
we smile/ at the Human Comedy.
-
- Are we part of the Human Comedy?
[pause and smile ironically]

Quite ironically: —

[although]

we see/ what’s wrong/ with everybody else,

we cannot/ see ourselves/ as others/ see us:

we cannot see what is wrong with ourselves

**[As we play our own delusive parts
within the illusive Human Comedy.]**

Quite paradoxically: —

- when look at ourselves,
- we see/
- only/ what we want to see.

That is/ truly-absurd/, isn't it?

Such-a life/ is delusory, indeed.

Quite paradoxically: —

- the truth is that we don't want
- to see ourselves as we actually are.

[Moreover]

- [Yet another/ ironic/-mental-twist
- may be illustrated by the fact that]: —

- Just as we/, (ourselves)/ don't notice/
- when we're being/ **graspingly greedy** —
- neither do we notice/ when scores of others/
- around us/ are **suffering and needy**: —

- Seldom/ do we focus/ our attention/
- on things/ in our surrounding-environment/
- which have no promise of satisfaction for us: —

- like the anxiety of students/ uncertain about the future;

- or people/, under stress/, in fear of losing their jobs;

- and a lot of others/ living carelessly/ beyond their means,

- buying things/ they cannot afford
- and being totally dependent/ on money-lenders/
- and networks/ of so-called/ friends and supporters,
- **who will only be there/**
- **for as long as there is/**
- **mutual need and dependency.**

[pause]

Quite ironically: —

- **when our views are**
- **so unconsciously-selfish,**
- **we see only what we want to see**

[pause]

[And]

[What is more,]

In untangling the tangle,

there is, yet, another,

paradoxical irony to be seen in

the incongruous fact that: —

[Although]

**the outside-world fools and tricks us,
we like to fool and trick ourselves: —**

[And]

the cause of such a bizarre paradox is that ...

**there is a part of the mind/
which wants to trick/,
and
there is a part of the mind/
which wants-to-be tricked**

[Think about that when for a while.]

It's a paradox and the resolution is: —

[If you could see how you fool yourself,
you would see yourself as being a fool,
and would no longer be quite-so-foolish.]

**Some people/ can learn/
to know the mind/
'the way it really is/,'**

but most people

**are/ completely/ and wholly/
incapable of realizing/,
that they are/ not at all/,
what they think they are: —**

[pause]

Indeed/, the unrestrained power/
of the [untrained]/-mundane/ mind/
has been compared/:

to that of a wild elephant tusker

- as being almost impossible
- (or at least very difficult)
- to keep under control -
-
- — as the wild tusker-mind —
- runs wildly through the jungle —

- **ignorantly** trampling/ everything in its way,
- without knowing that there is any other way.

[pause]

[Indeed,]

- when the mind is free/
- to go anywhere it wants/,
- it becomes a danger to itself/,
- and when it is disturbed/
- in its single-minded/ wild-pursuit/,
- it growls/, like a wild-animal/,
- which is protective of its food.

And at moments like this/,

we exhibit/ aggressive feelings which

-
- both we/ and others around us/
- [from relative points of view]
- **experience as uncontrolled/,**
- **emotional/, anger/ and rage.**

[Furthermore,]

- if we allowed/ our uncontrolled minds/
- to follow/ their base-instincts/,
- we/ could actually, ourselves, become/
- **quite like/ mad/, raging dogs/ and**
beasts/.

[You may not want to believe it/, but it is so.]

[Normally]

we wouldn't want/ this to happen/
(especially in public)

[So]

like the mahout/ with the wild elephant,

-
- we should try/ to bring/
- the mind under control,
- by training it/ firmly/,
-
- with calm and patience,
- slowly, but surely,
- taming the ‘beast’ within us.

[pause to think]

[And]

What is **also incongruous** is that -

- While the mind/ may be ignorant/ and
- indifferent/ to what it doesn’t know/
- or notice/ or care about/, —

- **the mind is also attracted/ and attached/**
- **both to/ what-it-likes**
- **and/ to what it does-not-like —**

- And whatever
- [or whoever]
- gets-in-the-way/
- of what the mind wants/
- will be **‘disliked,’**

[and]

when the mind/ continues to be thwarted/,

-
- **this ‘dislike’ develops/**
- **through a process/ of rising irritation/**
- **and aggravation/ into a strong anger: —**
-
- **which, when increased,**

- can evolve/ and develop/ into/
- **fierce-vibrations-of-vindictive hate.**

This is a hatred/

- which is/ totally-irrational
- and based/ on **ignorance of the/**
- elemental/ mind-bodily/ process,
- developing within a man's mind.'

