

The Path for Realizing New Life

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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. Audio recordings are now available from www.suanmokkh.org and www.bia.or.th. The following is a transcription generously made by a Dhamma volunteer. If you noticed possible improvements to the text and would like to contribute, please kindly contact the volunteer and the Buddhādāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok (suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com).

Today we'll continue talking about the 'new way,' or the 'way of new life,' the 'path of new life.'

Yesterday we were talking about the old life. We looked into quite a few aspects of the old life to see what it's like. This is absolutely necessary to recognize what the old life is, to know it clearly and profoundly. Once we have really seen the old life clearly for what it is, then we are able to deduce that there must be something else, and then we begin to look for that which is the opposite of old life. And this is where we begin to find the way of new life.

The old way or the old life is a life that is trapped by positive and negative. It's a life where positive and negative are constantly arising, and then the positive & negative causes 'self,' causes ego. And then the 'self' is the cause of selfishness and defilements, and then that is the cause of suffering, pain, and misery. So the old life, the old way, is one of the positive and negative causing ego, causing selfishness, causing *dukkha*. But the new way of life, or the new way, the new life, even if the positive & negative comes up, it doesn't cause ego even though there might be some positive and negative happening. It's not the source of ego, and so no *dukkha* arises. But even beyond that, there is the new life where the positive & negative doesn't arise at all. So this is a brief comparison between the old way and the new way.

One ought to have some understanding and appreciation of Nibbāna ('Nibbāna' is the Pāli word, the Sanskrit word with which people in the West

are often familiar with is ‘Nirvana.’) Both Nibbāna and Nirvana mean ‘coolness.’ One ought to have an understanding of what is meant by Nibbāna, because then we have a sense of the goal of the new way of life, and then we can move more steadily and more directly in that direction. There are two kinds of Nibbāna, or two levels of Nibbāna. The first level is where even though there are still feelings or experiences of positive & negative arising, none of that positive or negative leads to ego, leads to ‘self’ arising. That’s the first level of Nibbāna. But in the second kind of Nibbāna, the positive & negative don’t arise – things are not experienced as positive & negative. If we can understand what is meant by Nibbāna in these two levels, then it will make it much easier to understand everything else.

The new way of life is that which protects against, prevents against the positive and negative, prevents positivism and negativism from arising. Or should the positive or negative happen, should the mind experience things in that way, the new way of life will protect the mind so that the mind is not messed up by that positive & negative, so that ego and selfishness is not concocted. That’s the new way. And then the new life that results from this new way of living is a life that is free of positive & negative. When positive & negative is prevented completely, then it’s a life that is completely untroubled by the falseness of positive & negative – the positive & negative doesn’t even happen or even if the positive & negative still occurs, the mind isn’t touched by it, the mind doesn’t buy into the values positive & negative. And so it’s as if the positive & negative didn’t exist. Although the positive & negative may happen, they don’t exist spiritually because they have no effect or influence on the mind that is protected by the new way of living.

The old life doesn’t have a way of knowing and having *atammayatā*, and so the positive and negative can tread upon the mind. In the old way, the positive and negative are walking all over the mind, stepping on it and stomping on it, because there’s no understanding of *atammayatā* to protect it. In the new life there is an understanding of *atammayatā*, there’s a thorough understanding of it so that positive and negative can’t tread upon the mind. So the old way is one where positive and negative are walking all over the mind. In the new way, the positive and negative can’t tread on the mind at all. The old way doesn’t have *atammayatā*. The new way has *atammayatā*.

The new life that has *atammayatā* must use three tools. There are three fundamental tools that must be used for the new life that has *atammayatā*. The first is *sati* (mindfulness). The second is *paññā* (intuitive wisdom). And the third *samādhi* (collectedness of mind).

