

The Way of Practice for Ending Selfishness

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In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhādāsa gave regular talks during the monthly international retreats held at Suan Mokkh and then Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage. Usually, Ajahn spoke in Thai and Santikaro Bhikkhu interpreted into English live. Audio recordings are now available from www.suanmokkh.org and www.bia.or.th. The following is a transcription generously made by a Dhamma volunteer. If you noticed possible improvements to the text and would like to contribute, please kindly contact the Buddhādāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok (suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com).

We have been talking about selfishness or egocentric-ness, the dangers of selfishness, the origin of selfishness, the foundations on which selfishness is established; talked about getting rid of selfishness, and the advantages and benefits or the *anisoṅg* of destroying selfishness. In today's talk we will look at the method of practice that eliminates selfishness.

The main principle involved in eliminating selfishness is to realize the Three Characteristics of things – that they are impermanent, unsatisfied, and not-self. In general to see that all the things that we attach to as 'self' and all the results of that attachment which we take to be 'mine' – so all the things that we take to be I & mine – to see that they are impermanent, unable to satisfy, and 'self'-less. This is the general principle.

You should know in advance that all the realizations of various stages of spiritual attainment are merely the result of penetrating impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self, to the various degrees. We call each of these realizations the penetration of path-fruit and Nibbāna. There are four stages of attainment representing various levels of purity and wisdom. Each of these involves the application of path or correct practice, and then the realization that selfishness is being cut, and then the *nibbāna* (the coolness) of that selfishness being eliminated. This happens on the level that is called 'stream-enterer,' and then it continues to the level called 'once-returner,' and then the level of 'non-

returner,’ and finally the highest level of spiritual attainment – the Arahant (the perfected awakened human being). In each of these levels of attainment, the essential thing is that they all arise out of seeing impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self to that degree. And so these attainments progress as the realization of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā* (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self) progresses.

Penetrating through these three facts or Three Characteristics is the only way to relieve and lessen selfishness. This is the only way to completely eliminate them. So to the degree that these facts are penetrated and realized, to that degree selfishness will lessen and disarm. So this obviously points to the need to be very interested in these three facts of existence; and by being interested in them we begin to practice in order to penetrate to their deepest and most profound level of meaning. We do this in stages, beginning on a relatively superficial level of understanding; but as practice deepens and strengthens, this understanding progresses by stages to deeper, more profound, and more complete realization of these three truths of existence.

Now we’ll talk about the methods for seeing these three characteristics. In general we can talk about two methods or two approaches which are complementary. The first is to study, to study through thinking and listening about these things, we develop a theoretical knowledge of the Three Characteristics. The second method is that of practice, of practicing Dhamma correctly in order to realize these three truths within the mind directly, within the mind. So there is the method of study and the method of practice or realizing these truths.

We’re talking about knowledge and we should understand that knowledge has three fundamental levels. The first level is the level of learning, of study. Learning by hearing the words of another or by reading – this is knowledge, one level of knowledge. Then by taking that learning, thinking about it, reasoning about it, applying rules and logics, and so forth, we come to another kind of knowledge, the knowledge of reasoning. This is also knowledge, a second level of knowledge. Then there is a third kind of knowledge – the knowledge that comes from direct experience of that thing, of whatever truth it is, to be clearly aware of that truth without having to think about it, without having to reason, to use, depend on any kind of logics or assumption or so forth. This is the third kind of knowledge. To truly understand something, we need all three levels of knowledge. We can’t stop at just the first or second level. This is something we should understand that this word ‘knowledge’ can be a bit vague and

ambiguous. So be careful to make sure that knowledge is complete in all three ways.

