

## The Three Existences, Part 4 of 4

### ĀNĀPĀNASATI BHĀVANĀ : Tetrads IV

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

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*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](http://www.suanmokkh.org),

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

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

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Today's lecture will be a continuation of things left over from the last talk. We spoke yesterday about the first, second, and third stages or tetrads of *ānāpānasati*. There remains for us to speak about the fourth stage or tetrad today. Before getting into this fourth area of practice, I'd like to make some understanding of certain words/terms which are generally misunderstood. For example, terms like "attending to the breathing," "paying attention to the breathing." Even translating some of these Pāli terms into Thai, it's somewhat difficult. For example, in Thai we use the word "gum-node (กำหนด)" for "paying attention to" or "observing the breathing." Now, this can be misunderstood because when we speak of material things, we use the same word, we use the word "gum-node." To gum-node, to focus on something material with our physical eyes – that's called "gum-node." However, if we are speaking of something immaterial, something mental, we use the same word, but we don't "gum-node" it with our eyes, we don't focus on it or fix it with our physical eyes, but with the mind. And so, we attend to it – we focus upon it inwardly. For example, if you're going to shoot a gun, you need to aim, you need to focus on the target, and that's the kind of physical "gum-node" using the eyes. But in practicing *ānāpānasati*, it's not an outward kind of aim and focus, but it's inward. So, to find the proper word in English, it's not always easy and we're leaving it up to Tan Santikaro to figure out the word which he's not quite sure of. We can use the word "gum-node" in a sense of to focus and to aim one's attention at something. But it also has a sense of to scrutinize, to look at but in a really alert, focus, directive way in order to scrutinize something.

Another source of confusion is the thing or things which are attended to, which are scrutinized. In Thailand, almost everybody when speaking of *ānāpānasati*, translates it to mean to scrutinize the breathing in and out, to focus attention upon the breathing in and out. This translation is incorrect.

It's far too narrow – *ānāpānasati* or mindfulness with breathing in and out. So usually it's translated "mindfulness of breathing in and out" which is far too narrow. But we should understand that *ānāpānasati* is to scrutinize, to focus attention on one object or some particular object with every inhalation and exhalation. So, with every in-breath and every out-breath, one focuses attention and scrutinizes something that we're learning about, something important or valuable in life. So, it doesn't mean just focusing attention on the breathing. In fact, we can focus attention on anything. It is *ānāpānasati* if we do so while breathing in and out, while being aware of breathing in and out. So, we need to have proper understanding of the thing which are scrutinized. It's anything of value but we do this while breathing in and breathing out.

Now, you all know quite well by now that, in the systematic practice of *ānāpānasati* as taught by the Buddha, there are sixteen lessons or objects and obviously many of these are not simply focusing attention on the breathing. So, you can see quite obviously that mindfulness with breathing is to scrutinize one of these sixteen lessons at a time with every in-breath and every out-breath. Now, if we speak of *ānāpānasati* in general, we could speak of any kind of object. But when we speak about it as the system taught by the Buddha, then there are these sixteen specific objects which we focus upon, which we scrutinize with every in-breath and out-breath.

For example, if we look at the first lesson of the first tetrad which is knowing the long breathing while breathing in and out, now, a lot of confusion usually arises here. Now, the words are to know the long breathing but then one must ask, "Is one scrutinizing the breathing itself or is one scrutinizing the longness of the breathing?" Now, of course it's true or not, you can't separate them totally but the emphasis here is on the longness. We're not just focusing on the breathing now in lesson one. We're focusing on the longness and the reactions to the longness in the mind. What kind of influences or reactions does this longness bring up in the mind? But it's necessary to speak of the long breathing, otherwise people won't know what kind of longness to focus on. Then, this leads to confusion people. They just focus on the breathing. They assume that it's just mindfulness of the breathing. But in fact, even in this very first lesson, the attention is not exactly on the breathing, it isn't just on the breathing itself. The emphasis is much more on the longness of the breathing. Yet, we focus on this, we scrutinize this longness and the influences it has while breathing in and out.