If we count in this way we have three – mindfulness, intuitive wisdom, and collectedness. However if we wish, we can distinguish between two important aspects of *paññā*. The first is all the knowledge and wisdom that has been stored up, that has been gathered and stored, and this we can just call ‘wisdom’ or ‘intuitive wisdom’ (*paññā*). But then the second aspect of *paññā* is that wisdom, that understanding and insight which is used specifically for the situation that one is facing for whatever is occurring right now in the mind. *Sampajañña* is the specific wisdom that needs to be applied to the specific circumstances of this moment, and this we can call *sampajañña* (applied wisdom) – insight in action. So there are two aspects to what is broadly called wisdom: there’s the general wisdom (*paññā*) and the specific applied insight of *sampajañña*. So if we count in this way, then there are four things – mindfulness, general wisdom, specifically applied wisdom, and then collectedness.

The difference between *paññā* and *sampajañña* can be compared to the medicine that we keep in the medicine chest at home. In the medicine chest there are all kinds of medicines, but when one is ill one chooses the specific remedy or the specific medicine for the illness. One doesn’t take and eat the whole medicine chest. Or it can be compared to weapons. If one is a soldier, one has all kinds of different weapons, but when one goes to fight you only take the weapon that you can use. And so we have what’s stored up and then we have what is applied directly, specifically, to immediate circumstances, and this we call *sampajañña*.

Now we’d like to look at how these things work, how these four tools work together. Whatever circumstances arise, first *sati* is aware, *sati* is aware, it knows what is happening. *Sati* asks, ‘What is this, and what’s to be done, what is this, and what’s to be done?’ And then *sati* goes to wisdom, *sati* recollects wisdom, it goes to that big stock of wisdom that is somewhere in the mind, and then chooses or is able to find the specific wisdom needed to deal with the circumstances of the moment. That general wisdom is *paññā*, but out of all that *paññā*, *sati* brings the specific wisdom (*sampajañña*) to deal with the immediate situation, and then the *sampajañña* understands what’s taking place and responds appropriately so that there’s no *dukkha*. If however there isn’t enough strength for *sampajañña* and *paññā* to function fully, then *samādhi*, that collectedness of mind which has tremendous power, will provide the strength for wisdom and applied wisdom to act appropriately. And so in this way the four work together. These are four comrades that must function together. They’re a team, and if there’s proper teamwork between these four friends, then no problems arise.

So first there must be *sati* (mindfulness) to be aware of what's happening, and then to go to wisdom. If *sati* correctly recollects wisdom, then wisdom can be applied. Wisdom has a quality of sharpness. Wisdom is very sharp in order to cut through the problem, but sharpness is not enough. There also must be weight to provide the force behind the sharpness – just the sharpness won't cut the problem –and this weight is provided by *samādhi*, that collected power of mind. And so first there's some situation, and there's got to be awareness of it. If there's awareness then it can bring this sharpness and weight to cut through the problem, or to cut it before it even becomes a problem. Of course, the first key is that there is mindfulness, that there is this *sati*. Without that, then there's nothing to get the wisdom. Without *sati*, any wisdom and knowledge is [are] completely useless. Without mindfulness, wisdom can't be applied, *samādhi* is useless, it can't be used in an appropriate way, it can't serve its purpose. So having wisdom or *samādhi* without *sati* doesn't do us much good. There has to be this sharpness, this speed, this carefulness and attentiveness of *sati*. And then if it's just in time, if *sati* is completely spontaneous, immediate, and brings wisdom and *samādhi* into action immediately, then it's 'in time,' it's right in time to prevent any problems from arising. So one must have *sati*. If it's confused or fuzzy then the whole thing falls apart. There must be clear, sharp, very quick *sati*.

Or to put it very briefly and simply, *sati* is the speed, wisdom is the sharpness, and *samādhi* (collectedness) is the weight.

We're going to have these four things: *sati*, *paññā*, *sampajañña*, and *samādhi*. Or we can count them as three if we wish. We'll have these three or four things. If we have these four comrades, then there will always be *atammayatā*.