So these Three Characteristics of all compounded things can be seen on these three levels: there's the level of learning, and the level of thinking, reasoning, and all philosophies – all philosophies, philosophical, theoretical systems will fit under the second kind of knowledge. This learning and thinking and philosophy, all makes up the group of theoretical understanding. We can have some understanding of these Three Characteristics in a theoretical even a philosophical way. But then we shouldn't overlook, we should be especially interested in understanding them directly by ourselves. And this involves practice. For this, instead of using words and ideas and theories to understand reality, the thing is to deal with reality directly for the truth or fact to appear in the mind, to be manifested in the mind, and then through the mind to see it clearly. The man has to make direct contact with that truth within the mind in order to truly realize it. We can call this 'spiritual experience' – to experience the things directly and spiritually. You can think about past experiences if you want, but that doesn't compare with directly experiencing these truths here and now, right now. This is the most direct, the most powerful way. This we can call 'intuitive' or 'intuition insight.' It's to see these truths with intuitive wisdom, not an intellectual philosophical wisdom, but the intuitive wisdom of direct spiritual experience which is when these things arise in the mind, they appear in the mind, they are seen clearly, distinctly, obviously by the mind.

Now we'll talk about the objects, the matters that are taken of our contemplation in order to realize these three truths. These various objects that we can use can be separated into two groups. Once again we can see them basically as two groups. The first group of objects are the objects that are used as the basis for thought, for intellection, for reasoning. These objects are used or reasoning is used in order to develop an understanding of these Three Characteristics. So thoughts and theories and ideas and reasoning logics are used. But this kind of objects are always dependent on reasoning. This understanding is dependent on reasoning, so it's not really free. We can even say that this is to be a slave to logic and reasoning. This is the first group of objects.

The second type of objects or matters for contemplation are objects which the mind experiences directly. These objects have nothing to do with reasoning, with logic or any kind of thought. They're completely free of logic and reasoning. They're not dependent on reasoning in any way.

First groups of objects is always dependent on reasoning and so they are always dependent on or trapped within the limitation of reason and thought. The second group of objects are completely free of that. They have nothing to do with reasoning and thought because with these objects the mind makes direct spiritual contact. The mind doesn't perceive these things through the medium of thought or reasoning. It makes direct contact with the things. It's a direct immediate kind of awareness that has nothing to do with reasoning. The first kind of objects, the first group, is always associated with reasoning. The second group is above or beyond reasoning. So it's through the second group of objects that we can go above and beyond the world as well.

We've got a very easy example to point this point out for you. Think about sweetness, the sweetness of sugar. For a person who has never eaten sugar or never tasted anything sweet, although they hear from other people that sugar is sweet, they won't really know what that means. No matter how much other people tell us that sugar is sweet, that person still won't know what this sweetness really is. Even though that person could watch other people taste and eat sugar, and see the joy they had in that sweetness; still the person who never tasted sweetness wouldn't know what sweet means. But once that goes and tries some sugar, then they will have the direct experience of what sweetness is. In this way the two kinds of knowledge are incomparable. The knowledge of just hearing from somebody else's word or from thinking about it is not the same as direct experience of sweetness. Until the person actually tastes and experiences sweetness him- or herself, until then there is no real understanding of what sweetness is. The same is true with the characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and 'not-self.' We can hear about them from others, we can think about them, or if we want we can read books, we can even write books about it. But all that thinking and philosophizing is nothing compared with just a moment direct experience of anicca, dukkha, anattā – the kind of experience that has nothing to do with reasoning. In that experience that these characteristics become very clear in a way that words and logics can never do. Even the m.. [16.54 ??] dog when it tastes sugar, it knows what sweetness is. With human beings when we taste sugar, we can go and talk about it. We have the ability to speak and talk about all kinds of things. But as far as the direct experience of sugar, we're no better than the m... [17.20 ??] dogs who still has to go and taste the sugar to know what it is. And we are the same. We have to taste it for ourselves, experience it for ourselves; and then whether we talk about or not, that experience very clear.

