

Mindfulness with Breathing (Ānāpānasati), Part 5 of 8

ĀNĀPĀNASATI : TETRADS III

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In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhādāsa gave regular lectures during the monthly international retreats held at Suan Mokkh and then Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage. Usually, Ajahn spoke in Thai and Santikaro Bhikkhu interpreted into English live. All Ajahn's teachings are now available on:

www.suanmokkh.org,

<https://soundcloud.com/buddhadasa> and

<https://www.youtube.com/@buddhadasabhikkhu7829>.

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Today we will be studying the third part of *ānāpānasati*, the third tetrad or set of steps which has to do with the *citta* – the mind or heart. And it is known as *cittānupassanāsati* – the contemplation of the *citta*, foundation of mindfulness. Before we discuss the third tetrad specifically, I'd like to point out a very important fact about the practice which we have omitted so far. We forgot to mention it. This point is that every time you sit down to practice *ānāpānasati*, every sitting or session of *ānāpānasati* begins with step one. Every session begins with step one – the experiencing of the long breathing – and then move to step two and so forth. So at this point in the practice when you are still working on step one, obviously you begin with step one but later as you progress into later steps, you still have to begin each sitting with step one and make sure you can do that step at that sitting and then move on to step two and so forth. All steps are dependent upon each other. So each sitting, each session begins with the very first step, experiencing the long breathing. If you're not able to do the first step, then there is no possibility of you being able to do any of the further steps. So this is a way to help avoid self delusion by always beginning with step one.

So after successfully completing the first two tetrads, then we can begin to work on the third tetrad – the contemplation of mind. So in the first step of this tetrad which we can call 'contemplation of the mind' or we can say 'experiencing the mind in all its aspects' in this first step of the third group. Then we need to see the different states of mind that have taken place throughout the practice. Since the beginning of the practice up until this point, there've been a variety of the states of mind. What state is the mind in when it experiences the long breathing or the short breathing or contentment or happiness – the various things that have been happening? To contemplate this state of mind, to experience these different states of mind while breathing in

and breathing out is step nine of the sixteen steps or the first step of this third tetrad. So in this step we need to examine the different characteristics of mind, the different kinds of states of mind that happen. There are a variety of different states of mind and ways of talking about them. The tradition way of doing that is to speak in the following way, which is, “Does the mind have lust or is it free of lust?” “Is there lust or not?” This is one way to contemplate the mind. When we say the word ‘lust,’ this has a variety of meanings as well – both sexual lust but also the kind of lust we have for objects such as money, jewellery, gold, possessions and then also the sort of lust that we would have for a person though not necessary sexual lust but the lust or kind of love that we have for various individuals. So contemplating the mind to see whether there is lust or there is no lust is one way of experiencing the mind.

The second important characteristic of mind that needs to be noted is that of *dosa* or anger, hatred, aversion. Sometimes aversion or anger will arise towards some external objects or personal things that have come into our awareness, and we feel aversion towards that thing. Or *dosa* can arise from within and the sort of object list, general kind of mood of aversion or ill-will or anger. So the second characteristic that we’re talking about now which needs to be noted is, “Does the mind have *dosa* or is it free of aversion, ill-will, anger, etc?” – so being aware while breathing in and breathing out, knowing whether the mind is in a state of *dosa* or a state of being free of *dosa*.

The next characteristic is that of *moha*, delusion. With *moha* it can take various forms such as doubt when the mind is wondering in a state of uncertainty about what really is going on here, whether this is safe or not, what should be done, etc. *Moha* literally means to be lost or to be dull, to be dim. So this characteristic means that in contemplating the mind we must note whether the mind is in a state of *moha*, delusion, ignorance, confusion, doubt, etc – or whether the mind is in a state that is free of *moha*. So with each breath, each in-breath and out-breath, note either the condition of *moha* or the condition of being free of *moha*.