The second lesson is knowing the short breathing. So, now one scrutinizes the short breathing but one isn't. Once again, the emphasis is on the shortness. So, one is scrutinizing the shortness of the breathing just as in lesson one we scrutinize the longness. Now, in focusing attention on this shortness, one comes to see the very important fact that the short breathing is totally different than the long breathing. If we just focus attention on the breathing, whether it's long or short the breathing is pretty much the same, it comes in the same place, the movements are largely the same. The difference is in the shortness as opposed to the longness. So, this is what one emphasizes. This is where one really pays attention to the shortness of the breathing, the kind of effects, influences and reactions it has toward the mind. So, seeing that the short breathing is the opposite of the long breathing required that we scrutinize the shortness of the breathing as long as the result of that shortness.

The third lesson is to scrutinize the fact or truth that the breathing and the body are inseparably connected, that they're interconnected, interrelated, that they become calm together, that the breathing and the body are refined together, or they don't get calm together. Whatever kind of things happen, it happens to the breathing and the body together. So, focusing attention on this

fact of their interconnectedness, the inseparability of the body and the breathing – this is the third lesson.

The fourth object or lesson is to calm down the breathing and then the body calms down. And so, one focuses attention on the fact that the body calms down as the breathing is calm. This is the object of lesson four.

Now, we come to the second tetrad, the second group of four lessons. In the first lesson of this tetrad, we scrutinize feeling. We focus attention on specific satisfied feeling which is still rather coarse and excited. You can call it “rapture” if you’d like when it’s very coarse and excited, or “satisfaction,” or “contentment” when it’s calmer. But all the coarse kinds of satisfaction or gratification, these are called “*pīti*” and this is what is scrutinized in the first lesson of the second tetrad.

In the next lesson, one scrutinizes the satisfaction that is very refined, that has calmed down, is truly peaceful and cool. We can call this “happiness” or if we wish but the emphasis is now the kind of satisfaction that is truly calm and peaceful. The satisfaction of *pīti* is stimulating – it makes one shake and tremble and sometimes even hop and jump whereas the satisfied feeling in lesson six is now very refined, very gentle, very peaceful. This is the object of the second lesson of this tetrad.

In the third lesson, it begins to have a bit of *vipassanā* or insight involved. In this one, we scrutinize the fact that the feelings specifically *pīti* and *sukha*, that these concoct the thinking, the thoughts. Now in the Pāli, it is said that they are the concocter of the mind – this is the thing that conditions the mind. The meaning is that it conditions, concocts the thoughts and thinking. It’s feeling that conditions desire and desire, in turn, conditions all the kinds of thinking, the thoughts that arise. That kind of line trend of thoughts, of the thinking – this comes from desire. But the thing that conditions the desire is feeling. And so, therefore, we say that feeling is the concocter of the mind, of the thinking. Studying this fact is the third lesson.

In the fourth lesson, we observe or focus attention on the fact by lessening the strength of the feelings – the strength of the thinking is lessened. By weakening the power of the feelings or the energy of the feelings, then the energy of the thinking is weakened. One observes this fact until one is able to weaken the power and strengthen the feelings in ways that are appropriate to the situation and to one’s needs. And so that one is able to weaken certain aspects of the feelings and then certain aspects of the thinking will weaken or slow down. If one calms certain aspects of the feelings, then certain aspects of the thinking calm. We can explore this more and more until we have total mastery over the feelings. We can weaken them to the point they are totally calm and that means the thinking can stop. One can have such mastery over the feelings that the thinking stops for a while. As long as the feelings have kept calm, there will be no thinking because there’s nothing to stir it up – there’s nothing to concoct the feeling. So, one learns how to weaken the strength of the feelings, to lessen their energy in order to weaken the strength and energy of the thought. One explores this, one scrutinizes this until there is mastery over the feelings.