Surrounding us are myriad objects, and these objects are making contact with the mind via the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind sense. Whenever one of these objects, one of these sense objects, makes an impression upon the mind, if there isn't *sati*, then that contact will concoct positive & negative. And depending on the case either positive or negative values [will arise]. Once the positive or negative arises, if there still isn't *sati*, then that will concoct 'ego,' 'self.' This illusion will be concocted and be suffering. However, if there is *sati* to meet the object as it contacts the mind, as that object, that sense object, makes an impression on the mind, if *sati* is there to meet it, to be aware that here is something, and to be aware of what it is, aware of its danger, and aware of what's to be done about it, then *sati* can bring wisdom, and that object won't be able to concoct the mind into positive and negative. And of course the ego, the

self, won't get concocted either. So it's crucial that sati is fast – these objects come in very quickly. Sati's gotta to be fast enough to be right there every time an object strikes the mind. And further, sati must be complete. If it's incomplete, imperfect, then it won't be able to function properly. So sati must both be fast enough, must be immediate, and it must be complete, whole. If it is, then it's possible to meet up with any sense object and not turn it into a problem.

If mindfulness is complete and immediate, then it is able to confront any object that makes contact, and then brings wisdom into play, and that object is not a source of trouble and confusion, that object isn't able to concoct the mind. However, if sati is incomplete, slow, fuzzy, confused, then when there is an object making contact with the mind, sati isn't there to confront it, to meet it. And then the element of ignorance (*avijjā dhātu*) has an opportunity to come in. This ignorance element gets its chance and so it slips in, and then the mind is concocted by ignorance. And so foolish feeling is concocted, and then craving is concocted, and then attachment is concocted, and then ego is born. The illusion, the stupidity of ego, is concocted, and then dukkha is concocted. So if sati isn't quick enough and whole enough, then ignorance element gets its chance and there arises what we call 'dependent origination' (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), where dependent on each other these various things happen: there's ignorant contact with the object, ignorant feeling, ignorant craving, ignorant attachment, ignorant ego, and then dukkha. So without proper mindfulness, dukkha is dependently concocted in one and then there is suffering in the mind.

Now on the other hand if sati is complete and spontaneous, then it receives the object as the object makes contact, then because of sati the ignorance element has no opportunity to come in, so there is wisdom, there is the element of enlightenment (*vijjā dhātu*). When there is contact between the sense organ, the sense object, and mind, when these three meet, when there is this contact that is watched over by mindfulness, then everything happens in a very natural way through the enlightenment element, so there is enlightened contact. There is correct contact, or sense experience, and then any feeling that arises is correct, enlightened feeling, then any want or desire, any aim about what to do in this situation is correct or enlightened. And then any action proceeds smoothly, naturally without any dukkha. This we call dependent quenching. The old way, where ignorance comes in and then step by step dukkha is concocted, is called dependent origination, the dependent origination of suffering and misery. But this other one where sati is complete and fast, where there is wisdom, we call dependent quenching (*paṭicca-nirodha*), because at each stage,

each moment, the mind is quenched, it's kept cool. The potential for the mind to get concocted is quenched, and so whatever happens in this progression from contact to feeling to desire, all of that is quenched, and so no dukkha arises, there's just coolness. The one way is called dependent origination, which is the causes, the sequential causes of dukkha. The other way is dependent quenching, the maintenance of peace in the mind, the maintenance of coolness through mindfulness and wisdom.

So in summary, mindfulness must be used in every situation and in all circumstances. Whatever is happening, sati is necessary. Sati must be there before anything is born as positive or negative, before something takes on this positive or negative value. There must be sati there to prevent that positiveness or negativeness. Or even if these values of positive and negative have come, then there must be sati there to prevent the positive and negative from concocting ego. Even if ego has come up, sati must be there to prevent ego from tormenting the mind. And so [at] whatever stage of the process there must be mindfulness there. If mindfulness slips at an earlier stage, well then there's gotta be mindfulness at the later stage to protect against this concocting of the mind. Even if dukkha arises, even if mindfulness has slipped to the point that there's dukkha, mindfulness is absolutely necessary to remove the dukkha, to get rid of the dukkha. So no matter where in the mental process the mind is at, sati is needed. There's got to be sati there to deal with things properly.