This is a hatred which is

- [largely/ unknown to us/]
- always at work within our
- metal-physical/ energy systems.
-
- as a reaction/ to frustration/
- caused by
- whatever is irritating the mind

[pause]

**This sense of burning-hatred
is based upon an ignorance/
which must be “expunged,”**

- **in other words — /**
- **removed/ — got rid-of,**
- **totally-destroyed/ and/ wholly-eradicated**
- **and finally and ultimately ‘extinguished.’**

[pause]

- **‘Hate/’ is the evil sister/ of ‘lust,’**
- and the two/ are resolutely/ to be avoided: —
- We feel resentment/ and aversion
- when others hinder us/ from indulging/
- our physical senses/ and mental desires —

And, hence,

- **cravings**
- which, initially,
- may have been/ just little things/
- (appearing in arising awareness)

- can become/ gradually magnified/
- in the mundane and worldly-mind/

into ‘big scary things’

- which have the potential/
- of destroying/ both us/
- and/ our adversaries/
- and/ everything around us.

[pause]

[Moreover],

- when our perceptions/
- of the hindrances/
- which prevent pleasure/

- seem/ to be —

- not just momentary/, fleeting/ and passing/,
- but/, rather/,
- ever-continuing/ and seemingly-permanent/

[then]

our feeling of aversion/ grows
into a/ more-and-more/ intense-hatred
directed
towards those/ who are/ continuing/
to thwart/ our wills/, desires and dreams.

[And due to causal-dependency],

[consequently]

- such/ personal hatred/ for others/
-
- almost invariably/ causes just as much
- [or even much-more-powerful hatred] -

- to become

- projected-back/ [at us] -in return —
-
- projected-back/ from our antagonists,
- back towards us/ — **as a backlash** —

- re-directed/ and aimed/
- exactly/, at our selves,/
-
- [as the initiators/and proximate causes/
- of the processes aimed-right-back at us,

- In other words/, directed at us/

- due to/ our own/ prior actions/
-
- which have/, effectively/,
- caused us/ to become/ our own/
-
- ignorantly/and self-motivated/
- self-dependently-caused/ victims.

[You might want to think/
about that/ for a while too.]

Hate begets hate:

- It is all cause and effect,

- leading back/ to an
- originally arising desire/
- as its cause/,
- but/, normally/, the worldly-based/,
- ignorantly-directed-mind/ cannot see that.

[More realistically seen],

**The world wants what it wants
and
hates to be thwarted in any way.]
And/, when/,
it is/ thus-thwarted/ it loves to hate.**

[pause]

[That's also worth contemplating-upon, isn't it?]

[pause]

[In a similar way]

**we continually/ develop strong/,
negative and aggressive feelings/
towards those/ who oppose/ or oppress us: —**

- in our education/, in our work,
- and in our attempts/ to get money
- and so-called/ 'name and fame and success.'

We have/ strong/ and stressful emotions/

-
- **When/ we/ run-into/ oppositions/,
whilst trying to gain and maintain/
acquisitions/,
and attempting to live in indulgence/,
under plush/ and luxurious/ circumstances.**

[Again, inevitably/
ignorantly/ and selfishly/, striving/
to keep our own heads/
up-above/ those of others.]

[Consequently]

-our strongest, irrational
- and uncontrollable feelings,
- are usually connected
- to those who oppose us
- in our attempts/
- to become a “somebody”—
a big and important “person” in this world.

[and]

There is no telling/ what such a person/
may be capable of doing/
when his lust/
for self-importance/ is thwarted.

[pause]

[In summary]

It is in the arising/ and development/
of emotions/ related to the idea/
of our own/ sense of ‘self-importance’/

which we see

the greatest/ exertions and explosions and

outbursts/ of uncontrolled mental energy/

due to conflicts in our interpersonal relations.