Now, you can see quite clearly that each of these four lessons has a different focus of attention. We’re scrutinizing different things. In the first lesson, we focus attention on the excited kinds of satisfaction. In the second lesson on the calm, refined kind of satisfaction. In the third lesson, we scrutinize the fact that the feelings concoct the mind. And then in the fourth, we focus attention on the fact that by lessening the feelings, the power of the thinking lessens.

Now, we come to the third tetrad which deals with the mind directly. In this one, the first lesson is to scrutinize the different states of mind, which arise the different kinds of mind, which is to focus attention on the different characteristics or qualities of this different states of mind. For example, whether the mind has lust or it's free of lust, whether there is anger in the mind or not, whether there is delusion or not, and so on. There're these different states of mind and one scrutinizes them in order to see the different kinds of mind that can arise. One, of course, is focusing attention on the characteristics of each of these states of mind.

The second lesson here is to make the mind joyful, to gladden the mind as we require. In the third lesson, we make the mind concentrated as we require. This means that any level or degree of concentration that we need we can do that until this is totally within our grasp, within our power so that the mind has the quality of the purity, stability, and activity. So these three qualities are fully within our control. This is the object of the third lesson.

In the fourth lesson of this tetrad, we learn to control the things that we shouldn't have in the mind, the things that ought not to be in the mind. This is a good phrase to use because it's very generally included a lot of different things. So, to control the mind in order to get rid of, or to release all the things that don't belong in the mind. We release them, we free the mind from these things. This is the fourth lesson of the third tetrad. Some examples are love, anger, hatred, fear – to be able to chase away these things which don't belong in the mind so that even if only temporarily, the mind is free of these things.

So, you can see in all of these lessons we've mentioned that there is a different object to everyone. It's not just being mindful of the breathing. If that's all what we're doing, it would be the same lesson. There would just be one lesson. But there are twelve specific lessons – each with its own object where we scrutinize one particular object at a time while breathing in and breathing out. The breath is apparent to the mind and while we're aware the breath, we scrutinize each of these lessons.

Now, the reason we've taken the time to review these first twelve lessons is that it will lead us up now to speaking about the fourth tetrad, the one that deals with Dhamma. Through this review now, we will be able to more easily understand how to practice or how to scrutinize Dhamma which here means specifically the thing which doesn't belong in the mind and how to free the mind of that on the highest level or completely.

Now, literally the word “Dhamma” means all things. Dhamma in its basic meaning means things or all things, everything. Here specifically, “by all things” we mean the things that don't belong in the mind, the things when they are in the mind causes problem. So, we're going to scrutinize these Dhammas until understanding them and being able to chase them away. In order to chase them away for good, in order to free the mind of these things – in order to do so, there are four lessons. Now here, when we're speaking of things that don't belong in the mind, we can say more simply, it means the problems that exist in the mind. It's too much to go and have to scrutinize everything. Everything is practically infinite, and we will take quite a long time. It's unnecessary to study or scrutinize everything. What we need to particularly scrutinize are the things that are problems for us. This is what we need to understand and be able to deal with. So, when we speak of things that don't belong in the mind, we mean our problems or things that are problems in our mind.

The first lesson here is to contemplate the impermanence of these problems. That means contemplate the things which attachment has seized onto. Whatever attachment has grasped, that becomes our problems. And to contemplate the impermanence of the objects of attachment until

we're able to chase away the problems, until seeing, contemplating the impermanence of that object of attachment that ceases the problem so that that thing ceases to be dangerous or harmful for us. Although, this lesson is specifically called "contemplating impermanence," you need to understand that to truly see impermanence includes seeing a number of other things as well – that the more clearly and deeply one sees impermanence, that this will lead to seeing other things as well. And so that insight into impermanence successively leads to other insights which are kind of reactions or automatic results of seeing insight, or of seeing impermanence.