Now we'd like to talk about the influence that these two ways of knowledge have upon our lives. The person who never tasted sugar no matter what people tell them about sugar it still won't lead to any sense of sugar is like. They won't have any feeling for sugar. They'll be completely indifferent because they don't know what sweetness is. But once they taste sugar for themselves and know what sweetness is; then they have a feel, they have a sense of sweetness, and then this passes, and then sweetness has an influence on them. Just the word doesn't lead to sweetness having any influence, but the direct experience of it gives sweetness some influence. It leads to certain changes in one's feeling and attitude. The same is true with the truth of anicca, dukkha, anattā. By developing theoretical understanding of them, it doesn't really lead to a feel for them. There is no direct understanding of them and so it really doesn't have any influence on them. It doesn't have much of an influence on life and surely doesn't have any influence on the mind. The mind continues attaching to things as always. But when there is direct spiritual contact, and experience of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and 'not-self'; this has a very profound influence on the mind. When the mind actually realizes this directly, clearly, distinctly; then this leads to the lessening, the dissolving, and the disappearing of attachment, and of selfishness. This difference is very very important. Just by thinking about these three truths doesn't really change anything. It may change our way of speaking. We may have a new vocabulary to talk about. It may change our thoughts, but that's all that would change. All the thinking can change is our thinking, our opinions. But to really change things in the mind where the problems are arising, this has to come from the direct experience of these three truths, and through that spiritual contact, not through theoretical understanding, but through spiritual experience, intuitive develop wisdom. That's how these truths can cut through and eliminate attachment.

In our Dhamma practice our goals are very practical. We're practicing to bring about fundamental change in life. So we're talking about what is capable of bringing about this change, and mere theoretical understanding does not lead to fundamental change. It only leads to a superficial change in the thinking or maybe the words we speak. It takes the direct spiritual experience to bring about a true and profound change in the mind. This is the importance of direct experience of the three truths.

We want to emphasize that when we talked about the mind – the mind we could also discuss as having various layers or levels or whatever – mere theoretical thought and understanding only has a superficial influence upon the

mind. There is no real deep and profound effect. But through the direct contact of the mind with these three truths, these three facts of existence; then there is an influence that goes all the way through the deepest part of the mind. It penetrates to the very core of the mind, to what we might call the 'spiritual sphere of the mind.' Much of the mind is only concerned with worldly material, external things. And this part of the mind can be influenced by thinking and reasoning. But to get to the real depth of the mind, to totally transform the entire mind, requires to get all the way to the spiritual sphere, the spiritual center of the mind. And this requires the change that is brought about by direct experience, by intuitive wisdom of the three facts of life.

Although there is this great difference between theoretical understanding and direct experiential spiritual understanding, in spite of this, that theoretical understanding is the cause for the spiritual understanding. If nobody told us about sugar, if nobody explains how sweet sugar was, how delicious it was; then we would never go and taste it. So that's beginning theoretical understanding about sweetness led to our going and finding some sugar, tasting it, and then knowing it for ourselves. Although that theoretical knowledge is not enough, it's not the real thing; we can be very thankful for because it was the cause of our finding out what the real thing is. It's the same way with Dhamma practice – the theoretical understanding is not the real Dhamma, it's just words and theories about the Dhamma. Nonetheless, it's the cause, it's what get us started. We hear about how wonderful the Dhamma is, how delicious it is, how sweet; and then we begin to practice in order to realize the Dhamma for ourselves. That theoretical knowledge isn't the true knowledge of Dhamma; but it's the knowledge which we can be very thankful for whether we read it in books, hear it in talks, or whatever, that theoretical knowledge gets us going, begins us practicing in order that we can experience the Dhamma for ourselves. So it involves active work, it involves activity. To realize the Dhamma is an activity which we must very earnestly set out upon. And in doing so we can realize what it meant by the, what it's pointed at by the theoretical understanding. So we encourage you all to do this work, to put this theory into practice in order to taste the sweetness of Dhamma. And most of all, we encourage you to practice *ānāpānasati* because in mindfulness of breathing, each step in stage of the way there is not theoretical understanding, but there is direct experiential understanding of Dhamma. So please put this theory into practice and realize the Dhamma through that practice.

