

# *Success in Study & Practice*

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Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

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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](http://www.suanmokkh.org) and [www.bia.or.th](http://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](mailto:suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com)).*

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Today we will talk about the means to be successful in the study and practice that we discussed yesterday.

As we said yesterday, it is necessary to have a sufficient motive or appetite.

While it is necessary to have sufficient motive, it also is important to see what directions the motivation is heading, whether it is an academic motivation or a social motivation or moral or religious or whatever. Whatever directions our motive is moving then our appetite will proceed in that direction and then we may not be successful in achieving our goal if the motive is pointed in the wrong directions.

And so in order to have a proper motivation, we need a correct understanding of what it is we need and about the thing that we ought to get from life. This is necessary if we are going to have a wise motivation.

Now we might not really know what this life is, what it is about, what its purposes. We might know this, although most of us think that we do. In fact, it is likely that we do not yet understand correctly what life is and what its purposes. So this is very important thing to consider – what life is, its purposes and so on.

Now we can say that this purpose of life is to get the best thing that a human being should get, to get the highest thing that a human being should get. We might

even be able to give a name to this thing. For example, if we are Christian, we might call it ‘God.’ But although we can name it, we may not have any real understanding of what it really is. For example, in Christianity, we might say that the best thing we can get from life is to be with God or a Buddhist might say that it is ‘to have Nibbāna.’ But just being able to name it, does not mean we really know what it is.

And sometimes, we do not believe that life can be improved or developed according to the Dhamma and the teachings of religion. Many of us do not think that our life can be totally transformed through Dhamma. We often think that life just has to be the way it is now the way we are carrying on, the way things are now and that this is how life must always be. When we believe that life cannot change or cannot be developed then, of course, there is no way that it can change or be developed.

We need to firmly believe that this life is something given by nature in a way that can be developed according to our needs. It is just like basic natural resources that we find in the world. They are there in a raw form but this can be transformed according to our needs if we understand the rules and laws of such things. So in the same way, life has been given by nature in a form that is ready to be developed according to our needs.

In the ancient language of India, there is a phrase *jīvita vohāra* which means ‘the business of life’ or ‘the commerce of life.’ *Jīvita* means ‘life’ and *vohāra* means ‘to trade,’ to engage in commerce or to have a business. What this mean is life is our basic capital with which we set up a business and then we engage or trade or we carry out our business in whatever form in order to make a profit from our basic investment. This we call *jīvita vohāra* which points out that life as we’ve received it, it is just a basic stake and then it is up to us to develop it further and make a profit out of this life.

Now of course there are two kinds of profit. The first kind of profit or business – to make the profit is material. There are all kinds of material gains and benefits of which everyone is quite familiar. The other kind of profit is mental or spiritual. The first kind, everyone knows about more than well enough and there is no need for us to say anything more about the material physical profit obtainable from life. However, an understanding of the spiritual profit is quite lacking so it is necessary to talk further on this aspect.

On the material side, it is quite simple, it is a matter of having money and wealth, having necessary status and influence and having good friends. For a person in their old age, having these things will make one quite satisfied. That is good enough on the material side of life. But that is not enough spiritually. One realizes that there is still something spiritual to be gained from life, to be realized so we must do our best. We must look deeply in order to gain the spiritual profit from life.

For example, we can read in the papers about millionaires in this world who have plenty of money, who have been very successful in material business, have acquired lots of money. They have got families. They have friends and even good health and we see them, even though they are healthy and have lots of good friends, that they still live with a lot of fear. For example, that something will happen and their money will disappear or when their wife or a child or someone dies, they get very upset and cry. Then they also live with a sense of all we are having to compete with others in order to protect their investment and their money and their empire and everything else. This points out that they still have not been successful in this spiritual business of life no matter how successful their material business. There is still quite a bit to learn and to accomplish in terms of their spiritual business.

Although they are living in heaven, they live in heaven with the fear that they might fall out of heaven or the fear that God will kick them out of heaven. They are still living there in heaven with being attached to the positive & the negative. So, although they are in heaven physically, spiritually they are not in such a good shape.