Impermanence means that things are changing all the time. They're continually changing. And this is because everything comes from causes and conditions. All things depend on other things. And when the causes of things are changing, then the things themselves will be changing. Observing that all things are constantly changing because they depend on causes and conditions which are continually changing is to see the necessary impermanence of things. It doesn't hurt to mention at this point the Greek philosopher Heraclitus whose central teaching was everything flows or in Greek "contraire" (everything flows). He made a big deal of his teaching of impermanence, but he didn't take it any deeper and so things just got stuck at that point and didn't develop any further than teaching impermanence. And unfortunately, many of his contemporaries considered him crazy although that was for other reasons.

The Buddha didn't stop at the insight into impermanence. He saw the fact that we must live with impermanent things – the fact that life is nothing but impermanent things, being *dukkha*, that it is inherently painful living. And because all these impermanent things keep biting us, it is therefore painful. And all these things that make up our lives. There's nothing that can stay still long enough to be owned or controlled, that there's the fact that there are any "self" makes things inherently painful for us.

This word "*dukkha*" or "*dukkham*" can be a bit difficult to translate into English in order to get all of its meanings. Literally, it means ugly or hateful. Because all these things that are changing, they just turn around and bite us. They are biting us. This change of things keeps biting us. And this is why they're said to be *dukkha* or ugly, hateful. Because in this biting, there's a great deal of pain. When things are impermanent and have this inherent ugliness or painfulness to them, there's nothing that we can make a deal with. If you try to make a deal with anything, to have it the way you want, you just can't find something to make the bargain with. Because things are changing like this, because of this inherent ugliness, they lack anything stable. Things are empty of anything really secure or stable that we can control or own or we can make our deal with. It's all said to be "*anatta*" – not self. If thing has "self," we could make deal with them. If they really have some stable or secure substance, we can make our little agreement and have them be the way we want them to be. But that's not how things are. They lack this kind of substance or self. And so, we are unable to make this agreement. Things just don't work out the way we want them to. So, we emphasize that they are "not self." Even further, this quality of "not self" also refers to the facts that things are not only impermanent. Impermanently, thing not only bites us, they bite themselves – that they are painful withing themselves. So, they are said to be "not self." This is the result of impermanence. *Anattā* is directly resulting from impermanence. The fact of impermanence, this inherent painfulness and "not self" are just the way things ordinary are. This is the ordinary natural state of things which in Pāli is called "*dhammaṭṭhitatā*." It's just the way things are. There's nothing supernatural or strange about these facts. This is just the natural ordinariness of thing which again results from the basic fact of impermanence.

And then, why are things ordinary like that? The reason is because the law of nature makes them that way. The law of nature control things such that they are like that. This is called “*dhammaniyāmatā*.” *Dhammaniyāmatā* – it’s just the natural law that makes things this way. And all of these insights can be summarized with the insight that everything happens according to its conditions, its causes, its conditions. Everything depends on its own conditions, and it occurs and changes and develops further according to those conditions.

The fact that everything depends on its conditions and changes – that everything happens according to conditions is called “*idappaccayatā*,” The law of conditionality. *Idappaccayatā* or conditionality applies to everything, both mental and physical things. So, it applies to a lot of things that aren’t really a problem for us. They’re not the real problems we face. Our problems are all concerned with our own consciousness, with our own feelings of pleasure and pain. And so, it’s more useful, it’s more practical to focus upon the aspect of *idappaccayatā* which deals directly with our own problems, with our own *dukkha*. And this is called “*paticcasamuppāda*” or “*paticcasamuppādo*” which in English can be translated Dependent Origination. The law of Dependent Origination deals directly with all the fact of our problem. So, this is the aspect of conditionality, which is most important for us, which we need to see clearly.