Mindfulness of breathing is the only way, the most proper way of using, it's

the most proper system of objects to directly experience the Dhamma. When we say this, don't think that we're trying to play propaganda for mindfulness of breathing, that we're getting into arguments with other places or whatever. Our only purpose in saying this is to express that we've gone through just about everything, we've tried all kinds of different things, we've gone through all the theory; and in our experience mindfulness of breathing is the most direct, the most efficient way to realize, to truly penetrate through these three facts. To penetrate through them, not in a superficial way or in an out of balanced or deceptive way, but to truly get to their essence. This ānāpānasati is the most efficient and complete way of doing so, as far as our experience can say. We go so far as saying that by practicing mindfulness of breathing is like picking up a spoonful of sugar and tasting it for yourself. For this reason we would like to talk about the practice of ānāpānasati – of mindfulness of breathing. We won't talk about all the details of the practice but we'd like to talk about the outline or the spirit of ānāpānasati. We'll give a concise overview of what it's involved in mindfulness of breathing so that which will explain how it is that mindfulness of breathing is a way to get to the objects in which we directly experience these three facts.

We'll begin with an overview or panoramic view of ānāpānasati so that we can see the general structure of mindfulness of breathing, as well as where it goes, how we get there, and where it's heading. In mindfulness of breathing as you've probably heard, there are four areas or groups or stages of practice. Each of these four groups is necessary. They must be completed in order to truly meet or truly experience the objects that will reveal the three facts of life. And not only that, in order to directly experience those three facts themselves. The first area or the first tetrad of mindfulness of breathing has been called 'the gathering together and focusing of the mind energy.' In this first tetrad, we practice in order to find the power or energy of *samādhi* (concentration). Usually the mind is scattered and dispersed. What we need to do is to gather it together, collect it together, and focus it, in order that the mind has enough power to penetrate into the reality of things. The mind needs a very strong powerful focus in order to see through and into the truth of whatever it is it is focus upon. So in the first tetrad we are merely developing this concentration – the power of concentration.

In the second tetrad we deal with the *vedanā* (the feelings). The feelings are very dangerous things. The various pleasant, unpleasant, and uncertain feelings are the bases which cook up all kinds of defiled thought and behavior. So we

have to learn how to manage these *vedanā* so they don't cook up all kinds of defilement.

Even though the mind may be very concentrated, there can still be some very happy feelings coming in and interfering. So in the second tetrad we take those very very happy, some of the greatest happiness in order to examine it. Usually the *vedanā[s]* delude us into thinking that things are permanent, beautiful, and satisfied; and that they are 'self.' So what we do is that we take these most pleasant feelings, the happiest feelings; and penetrate through them into seeing that they are actually impermanent, unsatisfied, and 'not-self.' In doing so we are able to cut through or eliminate the influence that these *vedanā[s]* have upon us, so they no longer have any power to condition any defilement. And then in this way we learn how to deal with the *vedanā[s]* so they no longer interfere with the mind. This is the second tetrad – dealing with the *vedanā* (feelings). In doing so we of course use the genuine feelings which are taking place within the mind. It's dealing with the real things. It has nothing to do with logic or reasoning.

You're probably thinking that there are dozens or hundreds or even thousands of feelings, and there are. But we can categorize them all as either pleasant or unpleasant. What we do in mindfulness of breathing, in this second tetrad, is take the most pleasant of all those pleasant feelings, we take the most blissful feeling that everyone is searching for and attaching to. And we examine them until we see through them and cut off or cut through their influence.