Mindfulness must be used in every situation – that means all the time, every moment. Mindfulness needs to be there to protect the mind from ignorance and the concocting by positive & negative. Mindfulness needs to be there to confront anything that comes into struggle with it, or to deal with it. And then mindfulness is necessary to destroy any concocting, any ignorance, any positive and negative that has slipped in. So whatever the situation, whether protecting or fighting against or destroying, mindfulness is necessary. There has to be mindfulness to meet the situation, and then mindfulness is necessary to recollect wisdom and apply the wisdom. And there must be mindfulness, if collectedness (*samādhi*) is going to provide its strength and energy. So mindfulness, let us stress once again, mindfulness is required, is crucial in all situations whether in protecting against or in struggling with or in destroying, whatever the situation is.

Next we must discuss *paññā*. Literally, *pa* means 'complete' or 'thorough,' complete and thorough. *Ñā* means 'knowledge,' 'understanding.' So *paññā* means 'complete and thorough understanding.' And the meaning of this is that *paññā* is the complete and thorough understanding of things as they really are,

to know things as they truly are, not to know them in some deluded or false way. So *paññā* is this complete and thorough knowledge of things as they are in reality. This we call *paññā*, often translated as ‘wisdom.’

And then *paññā* comes from *vipassanā*. *Vipassanā* is a word that we use now to mean a certain kind of activity of mind: *vi* means clearly, distinctly, directly, or even brightly; and *passanā* means to see. *Vi-passanā*, *vipassanā*, means to see directly, see clearly, see immediately, distinctly. When things are seen in this way, just the way the eyes can see certain things if there’s good sunlight and the eyes are clear and focused, there’s no tension in the face, the eyes can see something clearly. In the same way the mind can see the reality of things clearly, distinctly, immediately, directly – this is called *vipassanā*. And *vipassanā* results in *paññā*, understanding things thoroughly, understanding things correctly and completely.

Vipassanā sees the truth of everything, sees the truth of all things. What this means – all this truth – is more than we can describe in words. There’s so much that is seen. The completeness, the totality of the seen, is more than can be explained in words; we don’t have the time. However we can mention specific aspects of that seeing, [and] we’ll talk about some of them. The first aspect or quality of *vipassanā* when things are seen truly in their reality is what we call *aniccatā*, *aniccatā*, the fact of impermanence, the fact of change.

Aniccatā means impermanence. *Tā*, which is an adjective means the state of or the fact. So this state is seen as the fact of impermanence, which we call *aniccatā*, *aniccatā*. When *vipassanā* realizes the impermanence of things, then this is called *aniccatā*. This is very important. This is the beginning of seeing things in terms of truth, seeing the reality of things, not just our illusions about them. And this is what will lead through *vipassanā* to *atammayatā*.

So *aniccatā* means the fact of impermanence, the fact that things are changing all the time. It’s the fact of the instability, the uncertainty of things that they’re constantly changing. This fact of impermanence is something that is very important. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus also taught this. The heart of Heraclitus’ teaching was “*Panta rhei*,” (All flows, all flows,) which means everything is changing, everything is in a constant state of change, of impermanence. Many of the Greeks though weren’t so bright and they didn’t understand him and said that he was crazy. But this fact of impermanence is a fundamental understanding if we’re going to live in line with truth.

Let’s look at bit at this word *aniccam*, impermanence. If we look, we’ll see that all the things we call the *dhātu*, the natural essences, aren’t static. They’re

always moving, and so the dhātus are coming together, clumping together, and something new is produced. For example, hydrogen and oxygen come together, and when they meet, then there's water. And so the dhātus, these natural elements, are constantly colliding and compounding and mixing. Whenever they come together, whenever bunches or hundreds or whatever of dhātus come together, then something new is produced. And since none of the dhātus are static, this activity of coming together and colliding amongst the dhātus is constant, so the result is impermanence, or the fact of 'constant impermanence.'

And it's not just the dhātus that are changing all the time, but when various clumps and clusters of dhātus come together, this is always changing all the time. Take the bunch of dhātus that we call 'water,' and then the other bunch of dhātus we call 'sunlight.' When the two come together we get steam or evaporation, and then when various clusters of evaporation gather together, then we've got clouds, and when the bunch of dhātus that is a cloud comes into contact with the dhātus that is coolness or coldness, then there is rain. And so the dhātus themselves are constantly changing, and then the bunches of dhātus are also coming together, colliding, changing, in a ceaseless process of transformation.