So, you would do well to study this fact of dependent origination. Over at the meditation center, you ought to examine this until you understand it clearly so that later you will realize its fact. Now, when these insights have been developing from impermanence and so on all the way up to the insight into the law of conditionality, The law of Dependent Origination, then one realizes that there is nothing anywhere, that there is not anything anywhere in this universe that can be taken to be a “self,” – there’s nothing that has the meaning of actually being a “self.” Realizing this fact is called “*suññātā*” (voidness). To realize the voidness of all things – that everything is voided of anything that can be taken to be a “self” or soul, that all things lack the meaning or the value or the reality that can be taken to be a “self” and so, they are said to be void of self. Realizing this fact that *suññātā* is very important because this is the heart of the Dhamma which can quench our *dukkha*. Even our bodies, even our minds, even these lives here, even our very own lives – all of these are void of anything that can really be called a “self.”

In the lesson that we’ve suggested to you of walking from the center to here without a walker, it is an excellent way to study the fact of *suññātā*. Walking without a walker – just to walk as a natural activity. Walking is just something that the body and the mind does. It’s one of the capabilities of life – to walk. It doesn’t require or depend upon some “self” that is the one who is walking or the walker. So, by studying this lesson, just let walking be a natural function of the body and mind without requiring or getting any “self” confused into it. This is a way to study the fact of voidness or *suññātā*. Some people are unable to accept this. Some people just deny it, refuse to believe it. Some people even think it’s ridiculous and funny. But this insight into *suññātā*, into voidness, is the only way of absolutely quenching *dukkha*. One can lessen *dukkha* in other ways but the only way to totally eliminate *dukkha* is to see deeply and totally the fact that all things are void of selfhood, that all things are totally lacking in anything that can be taken to be a “self,” something which is in control of life or is the owner of life. This is the only to fully eliminate *dukkha*.

All the different things exist. You can have all of them if you’d like, but just don’t have one thing namely “*attā*” or “self” (the atman or soul). All the things that exist, you can have them all, but leave alone this thing called “self.” “Self” is just the product of ignorance. It’s just an ignorant thought and illusion in the mind. It has no reality beyond that. It’s just this deluded concept that passes to the mind. All the things exist but none of them has any reality that can be at truly called

“self.” And so, in seeing that they are all void of “self,” one can have whatever is needed. This will happen best of all when there is no “self,” when one doesn’t cling to this illusion of “self.” We’ll do well for you all to realize the fact that this body and this mind can exist without any “self.” This body, this mind for them to live and function don’t require any “self.” They arise dependent on natural conditions and causes, and they will continue and change dependent on those conditions and causes. But none of these requires any “self.” When we realize this fact, then we will stop clinging to the illusion that there is a “self,” to the force believe that we need a “self,” that we have to be a “self” or have a “self.” When we can see that these bodies and minds are naturally void of “self,” then we can live without the *dukkha* created by “self.”

One should observe the animals and see that they can perform the functions of life without any “self.” The trees and plants can carry out the functions of their lives without requiring any “self.” One can observe that body and mind functions naturally carrying out all the responsibilities and duties of lives naturally according to the law of nature without their being any “self.” When we see this, then we can live without the illusion and burden and pain of taking these things to be “self.” However, there are some religions and philosophies say that in people and animals and trees, there are “selves” or there are souls. This kind of understanding is not Buddhism.

Now, one should be sympathetic to places like Thailand where the believes and teachings of “self,” of eternal “self” or soul has existed way before Buddhism ever came here. And then, when Buddhism arrived, this teaching of “not self” then had to struggle against the old belief that there are “selves” – the things are “selves.” And so, it’s quite difficult for people to understand because they come to it all with a very strong belief. Almost the blind faith in their being some kind of “self” or soul and it’s very hard for them to understand the teaching of “not self.” This kind of situation probably exists in most other places as well. So, one needs to be sympathetic to this difficulty of getting the message across for people to understand “not self.” If we look, we’ll see that the instincts already promote from the start, a sense of “self” – a belief in “self.” And then, the way people are raised, the way we are educated, strengthen this belief in “self.” Especially religious education in most places makes this belief in “self” very strong. So, when we recognize it, one becomes sympathetic that it’s quite hard for people to understand and see “not self.”