In the first tetrad in developing *samādhi*, there arise very powerful and very pleasant feelings. So in the second tetrad we examine, we contemplate, we fully experience these various kinds of pleasant feeling, rapture, happiness, joy, bliss, whatever we want to call them. Usually these very subtle, these very powerful, very pleasant feelings, that come out of mindfulness breathing, concentration, are something we attach to very strongly, the most attractive kind of feeling, and we attach to them with great strength. And then through this attachment they're tricking us into thinking that they are permanent, beautiful, satisfied, and that they are 'self.' This leads us into all kinds of effort to acquire more and more of these pleasant feelings because of this attachment to them. So in the second tetrad we deal with these feelings directly, and examine them, and contemplate them, until seeing that they too are impermanent, not satisfied, and not-self. And when this is realized they lose their influence over the mind. They no longer have their power to pull us around by our noses. So this is what takes place in this second tetrad. Usually because of our desire for these pleasant

feelings, we do all kinds of things in order to acquire them. Sometimes we try to get these happy feelings from sex or from sensual pleasures, other times we do it from our thinking or non-material or non-physical kind of activity including even concentration practice. But whatever the source of these pleasant feelings, they still are the bases for attachment, and they can still disturb the mind to no end, and lead to all kinds of defiled selfish behavior. So in this tetrad we see through them, see that they are merely impermanent, unsatisfied, and not-self. This is the work of the second tetrad of mindfulness of breathing.

If I was to say to you that you are enslaved to the vedanā; if I say: ‘You are enslaved to the vedanā,’ first of all you wouldn’t believe me. And second, you would probably scold and criticize me for saying it, you would probably start complaining. But the fact of the matter is that everyone is enslaved to the vedanā, whether pleasant vedanā or unpleasant vedanā. These feelings are pulling us around all the time, depending on the kind of feeling it pulls up in the appropriate direction. We’re constantly being dragged around because of our enslavement to feelings. When something is lovely, beautiful attractive, then the feelings arising out of that pull us towards sensuality in trying to get and possess and keep that beautiful attractive things. When things are unattractive, then the unpleasant feelings that arise lead us to harm, destroy, and even kill because of those unpleasant feelings. We’re slaves of these feelings. They cook up all kinds of reactions and behaviors. Generally we have very little control over this process. So in the second tetrad of ānāpānasati we learned how to see through these feelings. If you can accept that you are caught within the dualism of positive and negative, if you can realize this and accept this; then you will realize that you are a slave to the vedanā because of all the same things – things that are positive lead to pleasant feelings and we say they are good. Things that are negative or attributed or classified as negative are leading to unpleasant feelings and we say that they are bad. And these condition all kinds of reactions and responses. We’re slaves to these feelings.

In the second group of mindfulness of breathing, we look into get free of this trap. We’re going to release ourselves from enslavement to the vedanā by seeing through them, and then they no longer have power to dominate our lives. They are no longer our master. This is the essence of the second tetrad – is to free us from the domination and enslavement to the feelings.

In the third tetrad what we do is train the mind so that it is completely under control. Once the mind has been free from enslavement to the feelings, then it must be brought completely under control so that it has the highest ability to do

the work that needs to be done – which is to see directly, to penetrate directly into the truth of impermanence, non-satisfactoriness, and not-self. When the mind is very highly trained like this, when it is completely ready to perform this necessary duty; then the third tetrad is completed. And then the mind is ready, is perfectly tuned for the work of realizing the truth of anicca, dukkha, anattā.

The fourth tetrad is seeing everything, seeing all things as they really are. This means seeing all the things that have deceived us and that are deceiving us, to see all of these deceptive things as they truly. They've been able to deceive us because we don't see them as they really are. So now we take the mind that has been highly trained, the mind that has been concentrated in step one or in tetrad one; and then that has transcended the power of the feelings in step two; and that has been highly finely tuned in tetrad three. This mind now is completely free from the influence of things. These things no longer have any influence. At least when the mind is in that high state, that highly trained state, these things don't have any influence over it. Then that highly trained mind is used to examine, to contemplate everything, to see that they are impermanent, unsatisfied, and 'not-self.' When we say that we will see everything, what we mean is that all the things that coming into contact with us, all the things with which we are concerned. Anything that we have no business with or that we never come into contact with that is not our concerned. In this fourth tetrad we take all the things that have been causing us problems, we take all the things that make up our life. These are what we contemplate in order to penetrate into their truths, to have direct spiritual contact, to have direct insight and experience into the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self of those things. And then they will no longer have any power or ability to trouble or disturb us anymore.