[And]

**This “need-to-be-somebody/” appears to be/
the direction/ in which this generation, of
today, seems/ to be going/ the most-crazy.**

[However]

If such people could just see themselves/

-
- **as what/ they actually are/,**
- **[the way things really are]**
- **they would know —**

- **that all their lusts/ and desires/**
- **and hatreds/ are all delusional/,**
- **and all based on/ an imaginary/,**
-
- **inflated/, full-blown/ phantasm/ of**
- **‘A ‘SELF’**
- **demanding certain rights**
-
- **to enjoyment and self-indulgence**
- **accompanying sense of feeling of**
- **importance in this world/ —**

- **whilst/, without/ — [in any way] —**
- **considering/ the rights of others.**

- **[This is all wrong view and**
- **wholly-lacking in compassion**
- **and loving-kindness for others]**

[Which is the cause of our cruelty to others.]
[There is something wrong with that, isn't there?]

[pause]

[Indeed]

-
- all people/, including even
- the greedy and needy
- and hating and hostile
- are, worthy of pity,
- what-ever the cause
- of their suffering.

We oftentimes forget that

- One who is wise/, like a Buddha/
- **with right view of the world/**,
- will feel a deep compassion/
- for such fellow human beings
- [despite all their shortcomings]

[Instead of]

-
- (as we often unmindfully do)
-
- just **looking-down** upon them/
- **as**
- **lowly worldly antagonists/-**
- **and**
- **as ignorant and beastly-creatures.**

[pause]

[To come back to our point,]

**Right View/ means understanding/
that the way/ in which people
wrongly see themselves/ in the world**

- **is based/ on a false/ -**
- **supposition/ of a self,**
- **which is greedily trying/**

- **to get what it wants,**
- **— at whatever cost.**

- [pause]

[Thus]

[To come back to the Buddha's message]

**One who can/ disentangle the tangle
is the one who can untangle/ this
intricate network/ of false 'views/,
always busily-at-work,**

both,

**within the outside world/
within the delusional mind/,
bringing many/, almost/ to the brink of
madness.**

[Have you ever felt that way?]
[If you have, you are not alone.]

[pause]

**Right View of the world/
entails understanding/ —**

**that the way/ mundane people/
normally/ see the world/**

is/, totally/, delusionally-crazy: —

[and]

the way things/ **really are/** is the opposite:

in other words—

Not a burning-selfishness/
... burning ... burning, ... burning .../

but, rather/,

a detached/
... cooling ... calming ... and stilling .../
and extinguishing/ of internal, burning-energies,

until the last/, remaining ember/
or '*taint/*' of worldly-need and greed/
is eventually/ used-up and burnt-out.

[pause]

While there may be just a few
who can/ understand this,

there will/ certainly/ be others/ who
could/ at least/ plausibly-imagine that —

if there were to be/ an “opposite to
burning ... burning ... burning”
in the “stilling and cooling of energy,” —

[Indeed, this]

**could be an approach/
which is well-worth trying/,**

-

- through following/ the examples/
- of the Buddha/ and the Noble Ones/,
- who/ (according to the texts) /
- had “little dust in their eyes.”

[incidentally],

“Dust,”

-
- means “lust” [or ignorance] —
- inferring/ an/ “ignorance”/
-
- which is/ dependent/ on wrong views,
- which [still] cloud/ and blind the mind.

[pause]

Coming back to/ and analyzing/
more specifically
the sequence of the words
within the Buddha’s stanzas: —

The word, ‘taints’
as used/ in the third line/
of the second stanza/,

means impurities/ or imperfections,
or unwholesome inclinations;

and ‘Right Understanding’/ means
that
we see the ‘taints’ in ourselves
and the world/

and relinquish/ such wrong views
and begin/ to develop the mind: —

[So that]

lust and hate are eventually/ extinguished
[refined-away and, ultimately, replaced]
as virtue/ and wisdom/ gradually/ develop.

Let us repeat/ that remedy/,
once more/, clearly/
so we can keep it in mind:

Eradicate lust and hate/ until they are, eventually, replaced by their opposites, by the antidotes of virtue and wisdom.

[Note again]:

[We]

- should also stress
 - that this does not
 - happen-in-a-hurry.