*Attā* has a positive quality to it. The word “*attā*” is a positive word. *Anattā* has a negative quality and it’s a negative word. And so, people have a natural inclination towards *attā* – towards “self,” rather than “not self.” People are always incline towards the positive and so this makes for further difficulties in the understanding of “not self.”

The one who has seen fully the fact of voidness, then realizes that things are just thus. Things are just this way – they’re just thus. This is called “*tathatā*” – thusness or suchness. Things are such. They’re not like this or like that. They’re merely like thus. Realizing this fact is to realize that the whole stream of insight for – impermanence, the inherent painfulness, the fact that things are “not self,” the natural order, ordinariness of all that, the natural law, the law of *idappaccayatā*, Dependent Origination, and then voidness – all of that is merely thus. Things could never be otherwise. It’s no way that things could be any other ways. It’s just the way things are. They’re merely thus. There’re just such. This is the realization of the arahant, of the perfected human being, of the highest level of human life, of the Buddha. To realize this, we should continue practicing until we reach or realize this level of understanding, this degree of life where everything is seen to be thus, when we fully realize the suchness of all things.

The realization of thusness has many benefits. Whatever comes to meet us in life, that is seen to be just thus. Something lovely comes by, and we realize its thusness. Something ugly comes by or hateful and we just see that it's just like that. Something frightening appears and one just realize it's merely thus. Everything that meets us, we send it back with the realization of thusness, suchness. Nothing can come and concoct us, can stir us up, cook us up ever again when we meet everything with thusness. It's just thus. And so, in this way the mind is beyond the positive and negative. There's nothing that can stir the mind up into clinging to positive and negative when there is the realization of thusness. And so, thusness leads to what we call "*atammayatā*."

*Atammayatā* is the mind that is perfectly invulnerable. Nothing can shake it or manipulate it. The unconcoctable mind – the mind that is beyond positive and negative is called *atammayatā*. This is where the progression of insight leads to this *atammayatā*, which can be translated "unconcoctability." It's the mind that cannot be concocted, shaken, manipulated, or anything by whatever kind of experience. There's nothing positive or negative which can shake it or confuse it. This invulnerable mind or state of mind is called "*atammayatā*" which is the result of seeing *tathata* – actually the result of seeing impermanence all the way through to thusness and then there is *atammayatā*.

Then, for that person who has realized *atammayatā*, there won't be the words "profits and loss" or "honor and dishonor" anymore. This person won't be tricked into these kinds of words. There won't be the words "positive and negative." There won't even be the words "living or not living."

And then, what problem can exist when there is this *atammayatā*? Where could there be any problems? What could be a problem for us? So, this is where our study and practice is completed – is perfected in *atammayatā*. But what marvelous about all this, about especially *atammayatā* is that there is still intelligence to deal with all the situations and responsibilities of life. But now, none of these become a problem. There's no more ignorance and attachment, turning things into *dukkha*. So, there always remains this intelligence and natural mindfulness and wisdom with which to live life. When there is this level of life, you should understand the meaning of the word "arahant." This is the level of life of the arahant – the human being perfected, the human perfected which we can say is life where nothing wrong can be done, where no errors can be made. This is the ordinary way of speaking. But in Dhamma language we would say life where nothing is done – the life where we don't do anything. In ordinary language, if we say that, most people get confused. So, to put it in simple terms for the ordinary understanding, we can just say life where there are no errors made, where nothing wrong is done. But in Dhamma language, we say the life of not doing anything.