We'd like you to recall that in observe the objects we take for seeing impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self; we take things that are actually truly occurring internally. It would still be of some value to think of external objects. That would be of some value but the most powerful, the most valuable way of realizing these three facts, is to take things that truly are already happening inside. So in mindfulness of breathing we use the various exercises that have taken place and which we can recreate at will. So we take the first exercise of experiencing the long breathing. And we see that the experience of the long breathing, the long breathing itself is impermanent, unsatisfied, and 'not-self.' And then the second exercise of experiencing the short breathing, this is contemplating until we realize that the short breathing is impermanent,

unsatisfied, and ‘not-self.’ Then the third exercise of contemplating the interrelationship between the body and the breath, of seeing what influence the breath has on the body. This interrelationship, this influence, is seen to be *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*. And even the fourth exercise of calming the breathing, of using the breathing to calm the body, although the excitement, the agitation of the breath is calmed down. This calming is nonetheless impermanent, unsatisfied, and ‘not-self.’ So even just by using these four exercises as the object of contemplation, it is still possible to realize these three facts in a very profound way because they are internal facts. They are things that are actually truly happening, right here and now.

The same basic principle is followed with the second tetrad. But now instead of using the physical things of the breathing and body, we use the objects of the feelings that have been worked with in the second tetrad. These are true actual feelings which we are very experienced with, which we know very well – such as in the fifth step or the first exercise of the second group which deals with *pīti* (rapturous satisfaction). This is something, this is a very strong excited feeling which makes the mind tremble with happiness. This is so stimulating, this kind of joy that the mind shakes and quivers with this happiness. It’s a very disturbing kind of happiness. So this *pīti* (rapturous satisfaction) can be contemplated; and then because it can be made to happen whenever we need to; and then we contemplate as this actually occurring within the mind; and then see that it is impermanent, unsatisfied, and ‘not-self.’ And then we can let that cool down and come away which leads a very subtle and soothing kind of joy which we might call ‘bliss.’ And this is the sixth exercise or the second exercise of the second tetrad. This very soothing subtle bliss is also contemplated and seen as *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*. Then the third exercise of this second group the ability to condition the mind, the influencing of the mind by this different pleasant feeling – that is also *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*. And then the calming, the calming away of this feeling, so that they no longer disturb the mind, so that they no longer have any power over the mind. This fourth exercise of this second tetrad is also an object which has been inside within the mind that can be the basis of realizing *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*. So using the four exercises of the second tetrad we can develop an even more profound experience of these three facts.

Even in the four exercises of the third tetrad, all of these reveal the truth of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*. No matter what mind state, no matter what kind of mind it is – whether it is a joyful gladdened mind, or a very very firmly steadily

concentrated mind, or a mind that has been liberated from all attachment – no matter what the mind state is, no matter whatever kind of mind it is; it is nonetheless impermanent, unsatisfied, and not-self. So these four exercises of the third tetrad are just more objects for realizing these three truths. So there are these three tetrads and each tetrad has four exercises – that’s the meaning of tetrad. So there are twelve exercises to contemplate, to take as the objects. And in each of these exercises we will discover impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and ‘selflessness’ – each and every one of them. And in this way we come to a very full and complete understanding of these three facts. To take external objects isn’t enough. There will never be enough experience of these facts if we merely use external things, because the mind can’t have a direct enough contact with those external things. The only way is to use these internal things, and these twelve internal exercises of mindfulness of breathing in which the mind directly experiences *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*. This is enough. It’s probably more than enough to fully awaken, to fully be, to have a direct enlightenment of these three truths.

