

The Three Existences, Part 3 of 4

ĀNĀPĀNASATI BHĀVANĀ : Tetrads I-III

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

A Dhamma lecture given at Suan Mokkh on 9 November 1990

In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhadāsa 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>.

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 Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok

email to: suanmokkh_bangkok@bia.or.th.

Today, we'll speak about the practice of *ānāpānasati bhāvanā* or mindfulness with breathing development. However, first we would like to review the lesson of walking here from the meditation center in the way of walking without a walker, that the whole time of walking, there is no walker. We'd like to review this a bit. This matter has the importance equal to be the heart of Buddhism. You should understand that if we practice *ānāpānasati* completely, then we will be able to act without an actor. Whatever the action, there will no longer be an actor, or we will be able to experience without requiring an experiencer and the same way with everything else. If we practice *ānāpānasati* completely, then it will lead to us realizing this part of Buddhism. Please don't consider this something strange or supernatural or beyond one's abilities because it's something totally natural. It's the heart of Buddhism. And finally, there will be life without anyone who lives. There will be life fully, but there won't be the person who owns life or has life in any way. There's just be life. With the ordinary man in the street, this sounds like something impossible – to have life without the person who lives. They will think it's crazy, ridiculous, stupid. But let us affirm that even if you don't understand this right now, that one day you will be able to understand that we can have life without life having an owner. There's no need for the person who owns or possesses life. So, the words "having life without an owner" – this ought to be contemplated as the heart of Buddhism.

These words express the meaning of *anattā* or 'not self.' *Anattā* can be stated simply having life without an owner. Some people have misunderstood this teaching and then claim that Buddhism is pessimistic. This is incorrect. There's nothing pessimistic about the teaching of 'not self' that the possibility of having life without an owner where we don't force on life some owner or something. On the other hand, Buddhism is not optimistic. There's nothing optimistic about the

teaching of ‘not self’ because properly Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. It transcends. It’s above pessimism or optimism.

Now, this lesson of walking here without a walker – this is a very basic kind of lesson. It’s like entering primary school. It’s a way to start our practice. If you can do this, then it will grow, it will develop step by step until the understanding of *anattā* (not self) grows, occurs naturally and more profoundly. Today, you may not understand everything we’re talking about. Please do not consider that to be a problem. Simply continue to practice *ānāpānasati* and then one day in the future, when your practice has reached the end, then you will understand fully out of your own experience what it means to have life without an owner. So now, we will speak following upon and continuing the previous two talks. We’ll examine how to be without existence in all the different meanings of this word, *bhava* or existence.

For there to be existence or *bhava* means that there is a tremendous burden on life. The more that life maintains and protects this existence or these existences, the more that life maintains and protects this burden, this heavy weight that it carries. The first Pāli word we’d like to mention in this context is ‘*ohitabharo*.’ *Bharo* means burden, means a heavy weight. *Ohita* means to drop or to shred. So, *ohitabharo* is to shred one’s burden, to shred the burden. Now, existence, we know what is like to carry a heavy object such as a sack of cement, but the burden of existence is far heavier. *Bhava* is like carrying a mountain around. So, we should consider what it is to shred such burden.

Another word is ‘*bhavanirodho*.’ *Nirodho* means cessation or quenching where something goes out and never ignites again. This is similar to *ohitabharo* which is a shredding of the burdens or even throwing away of the burdens but *bhavanirodho* has a deeper meaning if one understands it. One doesn’t even have to go and throw this stuff away. It’s just the burdens dissolve, disappear, and then there’s no burdens. The burdens have ceased without having to actually throw them away. Now, in order for *bhava* to disappear, to end completely on the highest level, this is done by eliminating its causes. The way to end something is to remove its causes. And the causes of *bhava*, of existence are the defilements, desire and attachment. When one can remove the desire and the attachment, then *bhava* will disappear automatically. The Pāli words here are a little longer. It’s not necessary that you remember them, but they are ‘*parikkhīṇabhava saññojana*.’ ‘*Saññojana*’ is a feather or bond and so ‘*parikkhīṇa*’ is to sever, to cut, slice through completely, to sever all bondage to existence. When one has cut through all bondage to existence, there is no more desire or attachment to cause further *bhava*. And then, the causes, the conditions for *bhava* have been totally eliminated. And then, *bhava* has disappeared. This kind of activity is called “discovering the treasure hidden on one’s forehead.” It sounds a little ridiculous that there is something hidden on our forehead which we need to discover but this is in fact the way life is. It’s like there’s something on our forehead – it’s hidden to us which we can’t see it, can’t find it. So, our practice is very much one of discovering what is hidden on our forehead.