You ought to know what the problems of life are. Their names are greed, anger, hatred, fear, excitement, worry and anxiety, envy, jealousy, possessiveness, sexual possessiveness, longing after the past, boredom – these are a few examples. Even the millionaire or the angel up in heaven can still have these problems. And so the one in heaven even, still, has not completed their spiritual business. As long as any of these problems remain – the problems such as greed, anger, hatred, fear, worrying and so on, as long as any of these remain in even the least little way then our spiritual business is not yet completely successful and we still have some work to do.

Only when we see these problems and then have a sincere desire to be free of them or to raise our lives up above all these problems, only then will we have a sufficiently strong and pure appetite for Dhamma.

That means the best thing that one can get in life is to be above all these problems, to have a life that is beyond all these problems, beyond all of the power and influence of positive & negative. A life that is free of and no longer trapped in any of the dualities and pairs of opposite – the positive & the negative, the good & the bad, and so on and so forth. This is the best thing that we can get from life. Is this something that has ever occurred to you? Have you ever thought in this way or had this feeling that this is the best thing that we can get from life?

And with a very pure mind, let's ask ourselves – have we ever looked at life in terms of the four aspects of study (*sueksa*) that we discussed yesterday. In our life so far, have we ever really approached life in this way? Have we looked deeply inside ourselves? Have we seen what is going on inside ourselves? Have we been understood what is happening inside ourselves? And then from that understanding, practice according to the truth that we see within ourselves, have we ever looked at life in this way before?

For the most part, instead people just look at – we are going to go to school and we are going to study our best in order to get good grades so that we can get a job when we graduate; and then we are going to find a good husband or wife so that we have a good marriage that looks good in the eyes of the community. Then we are going to establish ourselves so we are materially secured and so people admire us and respect us and so on and so forth. For the most part, this is how people look at life. They see it, they look just in these various aspects. Modern people have come up with some variations on these themes but it is still just the same basic way of looking at things.

Or maybe some of you have tried out the hippy experience which was an attempt to look at life inwardly but unfortunately there was not much understanding about how to do it and so it ultimately failed the experiment. They did not ever achieve what it really set out to do and in many ways got confused and twisted.

In Thai, there is an idiom which is spoken of quite very frequently and has a lot of value in Thailand. We are not sure if there is an appropriate English idiom for this. It is “*to waste one's life or to not waste one's life.*” This is something that Thais are very concerned with, that they have been given life and do not want to waste it. So this is of great value to them to not waste one's life, to waste or to not – this is an important question.

If one is a Christian and then one has come to live with God (or gone to live with God or whatever) or if one is a Buddhist and has realized Nibbāna, then this is to have not wasted one's life. However, if we are still living with stress and suffering, a life is still stuck in the swamp and mud of *dukkha* then we are not yet to the point where we can say that we have not wasted our life. Even if one is a millionaire or a billionaire, but is still caught up in all the problems of greed, anger, hatred, fear, worry, excitement, envy, boredom and so on, then one is still wasting one's life.

Have you ever had a minute – a minute of your life that was free of all influence of positive & negative? Have you ever experienced one minute where there was no sense of anything being positive or negative, where the mind was not influenced and pushed and pulled by the positive & negative for even a minute? If you ever had an experience, if you ever experienced this, that is quite special and wonderful. But for most of us, life is constantly under the influence of positive, negative, being pushed and pulled this way and that way constantly. If it is not the positive, then it is the negative. If it is not the negative then the positive, over and over again, up and down, back and forth. Now, some people might think – well, when I am asleep, this cannot all be taken as any kind of a standard because first of all, when we are asleep, we are not even fully conscious. For the most part, we are not conscious at all. So this does not count as an experience that is free of positive & negative. And further, while asleep, we dream and in our dreams, we just take all our old habits and attachments to the positive & negative and work them out in our dreams. So while asleep, we are not free of the positive & the negative also. If we have ever been free of it for a minute, then we experienced the best thing that there is in life but many of us have not ever had even a minute of this kind of freedom.

This means that we still do not know the meaning of the words 'religious emancipation.' We may have heard about 'emancipation' or 'salvation' or even 'liberation' but do not know their meaning. For as long as our minds are under the influence and power of the positive & the negative then we do not know the meaning of religious emancipation no matter what we read about or thought about. Whatever the religion, if there is true emancipation or salvation then the only correct meaning of this is to be free of the positive & the negative, otherwise it is not really any kind of emancipation. Is this something that you have known yet – religious emancipation in the fullest most correct sense of the word, to be free, emancipated from all influence of positive & negative?