There is one literary matter to deal with as well. The word "tā" – properly, the words describing all these insights end with "tā." Impermanence is *aniccatā*. The painfulness is *dukkhatā*, *anattatā*, *dhammaṭṭhitatā*, and so on, *suññatā*, *tathatā*, *atammayatā*. This tā or in English t-a, a long "a" (t long a), and in Pāli language means a state of being. So, we've been describing nine states of being, nine realities or actually nine aspects of reality – that all things exist in these nine tās. However, there's a nice coincidence that in the Thai language, the same sound tā refers to these eyeballs – these eyes which we see. And so, then we speak of seeing these nine tās, these are the nine Dhamma eyes – the nine ways of seeing or nine insights. So, they're both of states of being or facts to be realized and they are nine ways of seeing, nine ways of looking at and seeing life, the world oneself. So, all nine of these tās is insights into the states of being make up the first lesson of the fourth tetrad – the tetrad dealing with Dhamma. Strictly, this lesson is referred only to

impermanence, to *aniccatā*. But in seeing *aniccatā*, if one truly sees it, one can help, but the insight will develop more and more deeply until encompassing all nine of these *tās*.

Now, the quite marvelous and enormously important result of realizing these nine *tās* is that the attachment, the clinging that we have had towards all kinds of different things, the clinging to them being “I” and “mine,” – the clinging begins to dissolve, it begins to weaken and fade away. This fading away of attachment which is a result of realization of the nine *tās* is called “*virāga*.” Contemplating this fact of *virāga* – the fading away of attachment is the object of the second lesson of this final tetrad. Observing, watching, scrutinizing more and more deeply, contemplating this fact of fading away is the second lesson here.

Now, when things fade away and fade away and fade away especially when this attachment is fading away, eventually it ends, it’s gone, it’s finished. Contemplating that the attachment fades away until it ends, until it is quenched or extinguished, this is called “*nirodha*.” *Nirodha* is this quenching or cessation of attachment. But when attachment is quenched, when attachment ceases, then *dukkha* ceases because attachment is the cause of all of our *dukkha*. When the attachment to all these different things as being “I” and “mine” fades away and ends, then all *dukkha* is quenched, is extinguished. Contemplating this fact, watching that thing fades away, fades away until the attachment fades away, until it ends and that thereby *dukkha* ends. This is the third lesson of this tetrad – contemplating the *nirodha*, the fading away, the quenching or cessation of *dukkha*.

There’s a little phrase here which is quite useful. In Thai, it’s “moad punha (หมดปัญหา).” Punha means both problems or troubles and questions. Moad is to end or finish. So now, in lesson three, all of our problems end and all of our questions end as well. This is the end or the finish of all of our problems and questions. This is a very nice phrase and has a very wonderful meaning too that all of one’s problems and question ends right here. This is where all of our Dhamma practice is leading to the ending all of our problems. All of our questions are ended as well. This comes about through having *atammayatā* which is the result of realizing impermanence and so on. And so, you won’t have any more questions to ask others and you won’t have questions left to ask yourself. The reason for this is because you don’t have any more problems. When you don’t have any more problems, there’re no more questions to ask.

We can summarize this kind of life as being clean. It’s totally pure. There’s nothing dirty or ugly or rotten in it. This life is clear. There’s clear, comprehensive understanding of all aspects of life. So, everything is clear, and this life is calm. There’s a peacefulness. Everything is at peace. Everything is calm. And further, everything is free – there is freedom and independence. This life is above all positive and negative, all ignorance, all illusions, all ego, and all *dukkha*. This is a life that is totally above all problems. So, we say that it is free or independent. We can summarize it again by saying that this is the life that is peaceful. Peaceful here means cool, calm, peace, which is also the highest happiness. Life is peaceful and it is useful. The life that no longer has any problems is the life that is most useful both for itself and for others. So, we can summarize all the benefits and results of this as being peaceful and useful.