When we speak of our inability to see what is hidden on our forehead is called “*avijjā*” which means not knowing or ignorance. This is a more subtle meaning of ignorance than the other meanings with which we are familiar – something very subtle about this level of ignorance that leads us to not even trying to see what’s on our forehead. Not only we do not see it, but we also don’t even try, we don’t even care. Discovering what is hidden on our foreheads, then, is the supreme art of Buddhism.

The practice of mindfulness with breathing is able to eliminate ignorance. It can successively cut through ignorance. And therefore, we say that mindfulness with breathing is an art, step by step, every step of the way, every lesson from beginning to end. It's, then, a very refined art, the kind that will eliminate ignorance. So, this is why we have made arrangements for you to study and practice mindfulness with breathing at our meditation center so that you'll then be able to use this art.

It seems that nowadays, there are many kinds of meditation, many different forms. All of which are later products – things that have been created and produced long after the Buddha's time. Here, we're not interested in any of those. We're interested in the original form of meditation which the Buddha taught. This is sufficient and satisfying for us. Learning about all the newer methods is very complicated and there are so many to choose from. We feel that it's more than enough to just stick with the original approach of the Buddha. So, why have we chosen this form of meditation?

The first reason is that it's convenient. Our breath is always with us. The breath is a very convenient meditation object – wherever you go you take it with you. This is a portable kind of meditation. It doesn't depend on a certain place, certain paraphernalia, or certain teacher, or anything like that. The breath, then, is the most convenient object for meditation.

Further, *ānāpānasati* is calm and peaceful. It's a cool kind of meditation. There's nothing ... (15.53), or disturbing about it. There are some kinds of meditation which are quite frightening, disturbing, even kind of ugly, for example, meditation using corpses. Unlike those, *ānāpānasati* is a calm, peaceful, cool kind of meditation as well as being convenient. The Buddha himself stated that he attained or realized the highest, perfect awakening while practicing *ānāpānasati*. And so, he advised it to many others and we, in turn, advised and recommended to you.

And this system of practice can be followed from the very beginning to the final end of our spiritual life. Unlike some practices that are only used under some circumstances or for certain period and then we have to switch to another kind of practice. This system of practice *ānāpānasati* as the Buddha taught – it can take from the very beginning all the way through to the end and there's no need to us to switch to different kinds of meditation. It is suitable for the entire *brahmacariyā*. The *brahmacariyā* is a term the Buddha used. It means the highest or the supreme way of living and we often translated now “the spiritual life.” So, for the entire spiritual life, this system of practice is appropriate.

Sīla which is a kind of natural morality in life, *samādhi* which is training in development of mental power and faculties, and *paññā* which is the development of insight in wisdom – these three which make up our practice, practice in morality, in mental training and in wisdom. These which are practice as well as that which is the result of practice which we speak of as being “*magga*, *pāla* and Nibbāna.” *Magga* is the level of insight. When wisdom has reached the sufficient level, it becomes a kind of insight which cuts through our habits of attachment, our ignorance. And then, there is *pāla* which is the fruits that certain attachments have been ended, have been cut through and eliminated. And then, there is Nibbāna which is the coolness that results when attachments have been ended. These express the results of practice, the cutting through attachments, there're having been ended, and the coolness that spontaneous arises when attachment is ended. When speaking of this practice, for the results, all of these are contained directly within the system of practice which we call “mindfulness with breathing.”

Ways of practice or practices which have other names, for example, the Noble Eightfold Path, are already included in mindfulness with breathing. Mindfulness with breathing is the Noble Eightfold Path or kinds of understanding that goes by other names such as the Four Noble Truths (the *ariya-sacca*). These too are included within *ānāpānasati*. This kind of practice includes all the practices and all the understanding of Buddhism. In this one practice, we get the whole package.