If you are successful in studying dependent origination and then our successful, our genuinely successful in practicing mindfulness with breathing, then you will experience for yourself true religious emancipation.

A little example of this is – have you ever for a few moments in your daily life, been free of gladness & sadness? Has there been a few moments, a few minutes, a little bit of time where our minds are void or free from sadness & gladness?

Now, nobody can put up with sadness for long and everyone prefers gladness. But there is something still better – to be above, beyond all sadness & gladness. This is far better. We can call this to be ‘void.’ When the mind is void or this voidness of mind, this total freedom of mind from gladness & sadness is even better. If we know this even in terms of this small example, if we know this then we will understand the meaning of a life that is emancipated. We will understand. We have some sense of what it means to have succeeded in our spiritual business.

What about all the drugs that are so prevalent in the modern world, which are so popular with modern people? Are there any drugs that will make us stop feeling sad & glad? Even if there was one drug somewhere that if we took a pill or whatever and it stopped all feelings of sadness & gladness, this still is not what we are looking for because this, to have to depend on some drug to do it, it is not to be free from the power of sadness & gladness and so it is not, even such a drug is not what we are looking for.

When people are all excited or whatever by marijuana or opium or coke or whatever, in these moments, are they totally beyond all sadness & gladness?

Or the nice places we visit, the beautiful views by the ocean or in the mountains or the exotic spots we go to, is this free from gladness & sadness?

Even while we are sleeping, we are under the influence of these things all the time in our subconscious way.

And so, please come and study dependent origination. Study it until it is understood well and then train with mindfulness with breathing, train in this until we have the ability to practice according to our understanding of dependent origination then our minds will be free from, will be above all these power and influence of positive & negative, of sadness & gladness, and all the other things that are keeping us so busy.

So now we have an adequate inspiration or attitude and motivation for practice, this is what gives us, understanding this what we have been talking about, provides us with a proper and sufficient motivation. But still, once there is that, we also need to get ourselves ready, to prepare ourselves for practice.

The very first thing we need in our preparation are certain disciplinary rules and disciplinary trainings. These are very basic preparation to eliminate some of the cruder influences of the positive & negative upon us. So when we ask you to follow certain rules, please don't think that you are losing any freedom in doing so. In fact, you are not that free in the first place if you are still under the power of the positive & the negative. This gives you certain disciplinary rules, will provide you with a starting point so we ask you to keep them very sincerely and faithfully – to eat at the proper time and be satisfied with the food that provided, to live and sleep in the simple way that we have here, to follow the schedule to the best of your ability, to keep the silence strictly. These are all tools to help us and most of all, please take very seriously the various rules and customs that we have to eliminate the arising of sexual feelings and sexual interaction. Please take all of these seriously and follow them. This will provide a basic level of preparation.

Now these various rules that we ask you to follow, please take a good look at them and see whether you are losing freedom or gaining freedom. Many people do not look at this carefully and assume that they are losing some freedom. We take a very simple example, here we forbid people to smoke cigarettes and some people go and think that they are losing some freedom. Look at this one carefully, when you do not smoke cigarette, are you losing freedom or gaining it? When we are unable to smoke cigarette, are we losing freedom or gaining it? Although it may seem to some of you that you are losing some freedom, in fact when you do not smoke cigarettes, you are gaining freedom from the power of cigarettes and it works in the same way for sexual behavior, for our tendency to follow our own desires or whatever is convenient or whatever we would like to do. It works the same way for all of these other habits and addictions that we have accumulated. Please look at this one carefully, whether the rules take away our freedom or give us freedom.

Such as over at Suan Mokkh International where the retreat is, we have separate dormitories for the men and for the women. Everyone does not stay together all mixed up like in a hotel. Look at this, is this losing freedom or gaining

it? And we have gone back to living in caves, over there our rooms are like caves, just like in the old days, thousands of years ago when people lived in caves. Does this take away our freedom or give us freedom? Please consider this carefully.

So please consider these things carefully until you are content to use these rules as a basic preparation so that you can study and practice on a higher level in order to achieve ultimate freedom.