You might think that we ought to be finished by now but in *ānāpānasati* there is one more lesson which is to look back and see that we have completed all of our duties – that our highest duties have now been fulfilled. So, we look back and then realizing that we finish everything that’s needed to be done. This is the final lesson. Its actual name is tossing back or throwing back. We can explain this using the metaphor that so far in life, we’ve all been thieves, robbers, bandits, crooks. We’ve been stealing things from nature, claiming them this is “mine,” this is “me.” We’ve

been thieves, very wicked, nasty crooks and criminals. But now one recognizes that all of these things, they don't belong to "me." So, we toss them back to nature. We throw them back. We return them – we just throw it all back to nature. This is why this is called "tossing back." So, we look and see that we complete it all our duties and we acknowledge that by tossing everything back to nature.

So, in this last lesson one has thoroughly evaluated the entire system of practice and the result of them. And so, the final result is that one is finished, is done, is complete. Now, the way of stating this is the result of this last lesson is that all *bhava*, all existences finished. There is no more sexual existence, no more formage existence, and no more formless existence. It's all finished.

And so, you can remember the housewife that we spoke of at the very beginning. Whose life was filled up with all kinds of burdens, one hour having to do this, one hour having to do that, being burdened with all the different kinds of existence, so a life with many burdens and much *dukkha*. Now, that's all finished – all existence is finished and so our housewife doesn't have any more burdens. She doesn't have any more problems. She isn't falling into any kinds of the existence. All the existences are ended. So, there is no more "self." There's no more ego, no more "me," no "self," no soul to carry around these problems. When there's no more ego, there's no more burdens. That means *dukkha* is finished. And so, housewife has a life that is truly peaceful and useful. And then, for the husband, it's the same. When all the existences are finished, there's no "self" to carry any burdens. And then, husband and wife here have now vested their marriage. In getting married, they have fulfilled the meaning of marriage. They have worked together and help each other to realize the highest purpose in life, through the life that is truly peaceful and useful where there's no more existence, no more burdens and *dukkha*. So, their marriage has been truly worthwhile.

There's one other thing to mention but we have to whisper it because we're afraid nobody will believe it. So, we'll just whisper it quietly. The secret that you can actually ordain as a monk or nun or in Thai, we have the word "buad (บวช)" which means to leave home and become a homeless monk. But you can leave home while living at home. This is the secret we'd like to whisper to you. You can leave home while living at home as a husband or wife if you practice in this way. You can leave behind all the problems and all the *dukkha* of having a home and a family and a job and all that by practicing in this way. But we're afraid nobody will believe this, that nobody will take it seriously. But we'd like to whisper to you that you can leave home as while living at home by practicing *ānāpānasati* as we have described. This is sound a little bit too weird to say that you can renounce the world while living in the world. Does this make any sense to you? You can renounce the world while your body and mind are still living in the world. This is the meaning of emancipation or liberation. When you reach the highest level of practice, then you'll understand what it is to renounce the world while still living in the world.

We've spoken for at quite some length to make it very clear and to avoid the misunderstanding that we're not practicing "mindfulness of breathing" as it is often called "mindfulness of breathing." That's not what we're doing. We're not just scrutinizing the breathing. We're practicing the "mindfulness with breathing." We're scrutinizing these different objects one by one while breathing in and out. We take up one particular lesson and do this while breathing in and out. So, we're just not practicing "mindfulness of breathing" but it's "mindfulness with breathing." Mindfulness and mindful scrutiny of these sixteen things which need to be understood. Not one of them repeats the others. So, it's not just doing the same thing over and over again. But there are these sixteen different objects that we are trying to make it very clear that this is

“mindfulness with breathing,” not “mindfulness of breathing.” So, we hope that you will understand this correctly in order to be able to practice successfully for the highest benefit. Another way to put it is that we have perfect and automatic mindfulness and ready wisdom (*sati* and *sampajañña*) every time we breath in and breath out. With every inhalation and exhalation, there is automatic mindfulness and ready wisdom. This is what *ānāpānasati* or mindfulness with breathing is. So, thank you all for being very good listeners. You’ve been very patient. Thank you.

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