Here, *ānāpānasati* means to be interested in, to pay attention to some Dhammas. Dhamma means something we ought to be interested in, something of value and importance to us. *Ānāpānasati* is to pay attention to, to examine some Dhammas with every moment that we're breathing in and breathing out, to attend to this something of importance while breathing in and breathing out. And then, we can exchange these Dhammas. After the first one, then we move on to a higher Dhamma. And then, when we've studied that one sufficiently, we move on to another one. So, step by step, we exchange Dhamma for higher ones until reaching the highest, until reaching the end of our practice. And through the entire practice, we examine these different Dhammas on higher and higher levels while experiencing the breathing in and breathing out. The reason for successively changing that Dhammas which we examine, the reasons for this are found within the practice itself. It's not really necessary for us to explain them to you now because you will see these reasons in your own practice. Right after a certain point, we need to exchange what were the current lessons for the next one and so on. The causes, the reasons, the value of this will become apparent as we practice.

Now, the Dhammas or things to be examined are basically four – there is the breathing, the feelings, the mind or the states of mind, and then Dhamma. These are the things which are problems, or we could say questions for life. These are the things out of which we are making problems and so these are the important questions in our life – these four things: the breathing, the feelings, the mind, and Dhamma. These are the four main things to be examined and each of these four can be examined in four ways or four aspects which give us a total of sixteen lessons. We studied these four things, each in four lessons, so, the total is sixteen lessons, in order to understand that the things which are problems for us, to answer the questions of our life.

We'd like to say a few things about preparation for practice. First, for preparing the body, we need to have a body which is in a normal, natural condition. We don't mean normal according to the standard of modern society, but we mean normal according to what is a natural state of health for the body. So, a natural state of health that is maintained naturally instead of requiring all kinds of medicines and stimulants and drugs to maintain our condition, to have a natural healthy condition of the body which we maintain in natural ways simply by living healthfully and sanely.

Next, we'll speak of place. To be very simple about this, make it natural. The best setting is a natural one. There are some rather foolish people who think that we have to meditate in an air-conditioned room. In Bangkok, there are some meditation groups to have very expensive huge meditation rooms which are air-conditioned, and the people insist you can only meditate in such a place. There are others who cling to the idea that the place must be totally silent, and if there's any sound or noise, we can't meditate at all. This is also rather foolish. Once you just look at the example of Buddha who meditated in natural places. In a natural setting, it's quite easy to find solitude, seclusion. Even if there is some noise and activity around us, all we have to do is leave those things alone. If we don't pay attention to those things, then we have a solitude. Especially if we forget the 'self,' if we forget our 'selves,' then there is automatic seclusion and solitude even if there is various thing going on around us. This is how to prepare one's place.

Now, we're not saying that one has to go looking for the perfect forest or cave or something like that, just the principle of making one's surrounding as natural as possible. One finds the best conditions that are available but when one cannot find the perfect place, one makes deal with whatever one has. We find what's available and make the best use of it. So, one needs not be obsessed with the perfect place. One just uses what's available. The true meditator can meditate even in a busy theater, or on the train – with all the rattling and all the noise on the train, one can still meditate in those places. Or in a factory with loud and pounding, banging machinery, one can still meditate even in such conditions. The only real difference is that those places are a bit more difficult. It's not a matter of impossible. It's just some places are more difficult than in the forest. But we need to be strong in our practice, to be able to use whatever conditions are available, instead of complaining or delaying. Make wise use of what we have. And then, as soon as we bring attention to the breathing, then wherever we are become a secluded place.

Further, we make all of our movements and actions refined and gentle. We don't walk with our arms pumping and flying all over the place, always in a hurry. We don't bathe, making a lot of noises, splashing water all over it. We eat carefully, politely. We don't go to the toilet in crude ways, rolling and pushing and things like that. With mindfulness, we're trained to do all things in gentle, graceful, refined ways rather than loud and crude. This is an important way of training ourselves to be mindful in everything we do.