There’s a simple way of comparing these three states of mind so that we can be aware of which is which as we experience them. For the first one of *rāga*, lust, whenever there is a wanting, a desiring, a pulling towards you or trying to get of something, that is *rāga*. It’s a positive feeling, trying to get, wanting to have, this is *rāga*. For *dosa*, the opposite of that, *dosa* is trying to get rid of, trying to knock things away, chasing away up to the point that even wanting to kill something to get rid of it. This is very negative. And then for the third, *moha*, it is neither the wanting to get nor the wanting or trying to get rid of, neither positive nor negative but it’s a confusion and not knowing about things the way they really are. So it’s like the mind is running around in circle around the thing, not knowing what to do, not seeing this is right or wrong, good or bad, etc, according to reality. This is the basic characteristic of each of these three kinds of mind states: the desiring positive kind of feeling, the aversed negative feeling to get rid of, and the uncertain feeling of running round and round. These are *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha*.

Next, we can talk about agitation or restlessness of mind. So we contemplate the mind and experience and note whether it is in a state of restlessness or not, whether there is restlessness or whether restlessness is absent. Restlessness is a condition where there is too much energy, or the mental energy is out of control and the mind can’t sit still. So it’s inability of the mind to rest. When there is no one-pointedness or one pinnacleness, the mind is not gathered together on that high pinnacle and the mind is unable to rest and relaxed. This is what it is like when the mind is restless. In order to know the different possibilities of mind states, we can use this perspective of

observing the mind to see whether it is restless or not restless while breathing in and breathing out.

Next is a state of mind which I won't tell you the Pāli word because it's difficult to remember. So we just talk about it in normal term. This is state of mind that we can describe as 'better than normal' or something that is more satisfying, more attractive, more worth having – extraordinary state of mind. So another angle on experiencing the mind is to contemplate whether there are states of extraordinariness or not, of breathing in and breathing out.

The next pair of mind states is knowing whether the mind is in the highest possible state of mind or not while breathing in and breathing out, noting whether the mind has achieved the most superior and exalted state of mind or not. Is that kind of mind enriched or not yet? The highest possible state of mind is the mind of enlightened being, of a perfected human being, of a saint, an arahant. So for most of us, this state of mind is a bit difficult to know. What's this point is about is being aware of the current state of mind while you're experiencing it and noting whether there is a highest state of mind in this or that there is no highest state of mind, knowing whether one's current state of mind has the highest state of mind or has nothing higher than it.

The next one is whether or not the mind is stable and steady, or we can say 'concentrated' while breathing in and out, noting whether the mind is in a firm, stable, steadfast condition or not. Is the mind concentrated or not yet concentrated? This is what needs to be known while breathing in and breathing out.

The last pair is knowing whether the mind has been liberated or not, whether the mind has been released and safe, emancipated or not. This comes down to, is the mind in a state of attachment to something or is the mind free of attachment? Is the mind attached to something, clinging to something or is this the mind which is void of all attachment? Knowing which of these two possibilities the mind is in is another way of studying, contemplating and experiencing the mind.

The point of contemplating the mind in these different ways is to enable us to fully know what kind of state of mind tends to arise, what are our habits of thinking, what are the habitual tendencies of state of mind. These can be observed through experiencing various mind states as they arise in the way that we have just described. These different kinds of mind states are happening, and we need to be aware of them. We need to know what our tendencies and habits are. So we can do this by being aware of, by experiencing and studying the various mind states.

Up to this point in the practice, the mind has been very well trained in different ways. It is developed a lot of self-control and the ability to avoid certain states of mind and the ability to give rise to other states of mind. Particularly in the second tetrad, the mind developed the ability not only to be independent of the feelings but also to have the control over the feelings. Now in step ten, the second step of the third tetrad, which we're discussing here, the mind uses this ability to be in control and bring about a state of delight, of joyfulness, contentment or happiness. There are many different words we can use but the mind now has the ability to bring about a desirable state of mind, such as being delighted or being glad, joyful. And it has the ability to do this in different ways. So we can use these different words to point out that the very well-trained and skillful mind can give rise to that kind of happiness or that kind of delight or that kind of contentment. Doing this and then being aware of that state while breathing in and breathing out is what step ten is about.