So all these dhātus, all these things, are ceaselessly changing and transforming. There's this constant flow of change, and this is what has given rise to what we call 'evolution.' The evolution of this world is nothing but this ceaseless flow, this ceaseless process of change and transformation.

In this process of change, this impermanent flow of change, there are these things that are coming together and then creating or concocting new things. This is called *saṅkhāra*, or 'concoction.' This coming together and cooking up new things is called 'concocting.' Every new thing that is produced is called a *saṅkhāra*, a concoction, the product of concocting. And then the things which are doing this concocting are called 'concoctors,' or *saṅkhāra*. All of this is called concocting or concoction, in Pāli, *saṅkhāra*, which can mean the process of concocting, the results of it, or the concoctions and the causes, the concoctors. In this flow of change there is this concocting, this *saṅkhāra*, happening ceaselessly.

We can look at this in two ways: we can see that impermanence (*aniccam*) is a flow of concocting, of *saṅkhāra*. Or we can look at it as *saṅkhāra*, the concocting, is a flow of impermanence, of change. So we can look at it in either way, that impermanence is the stream of concocting, or that concocting is the stream of impermanence.

If now we look inside ourselves, look into our own bodies, we'll see that there's nothing but this flow of impermanence and saṅkhāra. Throughout the body, anywhere that we might look, there's nothing but this stream of aniccaṃ and saṅkhāra. Whether on the crude level of body parts, or down to the subtle level of atoms, or even the tiniest subatomic particles, whatever it is, there's just this impermanence, this change of aniccaṃ and the concocting, the saṅkhāra. Wherever we look throughout the body, whether on the crudest level or the most subtle, there's nothing but this concocting and impermanence.

We can look from the aspect of corporeality or the aspect of mentality. Corporeality is called *rūpa* and mentality is called *nāma*. In either aspect there's nothing but this impermanence. In all the constituents of body and of mind there's this constant flow of impermanence. In the physical and the psychic, there is just this saṅkhāra and aniccaṃ.

But if we look outside, everything, all the objects of the senses, all the dhātus that make up these things, are constantly flowing, constantly changing in ceaseless impermanence. There's nothing outside us that isn't changing all the time.

Inside ourself there's all this changing, constantly changing. And outside of us there's all this change, this ceaseless change. If we really saw it completely we'd be so dizzy that we'd die, but nature or our natural ignorance helps us and so we don't see it, and then we don't get so dizzy and die or go crazy.

But we've now got what's called *vipassanā*, and there's wisdom (*paññā*). And so we can look at all this change in a way that we see it, we see it deeply and thoroughly, but we don't get dizzy and we don't die, we don't die from seeing it.

So everything within us and around us is constantly changing. When we deal with these things, when we experience these things, of course we want to be able to take advantage of them and find some benefit in them, and so we don't want them to change. We want to get something from them and we don't want them to change, but however they keep changing. It doesn't matter what we want, they're always changing. Although we have this natural inclination to try and use things for some purpose and benefit, they just keep changing. And so this constant change is always in conflict with what we're trying to do, and so this fact of impermanence, *aniccatā*, gives rise to the fact of dukkha, *dukkhatā*. All these things that are constantly changing can never quite be what we need them to be, they can never really fulfill our needs, they can never really satisfy our needs, so there's this fact of the inability of these changing things to

satisfy, to be what we need. And so this quality of dukkhatā, this fact of dukkhatā, arises out of *anicca* or is within the fact of impermanence.

So we want our wealth and property. We want it [them] to be of use for us, we want it [them] to last, we don't want it [them] to change, we don't want it [them] to be impermanent, but it's [they're] changing all the time. And so this hope, this wish of ours is biting the mind. These things, because they can't be what we want them to be, are constantly biting the mind. They're biting and biting and biting. And this gives rise to the characteristic of dukkha – the way that impermanent things are biting the mind is called *dukkha* – it's painful, it's miserable. So this is called *dukkhatā*, the fact of dukkha within impermanent things.