When you walk from the meditation center here without a walker, that is the most gentle, most graceful way of walking – to walk without a walker. To bring this to all of our actions and movements, it's a very excellent preparation. Another way to put that is to live with postures and movements that do not promote lust, hatred, and delusion. So, our way of living, our movements in life ought to be those which do not promote, or which promote as little as possible, lust, anger, and delusion. These are some important ways to prepare ourselves for meditation.

So now, we come to speaking of the system of practicing mindfulness with breathing itself. The first stage of practice is called "*kāyānupassānā*" which means contemplation of the *kāya* or body. When we speak of body or *kāya* here, or in Thai we pronounce ga-ya (กายนะ), the Buddha mentioned specifically "the breath." *Kāya* means a group or a collection of things, and then, he specified the breath as well as the flesh of our physical body. These two kinds of group, the breathing and the flesh of the body – these are together can also be called a "group" or "body" (a *kāya*). Dealing with the breathing and the flesh of our body together is the first stage of practice. For the breath and the breathing, this is something you already know for yourself, so, we won't go talking about it. Instead, we'll advise you on some ways of practicing with the breathing.

The first lesson is the long breathing. We distinguish between long breathing and short breathing. Sometimes these are so different that they're totally opposite. If you take some time and examine all the different kinds of breathing that occur, you'll explore all the different possibilities in your breathing. You'll discover long breathing. Once you have found the long breathing, then you can study it, investigate it, and explore it until you know all the facts and all the facets of the long breathing. Now, in the long breathing, there are variations of heaviness and lightness, of coarseness and refinedness or gentleness, and we study these. The differences in heavy and light, coarse, refined, bring about difference of fact in the body. They bring about different benefits and so we need to study these variations in the long breathing, of heavy and light, coarse and refined, in order to see what kind of difference results, or facts and benefits they bring in order to understand the long breathing in all its aspects.

The second lesson is the short breathing – to study all aspects of short breathing. Then we will know how short breathing and long breathing differ. We can study the very short breathing or the not-so-short breathing and the variation in between. We study the different kinds of short breathing to see how they differ in activity, effects and benefits. The more we study the short breathing, the more we will see how different it is than the long breathing in its activities, effects and benefits. Eventually, we see more and more clearly what kind of long breathing is most appropriate and we see what the short breathing is like. So, at the end we see that there're important differences between the long breathing and the short breathing. Understanding one helps us to understand its opposite and so together this leads to our comprehensive understanding of the breathing, and we know the kind of breathing that is most appropriate. The most important thing to learn here is the different influences, the different reactions of the long and short breathing. We need to learn this now because we'll use this understanding later in our practice.

The third lesson is to observe that the breathing group and the flesh group (the physical body) here are connected, to see these close connections between the breathing and the rest of the body. All the different kinds of breathing – long, short, heavy, light, coarse, fine – all of these kinds of breathing have their influences upon the flesh and blood of our bodies. This is the third lesson – to see this very deeply connection. For example, if blood is flowing quite copiously, quite a lot of blood pouring out of our wound, one can use the very long refined breathing to actually slow the flow of blood. It is just an example of connection between the breathing and the flesh and blood (body). The more deeply we see this connection – It's lesson three.

The fourth lesson is calming the breathing. Once we see that the breathing has such direct influence and important influence on the rest of the body, then we realize that by calming the breathing, the body is calm. The more subtly, the more we calm and relax the breathing, the more the body calms and relaxes. So, in order to have the relax, calm healthy body that we require for meditation, we can use the breathing. We can't bring this about directly just by telling the body to be relaxed but we can use the breathing in order to calm the body. So, the fourth lesson here is refining and calming the breathing.

Now, one should ask, what would be the results and benefits of practicing these first four lessons? We can answer that there will be much more mindfulness than before. However mindful you were before beginning this practice through working on these four lessons, so, you'll be far more mindfulness. There will be far more *samādhi*, the mind will be much more stable, strong, clear, alert. And there will be much more wisdom. Our comprehension and understanding of the things in our lives will be much more extensive than before. We can say that *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* are developing. *Sīla* is usually translated in morality and people often think of it as following rules, whether the five rules of Buddhism or the ten commandments, so whatever. But here, we don't need to have such a crude kind of *sīla*, of normalcy or morality, but just that one is able to control oneself by practicing *ānāpānasati*. The self-control and discipline inherent in that is a very natural kind of *sīla* and this we have much more than before. The *samādhi*, the ability to develop and properly use our minds is getting much better. And then, the *paññā*, the right knowing of the things in our live, is also growing. These are the benefits of practicing the first four lessons.