The most important thing is to see impermanence completely, to keep contemplating the object – whatever the object is – until seeing its impermanence completely. Don’t stop before that. Don’t walk away or give up. Stay with the impermanence until impermanence is fully realized. And then in that realization of impermanence, we will realize the unsatisfactoriness of the things. If it’s always changing, it can never bring us satisfaction and can never fulfill our wants and desire. And then by fully realizing that *dukkha*, that unsatisfactoriness, then it is seen that in that object there is nothing in that object that itself can stand up, that can resist that change and unsatisfactoriness. There’s no ‘self’ in there, and this is to see *anattā* (not-self). And then the object is seen to be not-self then we realize that it is void, that it is *suññatā* – void of I & mine. If there’s no ‘self’ there, nothing there that can be ‘I’ or ‘mine.’ And if this is void and empty of I & mine then it is *tathatā* – ‘it’s just that,’ ‘it’s just this,’ ‘it’s just like that.’ We can’t say anything else about it except ‘it is just that.’ We stop wanting to say ‘I & mine,’ ‘positive and negative,’ and all those other deluded attributes that were attaching to things. It is just seen to be what it is – just that – with none of these delusion attached. Then it is seen as it truly is – *tathatā*, just that.

The first step of the last tetrad is contemplating impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, not-self, voidness, and *tathatā* (‘just that-ness’ or ‘suchness’). This is the thirteen step overall or the first step of the fourth tetrad. The

second step of the fourth tetrad is to contemplate, to keep the mind focus on the fading away of attachment. The result of seeing impermanence and so forth is up to tathatā. It's that attachment begins to breakup, dissolve, and fade away. This dissolving of attachment is what is contemplated in the second step of this tetrad. The result of realizing, of fully realizing this fading away of attachment is that attachment ceases.

Step fifteen is the contemplation of the extinction, the complete, the remainder-less extinction of attachment. By remainder-less it means once it's extinguished, it's completely gone, it will never come back again. Step fifteen is contemplating this final extinction of attachment to things as 'self' or as 'belonging to self,' as I & mine.

And there's one last step. Now that in step fifteen all attachment has been torn away, all attachment, all objects of attachment, all 'I', all 'mine,' and all selfishness have been thrown away. There remains one last step, the final exercise is to see that all I & mine have been thrown away, have been tossed up, and we no longer burdened by it. This is a bit funny that we have to go and realize it but this is the final step – is to clearly see that all this attachment, all 'self' and all selfishness have been thrown away by and got rid of it all. This is the thing that must be clearly realized in the last step.

When any feeling, thought, or emotion comes up and disturbs you, when any kind of thought or emotion disturbs your mind; this is the weapon we can point at it. We can take the weapon of contemplating impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and anattā, and point at that thought or emotion and kill it, so that it doesn't anymore suffering. When we can learn to do this, to see all things as impermanence and so forth, then they cannot cause more suffering to the mind. To see everything, everything internally and externally, everything mental and physical, as merely impermanence. They're all changing all the time. To see this impermanence fully means that they cannot cause any harm or do any damage. Then there is no dukkha, no suffering.

In ourselves, in others, in anything, even in our rug there's nothing but ceaseless change. There's just a constant flow, a flow of change. There's nothing that stays still for even a moment. Even win this rug, or in the trees, in the plants, in the sky, in everything, there is this constant ceaseless flow and change. When we learn to see all things in this way, they have no ability to harm or to cause suffering. This is the most powerful weapon we can use on anything that causes any problems. It's just to see that it is impermanent,

unsatisfied, and *anattā* (not-self). This is the value of seeing these three facts. Because in seeing these facts nothing can do any harm. This is the value of realizing, fully penetrating through these truths. And on this note we would like to end today's talk.

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