So these bodies are impermanent, or even this thing we call life is impermanent, it's all just constantly changing. Of course we want to derive some benefit from it, to get some value from it, but we have to just accept that it's constantly changing. So just let go of it, let go of it all and let it change because it's going to change no matter what, but understand this change. If we can let go of the change, just let it be, then of course we can derive some benefits and value from all this change of the body, of life, but according to impermanence. We can get what benefits we can out of impermanence if we let go of it, and then it doesn't bite the mind, the impermanence won't bite the mind. And then there's no dukkha for the mind if we can let go of the change, let go of the impermanence. Then we're able to get some value and benefit from it, but even that benefit is impermanent, it's fleeting, it doesn't last. But if we can let go of it all, accepting the impermanence of it, then there won't be any biting of the mind.

And then there's something a bit ridiculous for us, that if something arises that is permanent, we don't like it. Say the food we eat never changes, we have to eat the same food over and over and over again, we get sick and tired of it, we get bored with it. Of course that's not absolute permanence, but if anything seems to not change, then we very quickly get bored and tired of it. So we don't even like permanence, this is how confused and crazy we are.

If we had to sit all the time, we'd hate it, we don't like to sit all the time. Or to stand, just stand, we don't like that either. Or to walk constantly, well we don't like that. Or to lie down all the time, we don't like that. We like to change, it's natural to change from sitting to walking to standing and so on. And so we've got this illusion of permanence within impermanence. We're constantly deceiving ourselves, lying to ourselves. We keep telling ourselves we want

permanence, but in fact we don't, but we're so mixed up we can't separate this lie of permanence that we see in the impermanence.

If we regard something as permanent, if we regard it as permanent, but of course it isn't, it keeps changing, then this bites, this claws the mind, there's dukkha. There's a misery inherent in grasping at impermanent things and regarding them as permanent. So we need to realize the *aniccatā*, the fact of impermanence in all things, realize the *aniccatā*, and then we won't regard it as permanent. By understanding *aniccatā*, we don't regard things as *niccam*, (permanent) and so we don't delude ourselves with the imagined fact of permanence (*niccatā*). So to keep things from biting us we need to realize the *aniccatā* of them. We don't have to grab onto or attach to this idea of impermanence, but just in a natural way realize the impermanence, and then it won't be a source of suffering. So we need to be aware of, to understand *aniccatā*, and then *dukkhatā*, the second characteristic of things.

The first vipassanā is *aniccatā*, the fact of impermanence. The second vipassanā is *dukkhatā*, the fact of misery or miserableness. And the third vipassanā is *anattatā*, *anattatā*, the fact of not-self. Things are constantly changing, but we want them to be this or be that to satisfy some need or desire of ours, and so that impermanence bites the mind, and then there is dukkha. But who wants dukkha? There's not one of us here who likes to suffer! We all hate to suffer, but we can't control things. We think we want this and we think we can control things to get what we want, but because they're impermanent, things are just dhātus, they come together, they form, they break up, they work according to their own means. The dhātus have their own ways. They don't listen to our wants and desires, so this trying to control or wanting to control and have things our way doesn't happen. There isn't this control. There's no control of all these impermanent things, of all these dhātus. This fact that there's nothing in control is what we call *anattatā*, *anattatā*, the fact of not-self, there's no 'I' or 'mine,' no self that controls these impermanent things.

The fourth vipassanā is *dharmādhiṭṭhatā*, *dharmādhiṭṭhatā* This is probably a strange word for you, but all it means is that this is the natural way of things. Things are naturally, ordinary, just like this. The fact that things arise, change, and cease – this constant arising, transformation, and ceasing – is just the natural ordinary way of things. The facts of impermanence, of miserableness (*dukkhatā*) – and the fact of not-self – that's just the natural way, things are ordinarily, just like that. This is called *dharmādhiṭṭhatā*, the fourth vipassanā, the fourth insight.

We don't see the fact of this naturalness of things, the natural way things are. We don't see this because of our own stupidity, so then there occurs the opposite of *dhammādhittatā*.

So things just are, and must be impermanent, must be unable to satisfy, and must be nonself. This is the naturalness of things. *Dhammādhittatā* is the naturalness that things are always changing. They bite if we grab on, and they're out of our control. There's nothing that controls them. *Dhammādhittatā* or naturalness.