Further, we can have comfort and happiness whenever we want. The more skillful we are in lesson four, the better our ability to be happy, to be relaxed, comfortable and happy whenever we wish. Whenever we need some happiness, we can bring that about by practicing lesson four. This is very valuable – to have this ability to be happy. But don't go and attaching to it, clinging to,

and turning into some kind of *bhava*, some form of existence. Don't go that far. But to just be able to have this comfort and happy feeling is another result of lesson four. And even better result is that we will be ready to practice further, to practice on a higher level. This is an even better result.

Once we finish the stage of practice dealing with the body, then we come to the stage that deals with the *vedanā* or feeling. This also has four lessons. So, sometimes it's called the "tetrad." Now, it would be quite difficult, and time consuming to go and study all the possibilities of feeling. So, we'll take specifically the feelings which are most important, which are most necessary for us to understand and control.

The first of these that we'll study is called "*pīti*" which can be translated as rapture. It's a strong excited kind of joy which has got a lot of energy to it. It's stimulating. It can even be quite kind of shaking, a kind of movements in it. We need to taste this feeling. We taste it. We kind of drink it, experience it until we know it thoroughly, we know all about it through our experience of it.

The second lesson of this stage or the sixth overall is to study the kind of feeling which is calm and cool. *Pīti* is still kind of shaking and trembling, very stimulating. So then, we come to the kind of happy feeling which is calm and cool. It's a very calm kind of contentment which is called "*sukha*." You can translate it as happiness or even bliss if you wish. But the thing to recognize is that it's calm, it's cool. So, now we taste and experience this kind of feeling until we know it thoroughly. And then, we will know the range of happy feelings from the excited, stimulating, kind of trembling (*pīti*) to the calm, cool (*sukha*). So, we know the range from very stimulating to very calm. So, there are these two kinds of satisfaction. When we're satisfied in a rather crude way, that's the stimulating *pīti*. When the satisfaction is very calm which is more of contentment, we call that "*sukha*." Now, we examine and experience this just to get to know their nature. We are not getting attached to these and getting all involved in them. But one just maintains and controls them enough to experience them in order to understand their nature. We don't go turning them into a lot of existence and ego, but we understand their nature so that we understand how Dhamma works.

Now, this kind of satisfaction we're talking about here arises from an awareness of accomplishment and success in our practice. Whenever we feel that we've been successful in our meditation, there will arise some form of *pīti* or *sukha*. This is a very natural phenomena which we should understand. Once we feel that there has been some accomplishment or achievement, then these arise. So, whenever this occurs at whatever point in our practice, whatever lessons even the higher lessons, when there is this sense of success, either *pīti* or *sukha* will appear, this is a natural phenomenon of the mind. Not only do they arise naturally automatically when there is some success in practice, but we can also learn to make them happen, we can force this thing to arise especially if we are successful. If we gain skill in practicing lesson four, then we can create *pīti* and *sukha* whenever we wish to our ability to calm the breathing. So, they arise both kinds of naturally whenever there is success, spontaneous respond to that success, but they can also be created, made directly by practicing lesson four. If we practice successfully through the whole series of lessons that make up mindfulness with breathing, then *pīti* and *sukha* will arise spontaneously the entire way. The first lesson of this stage is to know *pīti* until we can control it. The second is to know *sukha* (happiness) until we can control it.

The third lesson is to look deeply at these feelings until we see that they control the thinking. The feelings force thought. Now, the Buddha specifically used the words '*citta*' (mind or heart) but

here we're speaking of the thinking. And you can look directly and see how it's the feelings that force, that create the thoughts. Seeing, examining this fact is the third lesson. You can take a bit of a review of your past and see if you can find any thought that doesn't arise from some feelings. If you are able to look at this carefully, you'll see that there isn't any thought that doesn't come from feeling. There won't be any thought that isn't based in or in respond to some feeling.