Here, we are going to give up what in Thai is called “*eating well and living well*” which might be something like ‘to eat, drink, and be merry.’ We give up the luxurious life of satisfying our material and sensual desires in order to just... in a very simple way – eat well enough, live well enough. Many people want always to live well and eat well and this has no limit. It grows and grows. But here we are satisfied with a simple eating well enough and living well enough because this will provide us with freedom to get on with more important business.

So when you are here at Suan Mokkh or across at Suan Mokkh International, please look at it as being another world, consider yourself to be living in another world. But this special world is one that is there to help us to climb up out of all the world in order to above all worlds. Please try to see the place where you are staying in this way.

So let’s talk a little bit about sufficiency. We need to have sufficient food, a sufficiently decent place to stay, sufficiently good health. These are all things which you should prepare and arrange. Here at Suan Mokkh, we try to have food which is good enough but it is not too fancy or luxurious but it is good enough to keep us alive and healthy. We have a place to stay. It is not fancy or luxurious but it protects us from the rain and the wind and allows us to continue practicing. We need to get adequate exercise so that our bodies are functioning properly and are healthy. These are all things for us to arrange so that we get where things are good enough, are well enough.

There is a principle we once read in a book written by a Westerner – *The Principle of Plain Living and High Thinking*. Plain living and high thinking to put, set our sight on higher goals. This is something you all probably understand already. Please think of this while you are staying here.

We, who organize these courses have selected various teachings, instructions and information which is sufficient and appropriate for your youth, it is neither excessive nor incomplete. We will be talking about dependent origination in sufficient detail and then mindfulness with breathing so that you are all be able to have a good enough understanding of these matters even though we only have ten days. So please do not look on any of these things as difficult or even as easy, just see them as good enough, as sufficient, as appropriate for what we need to do.

If you take your own life as the focus, if you study your own life in the four ways that we have been talking about, then all the things we say about dependent origination will not be so difficult. For those who have already observed their own life, who have looked into their own life, an understanding of dependent origination will occur naturally. So please set about looking carefully at your own life then you will not have to have headaches and all kinds of confusion trying to understand dependent origination. The understanding will come out of yourself. You will not have to depend on others for your understanding of dependent origination.

The conditions, if you look deep inside... if you look inside, you will see the conditions of dependent origination clearly. Every atom and molecule of the body has, shares the conditions of dependent origination. Even on the coarse level of our physical bodies and structures, even there we can see, if we look, the conditions of dependent origination. So the key is to really look inside with proper motivation, with sincerity – to look inside and then the conditions of dependent origination will become steadily more clear to us.

We don't know will the following sentence surprise you or startle you – *“If you see paṭiccasamuppāda, if you see dependent origination then you will see the Buddha. If you see dependent origination, you will see the Buddha.”* Is this sound strange to you? Did you think that the Buddha had died 2,500 years ago? But the Buddha spoke these words himself. He said that, *“Whoever sees the Dhamma, sees me and whoever sees paṭiccasamuppāda [dependent origination], sees the Dhamma. Whoever sees dependent origination, sees the Buddha. Whoever sees the Buddha, sees dependent origination.”* Until then we do not know what the Buddha is. We just have a childish understanding of Buddha.

We can look around us, look around us in the external world and see all the conditions of dependent origination. Everything in the world is full of dependent origination. We can see how things arise, how they happen in this world dependent on conditions. There are these conditions that things arise then there are different conditions and the things end or they quench. So we can see the dependent arising and quenching, the being born and the dying of things over and over again. We can see this all around us. But to see this externally, it is no big deal. It is not particularly skillful or anything important. For to really be deep and significant, we need to see these conditions of dependent origination of how things arise and cease. We need to see these within ourselves. We need to see it in all the atoms and molecules of our bodies, in all the thoughts, and feelings, and experiences of our mind, to see how everything in this life, all the elements that have come together in this life, how all of them are expressing the conditions of dependent origination. Especially and what is crucial in this, not to approach it theoretically but to see the very practical matter of how suffering arises and how suffering quenches. To observe and see the dependent origination of suffering and how it dependently quenches as well. This is the crucial matter – to see within ourselves. And this is what we will be focusing our attention on over at Suan Mokkh International. We will be looking into this in more detail.