The fifth insight or vipassanā is *dhamma-niyāmatā*, *dhamma-niyāmatā*. All these impermanent things, all these things which have no self that controls or owns them, that are just naturally like this, all of these things are under the power of the law of nature. *Niyā* means 'order' or 'law.' The natural law, the state of being subject to under the power of the natural law, we call *dhamma-niyāmatā*. Things are not under the control of any self or ego. They're merely under the power of the law of nature, and we call this fact the natural order, or natural law, *dhamma-niyāmatā*.

So which of us is not under the control, or not under the power of the law of nature? Is there anyone out there who isn't subject to the law of nature? Whether ourself or anyone else in this universe, is there anyone who can say, "Nope, not me, I'm not gonna listen to the law of nature, I'm not gonna be like that."? Is there anyone out there who can say this?

The sixth vipassanā is called *idappaccayatā*, *idappaccayatā* or 'conditionality.' This is the natural law, the natural fact that everything depends on causes and conditions. In all this, impermanence, all these things which are not-self, in all of that natural change, the change always changes according to causes and conditions. *Idappaccayatā* is the fact that with this as cause, this exists, with this as condition, this exists. Any existence of anything, and the change of that existence, is always dependent on causes and conditions. *Idappaccayatā* is the fact that this flow of impermanence is a constant transformation of conditions, and so things are always changing dependent on the change of the conditions. Because with this as condition, this exists, with this as condition, this exists. Take away the condition, this no longer exists. In terms of everything, the entire universe both physical and mental, we use the word *idappaccayatā*. It applies to everything, but if we speak just about living things, especially the consciousness of living things, then we talk in a more specific way – we talk of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, the dependent origination: because of these and these and these and these conditions, dukkha arises. And

also of *paṭiccanirodha*, dependent quenching: because of the quenching of this condition, the quenching of this condition, the quenching of this condition, dukkha quenches, dukkha ends. So in specific terms we call it dependent origination and dependent quenching, but in terms of everything – both physical and mental, living and non-living, sentient and non sentient – we use the word *idappaccayatā*, the fact, the law, of conditionality.

The understanding of *idappaccayatā* (conditionality) and *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination) is very important. The knowledge and understanding of these truths is [are] crucial in understanding the mind and how suffering is concocted and how to eliminate suffering. We've discussed this in detail a few months ago, and we recommend that you study this. ¹

The seventh vipassanā is called *suññatā*, *suññatā* or 'voidness,' voidness. There's just all this *idappaccayatā* – this natural law of conditionality – things arising and transforming and ceasing dependent on causes and conditions. If there's merely this *idappaccayatā*, then things are void of 'self,' things have this state of being void of 'self.' Things happen according to this *idappaccayatā*, they don't happen because they're selves. So there's this seventh insight of *suññatā*, the voidness, that things are void of 'self.' If things are void of 'self,' then there's nothing to be positive or negative. If there was a self it might be positive or negative, but when there's just the constant flow of change according to the *dharmā-niyāmatā*, the natural law, when there's this constant change in that, there isn't anything that can be taken as a 'self,' as owner or controller. So there's the voidness, and if it's void of 'self,' it's void of anything that could be positive or negative. And so it's void of concocting and it's void of dukkha. Voidness means void of 'self,' void of positive & negative, void of the concocting of the mind, void of the defilements, and void of dukkha. Or in essence, all this voidness is called *suññatā*. But most simply the essence of *suññatā*, the essential meaning of *suññatā*, is void of 'self,' void of 'I & mine.' This fact is called *suññatā*.

The Buddha stated in a concise principle,²

“*Suñño loko attena vā attaniyena vā,*”

(The universe is void of self or any categories of self.)