We must be aware that
in actual fact —
[normally],
such insight comes only through
a process of gradual training —

- and does not happen
- [as some imagine],
- all, in one moment
- in a sudden-flash-of-insight
-

First,

- the mind has to be
- slowly-and-gradually
- refined of its impurities,
-
- through/ constant
- mindfulness/ and training,

- attempting/ always/ to be
- **focused in-the-moment,**

- to catch/ any wayward/
- mental, physical/ impulses/
- or inclinations/ and leanings/ —

- to catch

- the tricks/ of the trickster-mind/

-
- as it is/, constantly/ and continually/,
-
- trying to lead/ the mind-body astray.

[pause]

[So]

- In the training/, at first/,
- the mind will still be
 - — **all-in-a-tangle** —

[Consequently],

- the thing to do,
- (while trying to avoid new-snags
- and tangles/ and inevitable-knots),
- is to/, slowly/, start cutting-away/
- at already existing/ entanglements/,
- as we/,
- [eventually]/, begin recognizing them/
- as **what they really and actually are.**

We can/, then/, begin to create/
 a new 'mental environment,'
 (which in Pali is called **bhavana**): —

- a process/-of-mind-development/ -
- in which/ the mind/ is always/
-
- **under the microscope**/,
- so-to-speak/,
-
- and/ in which/
- the **gross impurities**
- will stand-out clearly/,
-
- once we have learned/

- how/, [through our practice],
- in analysing/ the workings of the mind/,
-
- to recognize/ and, then, arrest them/ —
- and/, how/, ultimately/,
- **to root them out:**
- within our own process of
- **developing purity-of-mind.**

[pause]

In anticipating our conclusion,

- we may state that:

“Developing the mind/” is an essential part/
of the **Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path/**, in which,

after the mind/ has gained/ ‘**Right Understanding/**
and has ‘**Right View/**’ of the way things really
are/,

through mental cultivation/, (*bhavana*)/ -

- the part of the mind/ which analyzes/
- begins to practice/ on the path/ to purification/
-
- in a way/ which will/, eventually/, extinguish/
- all the burning fires/ consuming the mind/.

[And]

- [Through/ Right Mindfulness]/, we begin to
watch/
- and observe/ ourselves/ in all of our actions/
- which may arise/ in thought/, deed/ or speech.

[So that]

- When we see/
- **an unwholesome thought/ arising/**,
- and we see it
- for what it really and actually it is/ —
-
- — its just being recognized, as what it is
- (as it is appearing,)
- **will often make it ‘disappear’ and go away.**

[pause]

- When the mind is tricking us into/
- wanting to do an unwholesome deed,
-
- **the detached-mind/ which watches/**
- **and observes/ the trickster-mind/**
- **can/ usually/ stop an unwholesome action/**
- **before it has time to happen—**

Because,

-
- **the alert mind/ moves much faster/**
- **than/ the more-slowly-moving body.**

[So]

**We should be ever-mindful/
in noting that/
‘the mind is always
quicker than the body.’**

[pause]

This process may be called **Right Thought/**
leading to/ establishing the mind/ in **Right Action:**

- which is/what is meant/ by the
- word “**virtue/**” in the second stanza.

- In this part/of the practice/,
- the emphasis is/on morality.

Since

- **the mind precedes all actions/**,
- **- we try to/ watch and analyse -**
- **every motivation/ that**
- **precedes every action.**

We watch our mind

- to see/ what/ is **arising** and
- coming into consciousness,
- [and]
- **if the mental action/**
- **is unwholesome, then,**
- **we [note] or ‘notice’ it,**
- **and stop/ and arrest it there.**

-

We watch/what we are about to **say/**

- before we say it/,
- and/, if there is any harm in it/,
- we do not say it.

-

We watch our mind/

- to see/ what is **motivating** it/
- to do a mind-body action,
- and if there is/ any harm in it/,
- we do not do it.

In everything we do/ in our **work/**,

- to earn our livelihood/,
- the part of the mind/
- which is sometimes called/

“the one who knows”

- **observes and analyses/**
-
- whether there is any/

- unwholesome/ dishonesty/
-
- or impurity/ in the inclination/
- being observed/ and
- in the action being contemplated.”