The fourth lesson is then to not let our mind just wonder according to our habits in our conditioning, according to our programming in our past. Instead, to learn to control the mind so that is only thing in ways that are useful, that are truly beneficial. Once we see that the feelings control the thinking, then we can learn to control this power of the feelings to force the thinking. And then, we can use this so that our thinking only follows lines and ways that are actually useful. We no longer let the mind wonder all over according to old habits and our conditioning. When we have gained mastery in these latest four lessons – those concern with the feelings, then our mindfulness will be even more quick and subtle than before. Once morality will be even more complete and natural, the firmness, stability, focus of mind will be even stronger and wisdom will be deeper, more extensive. So, our mindfulness (*sati*), the one's morality (*sīla*), the *samādhi* (strength of the mind), the *paññā* (wisdom) – all of these are developed even further than when we had finished the first four lessons. As these four grows, then we can have ability to control the feeling. Instead of letting the feelings control us, we can control the feelings which is the same as being able to control the world. When we can control the feelings, there is nothing in the world that can create the problem for us through the feelings.

And now, we can practice Dhamma on a higher level than previously. We can move on to an even more refined stage and aspect of practice. Don't ever forget that our practices are always enabling us to move forward to a higher more refined level of practice which brings us to the next stage that concerning the *citta* (the mind or heart) in which there are four lessons also. The essence or purpose of these lessons is that we will know the thing called "mind" thoroughly or have the thoroughly complete understanding of mind and we'll be able to control the mind according to our aims.

First lesson, here, is to know every kind of mind, to know the mind in every kind of type or condition it has. This we need to speak of in some details in order for you to understand. Now, in many cases we know the different kinds of mind by direct experience, by experiencing that mind itself. However, there are a few kinds of mind which are rather exalted and until we have had direct experience of them, we can only know them thorough inference, through comparing them with minds that we already know. We can quite easily experience the mind that is lustful, the mind that has anger, and the mind that is deluded. We can experience all of these directly. We have frequent experience of these kinds of states but that which we'll have to know by inference are the opposite of this. The mind, in which lust is totally absent, the mind in which there is absolutely no hatred or anger, no delusion – we're meaning the mind in which these are totally absent, there are no seats left of lust, hatred, and delusion. These kinds of mind we have not yet experienced. So, we can only know them from inference. But we can get a good understanding of those minds by studying how lust, hatred, and delusion bites us. When we see, for example, lust bites the mind, how it makes the mind hard. When we see the kind of suffering and pain that this causes, then this will allow us to infer how peaceful, how cool, how free the mind is when there is no lust. And the same thing we can infer from our experience of the pain and heat of hatred and the *dukkha* of delusion.

The next pair is the mind which is distracted – the restless mind, and the mind which is not at all restless which is totally undistracted. The distracted restless mind, the agitated mind – we can know more easily when we are unable to sleep. The time when we can't sleep because our minds are so agitated so we can know this kind of mind quite easily even in ordinary life. The mind that is totally undistracted, however, is right now beyond our ability to experience so we must infer from our observation of the mind that is distracted. But we can observe the distracted mind in such a way as to understand its opposite – the mind that is not distracted when there is peace of non-distraction. Next is the mind, which is highest, the kind of supreme level of mind or the not yet highest mind. Now, we know that quite obviously our minds are not yet on the highest level. So, first we can study that. We can experience the mind which is not yet on the highest level. And then, after we experience that thoroughly, one can see how this mind which is always has some *dukkha* whether there's some level of dissatisfaction in this mind. This's not yet highest mind. Then, we can get a sense of how the highest mind is totally above all *dukkha*.

The next pair is the mind which is *vimutti* and the mind which is not. *Vimutti* means emancipated, so, knowing the mind that is emancipated and the mind that is not. For now, the mind is not yet emancipated, and we know that. And we see the mind that still has troubles, still has problems, the mind where there's still *bhava*, sexual existence, formage existence, and formless existence. And from seeing these problems of these different existences, then one can get an understanding of the mind which is emancipated from all states of existence.

The last pair is to know whether the mind is immovable or not. The mind that is immovable is the mind where nothing can change it. This is the mind that has *atammayatā* which we'll speak about later. The mind that has the *atammayatā* is unchangeable, unshakable, invulnerable. But now the mind has all kinds of problems – it's changing, who knows, how many times each day and there are all kinds of things can come and change and shake and effect this mind. From studying the vulnerability, the mutability of the mind, then we can also understand the mind that has *atammayatā* – the immovable mind.