¹ The teachings on *paṭiccasamuppāda* can be found in the book *Under the Bodhi Tree* (<http://suanmokkh.org/books/28>) and also listened to online: <https://soundcloud.com/buddhadasa/sets/retreat-talks-8812>

² See *Suññataloka Sutta* (SN 35.85) <https://suttacentral.net/pi/sn35.85>

Attā is ‘self,’ *attena vā* is ‘categories of self,’ *attaniya* means ‘concerning self,’ and *attaniyena vā* is ‘categories concerning self.’ The universe is completely void of self and things concerned with self, of categories about self & the things concerned with self, *attā* & *attaniya*.

So obviously if there’s no ‘self,’ then there’s nothing that ‘belongs to self.’ If there’s no ‘I,’ well there can’t be any ‘mine’ either.

But because we’re rather stupid there’s ‘I’ and ego and ‘self’ and ‘soul’ all over the place, and so then we scoop in everything as ‘mine, mine, mine.’

No ‘I,’ no ‘mine’ – that’s short and simple.

So whether we look around outside us or we look inside – seeing that there’s nothing but voidness, voidness outside, voidness inside – everything is void of self. Seeing this voidness, then there is the eighth *vipassanā*. We realize, ‘Oh! It’s just like this. This is just how it is. It’s just like this.’ Seeing that all this voidness is, it’s just how it is, it’s just this. This is called *tathatā*, in Thai, *thathada*, [??] just like this, just this. Or in a more philosophical way, the ‘thusness’ of things. It’s thus, it’s not like that over there, it’s thus. Seeing this thusness of voidness is called *tathatā*, the eighth insight.

When things are *tathatā* (thusness) how could there be anything positive? If things are thus, how can it be positive or negative? In thusness, there’s nothing to concoct positive or negative, the meanings, the values of positive & negative. So in *tathatā* there’s the thusness that has nothing to do with positive or negative.

All the pairs of opposites, every duality whatsoever, such as good & evil, right & wrong, male & female, up & down, all of these are merely thus – thusness. They all are in truth just thusness. All of these dualisms are leading to the qualities or the values positive & negative. All of these dualities are concocting the positive & the negative. But to see that there’s no real duality in them, there’s none of this positive & negative, this is *tathatā* (thusness).

We need to experience, to consciously experience and realize, that all these dualities are tricking us, deceiving us, lying to us, and every time we buy their lie we suffer for it. When we realize this, then we see, then we develop the eighth *vipassanā* of *tathatā*. Realizing thusness, things no can longer deceive us, they no longer can trick us. None of these dualities can suck us in and make us suffer.

When there is this highest insight of *tathatā* (thusness) then there is no way that the qualities positive and negative can arise to the mind. The mind can’t be

touched by positive and negative. Nothing concocts the positive & the negative, so there's no positive & negative to concoct the mind, and so the mind is in a state of unconcoctability. The mind can't be concocted – it's at total peace. And so this is the ninth insight, *atammayatā*, the knowledge of unconcoctability that nothing can concoct the mind. And then 'I,' 'I' has disappeared, 'I' is completely gone.

So there are these nine insights, and together these nine insights are what we call *paññā*, wisdom. We said earlier in this talk that in dealing with any situation there must be mindfulness. Mindfulness retrieves wisdom, and applies the wisdom. Wisdom is made up of these nine insights: *aniccatā*, *dukkhatā*, *anattatā*, *dhammādhiṭṭhatā*, *dhamma-niyāmatā*, *idappaccayatā*, *suññatā*, *tathatā*, and *atammayatā*. These are our nine weapons, the nine kinds of weapons, the Nine *Tās*. In any situation, mindfulness just takes the right weapon to take care of the situation. To take and use the weapon requires strength, and this strength is applied by *samādhi*, the collected mind that has the qualities of purity, stability, and readiness. And so there are all these *Tās*, these weapons that make up wisdom. Mindfulness selects the right wisdom, the use of the appropriate wisdom is *sampajañña* (applied wisdom), and then *samādhi* provides the strength and power to use the weapon correctly. And in this way nothing can concoct the mind into positive and negative, nothing can cause suffering.

The matter of *atammayatā* isn't finished yet, so if you can put up with another talk, we'll continue tomorrow. But for today that's all. Thanks for being patient, tolerant, and enduring.

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Transcribed and lightly edited by Bill Weir (arizonahandbook@yahoo.com) in March 2016
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