When we talk about the ability of the mind to make itself joyful or delighted, we need to point out that this is something very useful. When the mind is sad or sorrowful, through the ability to control the mind, we can let go of that sorrow and bring the mind into a joyful state. Even when the mind isn't sad or sorrowful, still there's always the ability to bring the mind into a condition of gladness or delight. This can be quite useful because it often can be restful or helps us to find the energy to do whatever task we need to do. This control over the mind in bringing about the state of joyfulness or delight is a useful tool. So at this point we practice that and we note it while breathing in and breathing out.

When we talk about the word 'joyfulness' or 'delight', this word has two levels of meaning. The first level is a worldly kind of delight, delight in different senses, in sensuality and in defilement. This is one kind of delight which isn't the kind of delight we're talking about at this stage because we're talking about the mind which has been highly refined through correct meditation practice. At this point we're talking about the delight or joy of Dhamma – the delight and joy that come with knowing Dhamma, with using Dhamma. So in this part, a metaphase in Dhamma is used in order to delight the mind, to gladden the mind. When we talk about gladdening the mind, delighting the mind, or giving rise to a state of joy, this can be done by understanding what the cause of joy is. Joy comes from being successful. For completing some activity successfully, then one is satisfied or content with that success and out of that satisfaction arises joy. So in practicing step ten, we can note the various kinds of joy that have arisen throughout the practice. Specifically if we go back to the beginning and practice step one successfully, there will be gladness arising because of the successful completion of step one and being able to carry on doing it well. And then moving on to the other steps that take place, reviewing them, and then when the mind can see that it can do them successfully, there will be joyfulness will arise again. So in this way we can experience joyfulness on different levels according to the different steps of the practice. Then we see clearly where the cause of joy is. The joy arises out of doing something successfully.

One of the easiest ways to bring about an enjoyable state of mind, a pleasant, delightful state of mind is to examine one's life, to reflect upon the fact that how fortunate one is to have come across the Dhamma, to appreciate the great fortune of being healthy enough and fortunate enough to come across the Dhamma – these truths that will enable one to be free of dukkha, that is enable one to practice the way of life in which dukkha is being overcome. This is great fortune. One can appreciate that this human birth hasn't been wasted but that in being born in human one has also had the opportunity to hear the Dhamma and then to practice it. In reflecting on this great fortune, there will come about also a great joy. This is a quite simple and easy method of gladdening the mind.

When we are certain that we are able to extinguish dukkha, that we can bring an end to all suffering or all the spiritual problems, when we are positive and certain that we have attained the best and highest that man is capable of attaining, this kind of certainty at knowing Dhamma, having Dhamma, practicing Dhamma, and benefiting from Dhamma, this kind of certainty is a very skilful trick or technic of gladdening or delighting the mind. After practicing step ten sufficiently, meaning that we have developed the ability to gladden the mind in these different ways at will, quite instantaneously the mind can be brought into a state of enjoyment, the mind can be delighted in a variety of different ways. Once this has been done consciously with the mind noting or contemplating this ability, the doing and the contemplation of the doing, when this has been fulfilled, then we can move on to step eleven which is concentrating the mind.

Concentrating the mind in this step should not be very difficult because it's something that we've been working on throughout the practice, specifically in step four in calming the body conditioner and step eight calming the mind conditioner – the *cittasaṅkhāra* or the feeling. In doing these things, the mind has become very skilful at being concentrated. So at this point it should not be very difficult to concentrate the mind.

When we talk about step eleven is concentrating the mind, we have to be careful a point that many people misunderstand. Most people think that concentration especially in meditation means being able to sit like a block of wood or a lump of rock where the body is stiff and immovable. This kind of concentration is possible but it's not what we really mean in step eleven. It's too high a degree of concentration, too strong.