- **And, if there is/ an inclination/**
- **towards/ imperfection/,**
- **we catch it/ like a thief/**

- **and stop it/ from enacting/**
- **an unwholesome/,**
- **impure/ or dirty-deed.**

[pause]

This is **not so easy**/, however/.

[Because]

- [as we all know,]
- The **hardest thing/ in the world to do/**
- is to control/ the **inclinations** of the mind.

[Whereas,] [quite contrarily], [on the other hand]

- **The easiest thing in the world to do/**
- is just to let the untrained-mind/
- wander/ **ignorantly,**

- and foolishly follow it/
-
- like following a **wild elephant/**
- trampling through the jungle/
- wherever it wilfully/ and/
- head-strongly wants to go.

[Or]

- As some may (analogously),

- [with repulsion], want to say:
-
- like following after a **dirty-dog** as
- it noses its way through the trash.

[pause]

[And]

When the Buddha says/

- **that “a bhikkhu/ who is/**
- **“ardent”/ and “discreet”/**
- **can disentangle/ the tangle/,”**

the Buddha/ is referring/ to just this difficulty.

The Buddha is referring/ to bhikkhus

- **who are practicing/ the threefold-training of:**
-
- **(i) ‘virtue,**
- **(ii) meditation [and]**
- **(iii) wisdom/’**
-
- **on the path/**
- **which leads/to liberation/ and**
- **‘deliverance’/ from this world.**

[pause]

In actual fact/
quite **realistically** speaking/
there are really/ **very few/**

who can arouse/
and maintain/ and sustain/
enough energy/

to put-out/ the burning fires/

of the/ worldly desires/
in the/ mainstream/-mundane-mind/

[which is]
always at work/ within themselves.

[and]
This is why/ some/ enter the holy life/
and follow/ the monastic practice/,
to strive/ to extinguish/ their impurities

[pause]

Coming back to the Buddha's words:

The word “**ardent**” means

- “constant/ and untiring/, resolute effort,”
- sometimes translated as/
- “unrelenting diligence/” or “sustained energy.”

- Perhaps the word/ “**concentrated energy**”
- is the best term/ to use here/ in this context/

- because it implies/ that/ in the practice/
- we must arouse/ an **intense/ and energetic** effort/,

- which is/ so strongly-focussed/,
- that it/ can counter-act/
- and/ eventually/ ‘put-out/’
-
- (or extinguish)

- the burning energy/ which is/
- the **driving-force/**of the worldly-world/
- within/ ‘the ignorant part of our mind –
- which is falsely-conceived of as ‘**self.**’]

While such a task may seem

daunting and difficult at first,
there is no reason/ to despair/
because :

“There are/ still/ a few/
with little dust/ in their eyes”

who practice/ with dedication/ and
determination/
and/ who know/, through direct experience/, t
that/ —

resolute effort/ can cool/
the hot fires/ of the mind

into a coolness/ which extinguishes/
lust and hate/, — without any trace;

**And those worldly-bound/, deluded-people/
who might think/ that a monk’s life is easy/**

— have/ absolutely/ no idea of the/

**ardency/ and energy/
and sense of urgency/**

which must be aroused/

**and constantly-continued/
with unrelenting-commitment/**

— to the Noble Practice.

To continue the word explication,
with a view to tying-up the end
of the lecture sooner rather than later:

The term “**discreet**” is very subtle.

At first glance, it seems to connote,
shy, secluded, retiring, prudent,
tactful, judicious, and,

[indeed]

it means all these things, but
in terms of ‘mental cultivation,’
it has an even- deeper meaning.

The word, “discreet” implies
developing the ability, over time,
**to discern between motivations
and inclinations and intentions/
that arise in the mind,**

in such a way that/
we not only know
the good from the bad/

but we can discern/
even **subtle differences/
in perception/**
which would be hidden/ to
those with less mind-training.

**The word ‘discrete’
Indicates an ability
to discern and refine
and keep refining until,
eventually,
the mind becomes entirely-free
of any impurity,
without any residue remaining.**

[Hence],

gradual and habitual ‘discernment’
of the subtle undercurrents influencing
the flow of the mind energy

is essential to the practise.]