So what this means, is we need to observe in ourselves using all four aspects of *sueksa* [study]. Please do not forget the four aspects of looking-looking, seeing-seeing, knowing, and then practicing. For to be complete, there must be all four of these aspects. So in this way we look and we see how greed arises, how inner dependently conditioned way greed arises and then how it quenches in a dependent way. And then how anger arises dependent on conditions and then eventually quenches in a dependently conditioned way. To observe how fear arises dependent on conditions and how it dependently quenches, how excitement arises dependently – it is through a process of conditioning and then quenches through a different process of conditioning. To observe all these things, as they dependently arise and as they dependently quench. This is what we must study inside ourselves.

To observe things, to study things in this way leads to proper motivation and to a real appetite for study and practice. So please be patient with yourselves and with things. Please summon up some strength and endurance in order to study these things in the right way in order to acquire enough motivation and an appetite for

practice. Please do not see anything as being an oppression or impeachment on your freedom but rather see them as tools to help you to find greater freedom.

Now, let's go back to a very important subject and look at it in more detail. We would like to talk some more about the final goal. To understand this correctly will help us quite a bit in straightening out our motivation and in whetting our appetites. So let's spend some time reconsidering the final goal.

The first thing is that we will have heaven here on earth, right here and now. We will have the Kingdom of God right here and now. There will be Nibbāna right here and now. This is the first aspect of the final goal. If it is not here and now, it is just a fake, it is just a con job. The real thing must be *right here, right now – no other place, no other time.*

If somebody is talking about something being after we die, about going someplace after death, they are not talking about Buddhism or, if they claim to be a Buddhist, then they've gone and got something non-Buddhist, they found it from some other religion or something and confused it with Buddhism. You can see this clearly if you understand that the problem – all the problems that create suffering are right here and now. The problems are here so what does after we die have anything to do with getting free of our problems? The problems are here so the solutions must be right here and now. If there is any talk about getting something after we die, that has nothing to do with Buddhism.

All this business of reincarnation that many people would like to talk about, you should know right from the start that this business isn't at all relevant to Buddhism. It is off the subject. It is just something that people entertain themselves with. So you do not have to spend any time on that. However, we ought to point out that there is a different kind of reincarnation that is the sort of reincarnation that you are born, your body dies and then there is another reincarnation some place. There is a whole other kind of reincarnation. The kind that can happen many times in one minute. The kind of reincarnation that can happen hundreds of times in one day. If you are interested in this kind of reincarnation, it can be of some use to you. But the way that the kind of reincarnation that everyone is talking about has nothing to do with Buddhism and it is not of any real use to you.

So instead, we should be talking about a spiritual birth. There is no need to talk about physical birth. We will be talking about a spiritual birth. If one thinks like a

gentleman, then one is born a gentleman right here and now. If one thinks like a criminal, then one is born a criminal immediately. If we think like a cow, then we are a cow right here. If we think like a dog, then we are a dog immediately – we are born a dog. If we think like an angel, then we are born as an angel. If we think like a devil, we are born like a devil down in hell. However we think, whatever state the mind is in, that is how we are born. This spiritual birth happens many, many times in a day. It happens over and over again. This is the kind of birth or rebirth that we should be interested in because this is the one that is directly relevant to our lives right now. The other kind of things, it is not happening, so why should we be so worry about it. This is the kind of rebirth of right here and now that is crucial – the spiritual birth. If we understand, we practice correctly, we'll come to the final goal which is to have all births takes place in a wise way – what this means is that every time we think, experience, any time there is any kind of a feeling arising, let it be thoughts, feelings, experience that is beyond the influence of positive & negative. All the common birth that is going on is totally enslaved to positive & negative but the final goal is that all thoughts, feelings, experiences and so on are... the birth of all these thing is free of the power of positive & negative. This is what it means to be born in the Kingdom of God right here and now. This is what it means to go to Nibbāna or to realize Nibbāna.

This kind of reincarnation happens so many times in a day that you could never count it. This is the kind of reincarnation that is of value to you. This is the kind you ought to be interested in. That kind of reincarnation that they talk about in the books, that the Western writers – there are all these Western, European, American writers and scholars writing about Buddhism. That kind of reincarnation, you can just throw out of the window. You can toss it away because that is not the reincarnation as taught in Buddhism. That's reincarnation as understood in other religions and then that's being confused with Buddhism. So there is no need for you to spend your time on that kind of reincarnation. Instead learn about the Buddhist reincarnation – the kind that happens many times in a day. It even can happen many times in one minute. If we are interested in this, then we should also practice mindfulness with breathing. If we practice mindfulness with breathing successfully then we will be able to control all these births, all this reincarnating can be controlled so that it doesn't happen in a way that leads to suffering.