Now, we study all of these different states of mind in order to know them so that we can choose the best kind of mind that is most appropriate for us to aim for. By studying them all, then we will realize the kind of mind that we really need – the kind of mind that is most healthy. And so, we study them with this purpose – to be able to choose the kind of mind which is most appropriate.

The second lesson of this third group is to make a mind that is in a state of true joy or delight. Now, this doesn't mean a mind that is joyful or enjoying different kinds of existence – sexual, formage, and formless existence, but it's the mind that has the joy of Dhamma, a kind of joy which is higher and more pure. So, the mind we delight it, we make it, we train it, however you want to put it, the mind trains in being joyful on higher and higher levels until there is the kind of mind which is joyful in the most satisfied kind of way, the kind of mind that can't be affected or change to manipulate it by anything.

The third lesson here is to stabilize, to secure the mind. This is the little name of it, but the meaning doesn't come up quite clearly enough. There are certain qualities of the truly stable mind that need to be explained to properly understand this lesson. The first factor is cleanliness. This mind is clean. There's nothing dirty in this kind of mind. There are none of the hindrances, none of the defilements polluting this kind of mind. It's void of hindrances and defilements. So, we say that it is clean. The second factor is the mind can gather all its energy and focuses it in a

single point. Normally, the mind's energy is kind of just spreading all over or radiating outward in all directions. But when the mind can gather all energy together and focus it in a single point, this is the second quality, this focused concentrated quality. It's like a magnifying glass which can take the rays of the sun and focus them into a very powerful point which is strong enough to even light paper on fire.

The third factor is a flexibility or agility of mind. What this really means is the mind is ready to work or the mind is active. If the mind is stiff or thick or sluggish, then it's not ready to do anything. But when the mind has this activeness or flexibility or agility, no longer a hard or a confused mind, when it has its activity, then it's ready to do any duty, to carry out any responsibility. This activeness, this readiness of mind, the mind that is fit for its work is the third factor. Excuse me, this quality of mind is the third factor. If the mind isn't clean, it won't be able to gather or collect its energy, to focus its energy. And if the energy of the mind isn't focused, then it won't be properly active. And so, these are connected in this way – the mind must first be pure, be clean in order to focus all its energy in one point, and then, the mind must focus itself in order to be truly active and ready.

The next lesson is to release or let go anything that is clinging to the mind, the mind releases – to release the mind from anything clinging to it or the release the thing from the mind which is clinging. Now, *sīla* or morality can release things in its way. And then *samādhi* – the mental training and development – can release things in its way. And then, wisdom releases things absolutely, according to a method that needs the power of wisdom. And then, *sati* (mindfulness) and *sampajañña* which is the kind of wisdom in action, wisdom specifically dealing with the immediate situation – this *sati* and *sampajañña* are present in the application of all three of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. So, our training in these four lessons regarding the *citta* are training mindfulness, this wisdom in action, morality, *samādhi* and wisdom on even higher and more refined level. So, we can summarize these four lessons by saying one is now master over the mind. For all one's life, one has been a slave of the mind, the mind's servant is doing whatever the craziness and the habits of the mind order. But now one is master over the mind. Now, one has the mind which the Thai call “saraputtneuk (สารพัดนึก)” which means anything you could wish for. Anything you could wish for, that mind can do it. And we can also describe this as the almighty mind – the mind that has power over everything. So, the results of thoroughly practicing these four lessons are the mind that can have anything that it wishes for – the mind which is almighty. And finally, we have the mind that's ready to practice even further, even higher.

We must apologize we have estimated our use of time a little bit off the mark and so we used up the time, but we haven't yet completed our explanation of mindfulness with breathing. So, we'll have to finish tomorrow. We've covered the first three stages today. We'll cover the last stage tomorrow morning. So, thank you for being very good listeners and very patient. Thank you.

* * * * *

Transcribed by a Dhamma volunteer and lightly edited by Pranee in 2024
Audio files: 5125331109030.mp3

© Kevala Retreat, 2024