In developing the deeper of concentration which we call the '*jhāna*,' so far you've really only heard about the first *jhāna* but in the second *jhāna*, third *jhāna*, fourth *jhāna*, the higher and higher levels or more and more subtle levels of samādhi or concentration up to the point where the body is able to stop breathing, these are very high levels of concentration and they are not what we're specifically talking about in step eleven. However, if the mind is able to develop these very high levels of concentration, it should have no problem with the lower levels of concentration. So that what we'll be not talking about in step eleven. What we are talking about is getting the mind in a state where it is fit and ready to work. To work the mind needs energy, strength, stability, clarity and characteristics like these. So in step eleven it is concentrating the mind so that it has these characteristics which are necessary for the mind to do work or we can say for the mind to be able to do its duty. So in step eleven it is becoming very skilful in bringing the mind into state where it is ready to perform its duty, where it is ready to work. In this case the work is the meditation practice. In doing so there'll also arise joy within that because when the mind is ready to work, there is energy, there is a lightness and a happiness that all come together when the mind is prepared and able to do the job that needs to be done. Step eleven is concentrating the mind, preparing the mind to do its duty.

The state of concentration which is correct and proper has three characteristics which provides us with a very simple tool for judging our concentration and seeing if it is proper and balanced. The first of these characteristics of the correct concentration is called '*samāhidho*.' This is a state where the mind is firm, steady and stable, where it is fixed upon one thing. This is the characteristic of *samāhidho* – stableness. The second is a condition where the mind is clean, clear and pure. It is not obscured by any polluting or defiling factors. This is called '*parisuttho*' – purity or pureness. And the third is a state of being ready to work, being prepared to work or we can say 'activeness.' This is called '*kammaniyo*.'

So there're these three characteristics which you ought to remember because these are the way to check and see whether there is good concentration or not, correct concentration or not. These are *samāhidho* – stability or stableness, *parisuttho* – purity or pureness, and then *kammaniyo* – activeness or activity. When these three characteristics are present, then concentration is correct. Please remember that this is the kind of concentration that we use in doing things, in working. And this is the kind of concentration that can be used not only in the meditation practice but in doing any of the activities of life which are required for survival. So remember these three things: *samāhidho* – stableness, *parisuttho* – pureness, and *kammaniyo* – activeness. These three characteristics can be present no matter what position of the body. They can be present when there is walking. They can be present with standing. They can be present with sitting and with lying down, not just the one sitting in meditation posture. Somewhere in the scripture it's said

that if these three characteristics are present while standing, then we can call that ‘divine standing.’ That is a kind of standing which is divine. It is on such a high level or exalted level that we can say that it is divine. If these characteristics are present while walking, then we can say that it is divine walking. When sitting if it is present, then it’s divine sitting. And when lying down, if these three are present, then we can call that divine lying.

So obviously concentration isn’t a matter of sitting like a lump of rock or a block of wood – stiff and rigid and dead to the world. The essential thing about concentration when these three are present is that the mind is ready to perform its duty and the true duty of the mind is to know more and more on higher and higher levels from moment to moment. So when we’re talking about concentration, we’re talking about these three characteristics of mind in whatever position or activity of the body so that the mind is ready to know, to learn, to develop and to grow wisdom. So this is called ‘*samāhidho*’ when the mind is well established, firm and stable, which we generally call ‘concentration.’ In the scripture it said that when the mind is well established, firm, stable and concentrated, then the mind is prepared to see all things as they are. When the mind is well established and concentrated, it is able to see all dhammas as they truly are or it will see all dhammas as they truly are. So the concentrated mind is the necessary requirement for insight and the development of wisdom. This is what we’re really talking about when talking about concentrating the mind, about *samāhidho*. If there are any problems in life that need to be answered, if these problems are within the mind, these questions, and if the mind becomes concentrated, then the answers to these questions will arise by themselves because the concentrated mind sees things as they really are. This is the most important meaning of concentrating the mind which in step eleven of the practice of *ānāpānasati* we develop great facility and skill in concentrating the mind. While practicing this skill, we are also contemplating and experiencing that so that it is fully understood. It is not a semicomatose activity but it’s something that happens in full awareness and it’s done with complete self-control while breathing in and breathing out.