Here in Thailand, we have to endure all kinds of hardship about this thing because historically the Hindus or the Brahmans came here before Buddhism and

so the Hindu teaching came here first and the teachings spread throughout the Thai people of this Hindu's idea of reincarnation and rebirth. Then Buddhism came here later and, ever since, it has been very difficult to get anybody to understand the Buddhist teaching on reincarnation. The Hindu approach is very simple. If anyone can understand it, it is very positive. It is got something that people really want to believe and it's very attractive. It's even comforting. People find a lot of security in it. So, it's very difficult to get people to pay attention to the Buddhist teaching on rebirth or on reincarnation. So, even here in Thailand, in a supposedly Buddhist country, even amongst people who call themselves 'Buddhist,' who have been born Buddhist and wear Buddha images around their necks, it's difficult to get them to understand the Buddhist kind of reincarnation.

Further in talking about the final goal, all of you should get yourself ready to receive the diploma of the Buddha. In Thai, when you graduate from a university, you will get a *parinya* – a diploma and the Buddha also used this word – *pariññā* [??]. But this diploma of Buddhism, the diploma that you get when you graduate from the Buddha's school is, as the Buddha had said himself, there are three of them. The first is to be free of *rāga* (lust, greed). The second is to be free of *dosa* (hatred), and the third is to be free of *moha* (delusion, stupidity). One should prepare oneself to get these three diplomas: that of being free of greed; the diploma of being free of hatred – totally free, totally free; and the diploma of being absolutely free of delusion, confusion, and stupidity. Please do everything that you must so that you can receive these three diplomas from the Buddha's school.

Even if we have the ordinary kind of diploma, the piece of paper that we hang on our walls, that we get from the different universities in the world or the other schools, institutes, and such places, even with these paper diplomas our lives can still be hot. Our lives probably are not yet cool, they can still be hot with greed, hatred, and delusion. Sometime, our lives are even more hot because we have these diplomas. Sometimes they cause more problems than they solve. So we ought to get ourselves ready to get the other kind of diploma. The kind of diploma where life doesn't bite its owner. The kind of diploma that brings coolness, peace, and genuine freedom.

Next, we would like to talk about the sign or characteristics of having received these three diplomas. The one who has gotten these diplomas, will have the characteristic of what we call *atammayatā*. *Atammayatā* is the state of mind where

nothing can concoct it, can influence it, can effect it. The mind that is totally unconcoctable, totally inaccessible [??]. It cannot be influenced. It cannot be messed up. Nothing can be done to it. This, we call *atammayatā*. The one who has this, is called *atammayo* – the one with *atammayatā* is *atammayo* or the *arahant*, the one who has finished with all problems, who is completely free. This is the characteristic of having received the three diplomas.

(He wants the best possible translation for the word, *atammayatā* – ‘unconcoctability.’ The mind that is unconcoctable. We can say unconcoctability. This is *atammayatā*.)

This mind with *atammayatā* is so still and so solid. It’s even more solid than the Himalayas. In Asia, the Himalayas are the great mountains. In Europe, there are the Alps, in North America, there are the Rockies. These great mountains seem so solid and permanent to us but in fact if there is an earthquake, these mountains can move and shake and pieces of them can fall off. *Atammayatā*, however, is completely unshakable, completely unmovable. The mountains in the world still can shake and move but *atammayatā* will not move or shake or tremor even if there is an earthquake. Nothing in the world, no objects or concerns in the world can make *atammayatā* shake or tremble. It is completely unmovable, unshakable. This unshakableness is what we mean by ‘unconcoctability.’ Nothing can concoct this. Nothing can pull it out of this solidity or this freedom. Because this unshakable mind is the mind that is totally free. Nothing has power over this mind. Nothing can trick this mind, this *atammayatā*, ever again.

If our human world has *atammayatā* then it has the utmost security. Through *atammayatā*, our human world can have perfect security.