[‘Discernment’ is, thus,
an important word in
the vocabulary of the practice

of rooting-out even the most obscure,
hidden, illusive causes of distress
through clearly, illuminating and
revealing the last remnants left

in the vast, endless caverns in
the dark hidden and gloomy-crevices
of the mind as it really and actually is —
and, thus, achieving
deliverance through the light of the truth.]

In the next stanza,
the Buddha explains

how Right Concentration develops

through awareness of the
non-reality of name-and-form,
without residue remaining,
into the Nibbana element:

**“When name-and-form ceases,
Stops without remainder
And also impingement of name and form:
It is here that this tangle is cut.”**

This is even more subtle than
in the section on “discretion,”

because it alludes to a fleeting process

of basic perception and consciousness
as it is arising and flowing and ceasing.

This short stanza is not easy to understand,

[But, fortunately]

there are well-known passages within
the Pali texts which outline the process
in more detail than in this short stanza.

Indeed, the Abhidhammists
are fond of explaining
existence through
such an approach: —

**What we like to call experiences of objects or
phenomena**

are nothing more than fleeting impressions -
phenomena “impinging” (through sensation),
getting into and or infringing on the field
of the mundane-mind as arising forms or images,

upon contact, with which, there are
mental reactions, linked-to basic feelings
of like or dislike or neither like nor dislike.

Simultaneously, phenomena are arising
and *colouring* bare sense experiences,
depending on
how they are conceived and perceived.

Out of perceptions, mental formations (*sankhara*)
are arising
which are assigning things
names and forms and certain sets

of characteristics related within
the complex of memory thereto.

[And]

Incidental to accompanying consciousness,
(which has been active from the beginning),
the mind-body process keeps on evolving
in inestimable numbers of arising processes

which lead, interdependently, to even-more
complex links and networks of free associations

as uncontrolled processes are intermingling

in the tangled-mess of the tightly-knotted ball
of the twine of the snagged and entangled mind.

It is no wonder/ the mind becomes/ confused,
and it appears almost impossible for an average
psycho-physical, mundane, individual entity
to be ever able/ to comprehend/ or to control.

Does this sound complicated?

It certainly does!

Is there a way to untangle/
the tangle within the tangle?

Yes! There certainly is.

**Who can disentangle such
a tangle for this generation?**

The answer is: — the well-trained practitioner
who clearly sees that the random association
of worldly mundane consciousness
is leading nowhere
but to confusion and trouble,

who sees that mental formulations
are just ‘**constructs**’ in the mind

with no corresponding substance in reality

who sees that perceptions are ‘colored’
according to individually-toned ‘moods’
which have relativity only to themselves
lacking any common shared-universality.

who sees that even bare forms
are merely illusory sense impressions,
with only an ‘apparent’ substantiality,

when, actually, they are constituted
of uncountable tiny energy impulses

which are moving and changing so fast
that an image is like a picture in memory

that has already passed
before it is remembered,

due to the fleeting insubstantiality
of all seemingly-solid and enduring
objects made of the four elements.

The Arahant sees the changing nature
and the impermanence of all things,
and so do many monks and practitioners
who ‘know’ the nature of ultimate reality.

[The Dhamma is not for dead people in old books.]

The Dhamma is
the true nature
of things *as they really are*: —

The true living Dhamma
in the process of the passing
and ceasing of all arising
phenomena in the world.

The Dhamma is there to be discovered

and, as it unfolds to the ardent bhikkhu
or practitioner, wisdom arises in intervals,
[sometimes (but not often) in no short time].

* The man with no Dhamma is like the swimmer
who drowns in the sea and sinks to the bottom.

* The one with virtue may go under the surface of
the water,
but he will rise again and see the shore in the
distance.

* The one with virtue and wisdom will stay afloat
on the surface and swim for the further shore.

* The one with virtue and wisdom who is ardent
and discreet
will near the shore, so that his feet are touching the
bottom.

* And the one who is refined and free from all
taints
will stand safe and secure on the further shore.

The man, who in this life,
gets carried away
by the worldly
stream of consciousness: —
(*sankhara*) — can never see

the true nature of reality
which is/ in actuality/
nothing but streaming,
invisible, waves of energy.

The man who hangs
on to mental formations
for psychological security

may feel safe in the fortress
of his views and conceptions,
but he will
never be able to see ‘actual reality.’