As you begin to experience and become aware of these three factors of stability, purity and activity, you’ll see that the three of them are interdependent and inseparable. There cannot be purity of mind without stability of mind. There cannot be activity of mind without the purity. There cannot be the stability without that activity. The three come together are inseparable, interrelated and interdependent upon each other. When all three of them come together, then we can say that the mind is firmly established, well established. It’s steadfast and stable which is the word ‘*samāhidho*.’ So step eleven is fully exploring the possibility and potentials of the concentrated mind, of the mind that is well established. When the mind is well established in this way, meaning that all three of these factors are present, then the mind is ready to solve any problems. Whether they are natural problems related to this world here, to that normal mental, physical process, or whether their problems related to supernatural world, in either case the mind that is well established is a mind that is prepared to deal with and solve these problems.

So the most important point of all these is that the mind that is well established or concentrated means that whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down, the mind is well established and ready to solve any problems. This is the most important aspect of this point of step eleven. So the mind is ready to solve any kind of problems that might arise or that have already arisen. This is the meaning of *samāhidho* – one who has concentration.

When step eleven has been fulfilled and the mind has been well established in concentration that includes those three factors, then it’s time to come to step twelve. Step twelve is liberating the

mind, freeing and releasing the mind. This means that the mind has got a variety of things which the mind is clinging to and things which are clinging to the mind and none of these things are useful. None of these clinging is of any value. So in step twelve the mind develops the ability, practices on liberating itself or in being liberated. We can see that this liberation has two aspects. On one hand, it is the mind lets go or releases all these things which it is attaching to. On the other hand, we take these things away from the mind. We get these things to let go of the mind. So the mind both liberates itself and is liberated from these things which it has been attaching to. All these objects of attachment are let go of. They are released and then the mind is liberated. So step twelve is this liberating of the mind.

To understand what happens in step twelve, we need to understand one very important word, that is ‘attachment.’ So let’s take a little time to understand what is meant by ‘attachment.’ When we talk about attachment, we’re speaking of a mental process, of something mental. However, to describe it we’re using words from the physical, the material realm. We’re using words like ‘clinging,’ ‘clinging to,’ ‘grasping at,’ ‘clutching at,’ ‘holding onto’ or ‘attaching to,’ which are all literally physical activities but we’re borrowing these words from the physical, material vocabulary and applying them to this mental activity of clinging to, clutching at, grasping at. To be clear about this, the easiest way to summarize the meaning of all these words, of this mental activity which we call ‘attachment’ or ‘clinging’ is regarding something as ‘I’ or ‘mine.’ When any object is regarded as ‘I’ or ‘mine,’ then there is attachment and clinging for that object.

As far as the means of practicing this step number twelve, the way to do it is to contemplate, examine, study, scrutinize what happens when there is attachment. When the mind is attaching to something as ‘I’ or ‘mine,’ see the penalty, the pain, the difficulties, the problems that result from this attachment. All attachment carries a punishment, an inevitable punishment. To contemplate this punishment or penalty whenever there is attachment is the way of practicing step twelve. To go along with contemplating, scrutinizing, studying the punishment of attachment is also study and contemplate the reward or joy of when there is no attachment. When there is attachment, the mind is heavy and burdened. When there is no attachment, the mind is light and free. When there is no attachment, the mind is happy and joyful. So to see this happiness and reward of when there is no attachment along with the penalty of attachment, when this begins to be seen clearly, then the mind will naturally begin to let go of things, will naturally stop attaching. This is the way of practicing step twelve.