But instead, our world is full of all kinds of crises because they do not have any *atammayatā*.

If you take *atammayatā* as your final goal, if this is what you are seeking then your motivation towards and your appetite for the Dhamma and for Dhamma practice will have no limits and you will not have any problem with motivation and inspiration for practice.

Another name for the final goal, another way of describing it is to be above the power of all things, to be above the influence of everything.

Now, we are under the power of everything. All these sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mental experiences have enslaved us. We are under the power of all these sense objects in the world and so we do not have any true freedom. The final goal, however, is to be free of the power and influence of all these sights, sounds, and so on.

In Buddhism, we have a way of speaking where we say that, we are the slaves of our eyes, the slaves of our ears. We are slaves to our nose, slaves to our tongue, slaves to our body, and slave to our minds – mind as a sense organ. This slavery keeps us trapped in everything. It keeps bringing upon, brings all kinds of problems and difficulties into our lives so we need to escape or break out of this slavery and instead be above, be beyond the power of our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Another thing is that we are slaves to time. Time has us enslaved. This is a very serious headache for many of us. It creates all kinds of pressure. It pressures us. It squeezes us all the time – this slavery to time. However, we can be totally free of time. Time is nothing but desire and the non-fulfillment of our desire. We have a desire and here is the fulfillment of our desire and the separation between our desire and its fulfillment is time. And all the while that time exists while our desire is not yet fulfilled, that time is always squeezing us and pressuring us and putting stress on us. But when we have no desire, when we have no more ignorant desire then, for us, time does not exist. When there is time, it bites us, it chews on us, it eats us. But when there is no desire, there is no time. It cannot eat us or it cannot chew on us. It does not bite us. For us, all the clocks in the world stop moving when there is no desire. This is another way of looking at the final goal – to be free of time so that time no longer can bite us and eat us; instead to master time.

If we have *atammayatā* just like the *arahants* (the fully awakened ones) then time cannot affect us, time will not squeeze us or bite us. And then our mind will be free of time. And the clock will stop turning for us.

Then one more is to be above the power of the positive & the negative, to no longer be a slave to the positive & the negative. We've already talked about this one quite a bit so we just summarize it here at this time – to no longer be a slave to the positive & negative.

Now we come to a rather strange one, the most strange of all, to be above oneself, to no longer be a slave of oneself, to be out from under the power and influence of oneself. This is the most strange of all but to really be free is to be free from oneself – from oneself, one's *ātman*, one's soul, one's spirit, whatever you want to call it. To be completely above oneself, this is to be totally free when nothing has any power or influence to cause any problems or any suffering ever again.

In religions where there is a God and where they talk about souls and selves then people seek 'the eternal self,' 'the eternal soul.' But in Buddhism, we do not see any soul or any real self anywhere. So in Buddhism, our aim, our final goal is eternal voidness. Eternal voidness, the state that is completely free and void of self. This is the goal in Buddhism. However, the names may differ – 'eternal soul' or 'eternal voidness' but the aim is fundamentally the same.

But it does not matter if the names are different. This person sits like a *Farang*, this one sits like a Thai and Ajahn Buddhādāsa's sitting like an Indian. Although we sit differently, we all get the same benefits from doing so.

One final point for us to make is that there are some exceptions for children and for newcomers that, for example, children may need a few beliefs and some superstitious practices, maybe even a few dogmas. These may be necessary for children and for newcomers. But those who are really intend to practice in a deep level and once we are successful in practice then we will be beyond all superstitions, all beliefs, all dogmas but there needs to be an exception on this matter for children and for newcomers.

So if you are successful in your study – your four-way study of dependent origination and are successful in your practice of mindfulness with breathing then you will get the result of being above everything.

So, finally let us express our joy that you have come here for this purpose and all of you who have come as tourists, we employ you to leave as pilgrims. That means with the most valuable things in your backpack. When you leave, make sure that you take with you the most valuable thing that one can find in life. We thank you for coming here with this purpose and we also thank you for being very good listeners. Thank you for coming and we hope you the best success in your efforts.

And in your backpacks – your backpacks will be filled up with ambrosia – the food of the gods.

To take home with you and share with your family and friends. You'll have trouble finding a better souvenir.

So that's all for today.

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