The man who is looking
for truth in his perceptions

will have attachments
dependent on

the *coloured* perspective,
dependent on the person
he believes himself to be.

The man who is fixed in
bare awareness of feeling

is just a human being caught

between feelings, perceptions,
and impressions; and he may
get stuck there as long as
he thinks he is a **self** seeing.

The man who believes
in corporeal form is himself
just a corporeal form, focused
on seeing truth in corporeal forms.

The man who experiences
sense images

as just flashes of light
and colour moving in
impulses and waves of energy,
with no fixed form,

will be nearer to the truth,
but he will still be focused

on outward impressions,

dependent on the transitory
nature of **self** as observer.

[pause]

Once **the one who is aware** that
That sensation has passed and is gone,

the one who suddenly sees the emptiness
of all sensory and mental phenomena

will be standing on the firm ground of
the sea bed and nearing the further shore.

“It is here that the tangle is cut”
alludes to an unconditioned state -
freedom from the net of the world
in the Nibbana element.

While this will be too subtle
for many entangled in the tangle
of this generation, there will also
be a few who understand.

The secret to cutting-through to
ultimate reality is contemplating

how conditioned realities,
being impermanent,
as long as they are
connected to the idea of self,
inevitably cause suffering.

When, through contemplation,
insight reaches its peak in
an understanding of ‘non-self,’
the break- through to
ultimate reality occurs on its own.

In that world which we
have initially presumed

to have ‘form,’
there is nothing enduring.
In actual reality,
there is only an unborn,
unformed, unconditioned.

In the words of the Buddha:

“There is, bhikkhus,

that base where there is no earth, no water, no
fire, no air,

no base consisting of the infinity of space,

no base consisting of the infinity of consciousness,

no base consisting of nothingness,

no base consisting of neither perception nor non-
perception;

neither this world nor another world nor both;

neither sun nor moon.

Here, bhikkhus,

I say there is no coming, no going, no staying,

no deceasing, and no uprising.

Not fixed, not moveable, it has no support.

This is the end of suffering.” (See Udana 8.1)

No one but a Buddha [who is a tamer of men]
can explain in words as well as that.

Contrariwise, here in this world,
this breaking wave/ of mortality/
which is designated as “this generation,”

is still unaware of the unborn,
unformed and unconditioned,

is trapped in a sinking bog
of worldly ignorance,

is vainly grasping after
a commonly-shared set

of hopes and desires,
which is foolishly dependent

on a commonly-held but
false view of permanency.

This generation attaches
to the vain hope that
what it conceives as real
will be a lasting source of satisfaction,

although nothing could be further from the truth.
as long as there is a perceived corporeal person

who believes that attachment to forms,
and to perceptions, mental formations and to
consciousness will bring permanent happiness, -

this world is bound to be a place of unhappiness,
and the whole delusion is based on one thing —

which is believing what is
impermanent is permanent.

*

Concepts and conceptions
of fixed forms are not real,

and as long as people hang onto
their idea of the fixed form of the world,

ignorance will prevail and
no one can ever be happy [for long].

Why people cannot see
the impermanency of things
and of self is a mystery: —

At best,
human perception
is a
mechanical projection
for oversimplification of
appearing phenomena
and arising of forms -

which the ignorant
(unenlightened)
can, at least, use as
tools for self- survival
and self- nourishment,

but this will always lead back
to the horrible analogy of
the world as a tangled jungle.

Everyone hopes for something
better than that,
but a few
can see that the way to freedom

from mental stress and anguish is —
through an ultimate understanding
of transience and impermanency: —

[Which means]: —

seeing the beginning
and ending of things

as one is striving for
ultimate, mental purity

and ‘seeing through’
all ‘apparent’ forms as
just arising-and-ceasing.

In conclusion,
what we say about “this generation”
has been the same for every generation,
since the time of the Buddha until today.

[This is the way of the world,
and it is not going to change.]

[But]

Those who know ultimate reality
will also know that,
even if the world were to burn-up

[even if there]
were no men or planets or galaxies]
the vibrant ‘energy’ of the dhammas
would keep swirling-on indefinitely.

A few people see the vibrant light
of Enlightenment, but most do not.

There is the way of the Noble Ones

and

there is the wanton way of the world.

Some swim against the stream
of attachment to worldly want,

but most do not.