When we talk about liberating the mind, there are many objects of attachment from which the mind must be liberated. We can break these up into four categories. The first is related to sexuality such as the objects – various physical objects in the world which elicit feelings of sexuality or things we see, hear, smell, taste, feel and think about – these are further objects of sexuality or attachment to sexuality. And then the kind of thoughts that we can get engaged in regarding sexuality. So one category is attachment to sexuality. Another category which we tend to attach to are thoughts, opinions, beliefs, views, theories, etc., which are incorrect. We have all kinds of opinions and views and beliefs which we’re attached to. So this is a second set of objects of attachment. The third set of objects are traditional beliefs and practices. We all follow a variety of traditions, customs and things, both religious and secular which are very superstitious. And this is the third kind of attachment – attaching to all these customs, ways of dressing, ways of behaving, doing little rituals at sporting events and things like these. The fourth category of things which we’re attached to are all the things that we’re attached to as ‘I’ or ‘mine.’ So these are four groups of objects which we’re attached to. Then by observing these,

contemplating them, seeing the pain and punishment of attachment, and the joy and freedom of non-attachment, then the mind will automatically liberate itself from these things by just realizing the truth of attachment and non-attachment to these four categories of things which we're attached to.

This issue of attachment is very very important. In Christianity there're also concerns with the problems of attachment, and we can see in the primary symbol of Christianity. In the cross there is the eye and the cutting of the eye which shows that Christianity also teaches the getting rid of, the cutting off of attachment to things as 'I,' getting rid of selfishness. This is in the teaching not only of Buddhism and Christianity but all the true religions as well. They all are teaching that we must be free of attachment. This is because attachment to things as 'I' and 'mine' is the origin and source of all defilements or all sins. All defilements of the mind and heart come from, and all rooted in this problem of clinging and of attachment. So this is why we need to be interested in it and that's why in step twelve we really study and scrutinize both attachment and non-attachment and begin to liberate the mind.

We've talked about things that the mind attaches to, which we're attached to or things that the mind must be liberated from. We can also talk about the five hindrances. The five hindrances are feelings which arise from within the mind, from the depth of the mind out of our habits and tendencies of thoughts. And these are five in number. There is the hindrance of sensual desire. This is a kind of sensual desire which has no specific object. It's more of a mood or attitude of sensual desire. The second one is the hindrance of ill-will. The third is the hindrance of sloth and torpor or dullness of mind. The fourth is restlessness and agitation of mind and the fifth is doubt. These are the five hindrances, and these are things which the mind must be liberated from.

There are also the kilesas or defilements which are usually termed to be *lobha* – greed, *dosa* – anger and ill-will, and *moha* – delusion. Or we can say liking and disliking or all the pairs of opposite of duality such as good and evil, winning and losing, advantage and disadvantage. These are the different things from which the mind must be liberated. So in step twelve, there is this study and scrutiny of attachment, the things that are attached to, the penalty of that attachment and then non-attachment, the benefit of living free of attachment, the happiness and lightness and freedom of non-attachment. This is all studied and as this is studied the mind will naturally release and let go of all these various things. Liberation will begin to happen naturally.

This is step twelve, the last step of the third tetrad. So this third tetrad overall is the studying of the mind, studying of the *citta*. First, experiencing all the different states of mind in step nine – the lustful mind, the non-lustful mind, the angry mind, the non-angry mind, etc; then delighting the mind in step ten – learning how to make the mind glad, bring it into a state of joyfulness. The third step is concentrating the mind, establishing the mind in firmness so that it is ready to do its duty. And then the fourth of this tetrad or step twelve is releasing, liberating, freeing the mind. In carrying out these four steps, the mind has been studied and trained in great detail. So this completes our discussion of the third tetrad of mindfulness of breathing. Time is up and we will end today's lecture at this point. Thank you.

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