

The Way to Buddhist Art

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

A Dhamma lecture given at Suan Mokkh on 5 September 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. Audio recordings are now available from www.suanmokkh.org and www.bia.or.th. The following is a transcription generously made by a Dhamma volunteer. If you noticed possible improvements to the text and would like to contribute, please kindly contact the volunteer and the Buddhadāsa Indapañño Archives in Bangkok (suanmokkhbkk@gmail.com).

Yesterday we discussed the Buddhist art of life. The art of life, of how to live life without requiring a ‘self,’ the art of living without ‘self.’ Today we will talk about the way of that art.

A life without self is much better than death. Some people, when they hear about selfless life wonder what value it has, or think that it would be just as well to be dead. So one should consider the benefits of a life without self. For example, when life is free of self, there is no death, one knows no death, death has no meaning. This is one benefit. So life without self is much better than death.

Without self one can still be. One can still be in any way that one needs to be. There is still being. There is still living. Without self there is still having the various things that are necessary. There are all the forms of doing which need to be done, even the kinds of doings that make up an ordinary life with homes, families, and jobs, even the doing of reproduction, reproducing. Without self there can even be reproducing, and relating – all the relationships and connections.

Without self there can be all these things and none of it will be *dukkha*. None of it will be suffering if there is no self. So to be without self is the highest art or the supreme art, for the sake of supreme life, the highest level of life, one that is beyond all problems, a life that knows no suffering.

Now, what we are calling ‘art’ here is usually called ‘Dhamma.’ This supreme art is nothing other than Dhamma. Without Dhamma there can be no art and

without Dhamma none of this is possible, what we've just been talking about. Without Dhamma all being becomes painful. If there is no Dhamma, whatever we are is a source of pain and difficulty and misery for us. Whatever we have, whatever we possess, any kind of having becomes burdensome and stressful for us. Any kind of living becomes difficult.

All forms of doing are tiresome and hassles for us without Dhamma, and even reproduction, sex, without Dhamma sex becomes a big problem. It creates all kinds of anxieties and competition, possessiveness, manipulation and so on. So without Dhamma everything becomes painful. Without Dhamma anything becomes a basis for *dukkha*. But with Dhamma there can be life without any of that. There can be the being, having, doing, relating, but without the pain, without the heaviness and hassle. That is the supreme art.

This sentence we've been using is rather difficult to understand – 'to live without self.' 'Living without self' is a statement in Dhamma language. It is something which is understood by those who know and understand Dhamma and it is spoken in the way these people speak. 'Living without self.' What it means is to live without attaching to anything as 'self.'

When living, yet not clinging to anything as 'me or 'mine,' this is what we are talking about. There is this life with a body and mind. When there is no attachment or clinging to this body as being 'me' or 'I' or 'mine.' When there is no attachment to this mind, this heart, as being 'self,' as 'me,' as 'mine.' When neither body nor mind, when none of life is attached to as 'self,' this is the supreme art. But there is still life. Notice that there is living going on. There is life but there is no self, no attachment to self.

Now, what we call 'self,' whatever anyone calls 'self' is false. That it's not a real self, although we say 'self,' 'self,' 'I,' 'I,' it's not a real self. It's merely a concept or a misconception, an illusion that this or that is a self and so we need to correct this misconception. We need to straighten it out, to realize that this 'self,' this 'I' is merely a concept and nothing more. That there is no identity of self or essence of self or reality of self behind the concept. To see it as just a concept and nothing more one stops attaching to it as being real, as being really 'me,' the real 'me.' One can then stop attaching to it. When one stops attaching to this concept of 'self,' then all the *dukkha*, all the heaviness that this attachment brings will then just disappear and then life becomes free.

When life is free in this way, there is just life. There is the body, natural and

simple, there is the mind functioning properly. There is merely body and mind. There is no need for a third thing, some self or soul to be clung to. Just the two are enough for life. Life gets on just fine, fine with body and mind. We don't need anything extra.

As you can remember from yesterday, one extreme view is the insistence that there *is* self, there is self, everything is self, that there are these lasting even eternal selves. That is one extreme. The other extreme is that there is nothing, that nothing exists, that nothing ever did exist. There is just the view of nihilism [that] is the other extreme.

But in the middle not quite between but above these two wrong views is the right one. Which is that there is this concept of 'self.' We say 'self,' 'self,' 'self.' There is this concept of 'self' but it isn't a real self. You can use the concept but you can't find any essence or real self that can be clung to as self.

This is called 'the middle way' or 'the middle teaching.' There is a self which is not a real self, the self which is not-self, to see that there is merely this concept but no real self.

It's time now to look at where this misconception arises from, where does this misunderstanding of self, this misconcept, where does it come from?

The concept of 'self' arises out of the ignorant feelings of being positive and being negative. Whenever there is this feeling of something being positive or something being negative that is inherently ignorant. This is not feeling that comes from seeing things as they are. It comes from fundamental misunderstanding. Once there is feeling of positive this develops into a positive ego. When there is feeling of negative this grows into a negative ego.

The positive ego wants the positive, wants more positive, wants to have it and keep it. The negative ego wants to get rid of the negative, wants to get rid of or destroy, or whatever. So once these feelings of positive & negative occur they lead to different forms of ego, positive egos & negative egos.

So this in very simple terms is how the self, how the ego gets stirred up or gets created.

When there are none of these feelings of positive & negative, there is no positive & negative ego, there is no self. When there is no self, life has no problems. There is nothing heavy about life and then we say that life is free, life is liberated. Everything is fine, everything is cool. This is the meaning of

liberation, when there is nothing positive or negative, when there is no ego or self.

There's the body and the mind that's all that's actually present, and in this body there is a nervous system and the mind or consciousness is able to experience things through the nervous system or is able to experience the information received by the nervous system. All around are various objects, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches which are stimulating the nervous system constantly.

Every time the nervous system is stimulated in some way, that then is experienced by the mind. When these things are being... when the nervous system is stimulated in one way or another and is experienced, then due to ignorance this is distinguished as being 'positive' or 'negative.' This is how things work. Things are distinguished, positive & negative and so thus the feelings of positive & negative arise.

Now, all of this happens purely naturally. It doesn't require any self, soul, spirit, ghost, whatever, for these things to operate. They're merely natural mechanisms. So things function in this way, just because there is a body with a nervous system and mind. With these they are able to happen. With these two things, without any need for a third thing.

In ancient times people who didn't understand, who had no knowledge of what we're speaking about believed that there are three things, body, mind, and some third thing, that has been called a 'soul,' a 'spirit,' *ātman*, 'self,' *attā*, or whatever. They believed that if there was experience, there had to be something special behind it all and this gave rise to that belief in some self or soul.

Later when Buddhism came along and said that, 'Look there is really no self involved in all of this. The nervous system can be stimulated and the mind naturally experiences that and then all the other things that happen, this is just happening through body and mind. That's all.'

The mind experiences these things. There is no self or soul in there to do it, who experience all this. But they were unable to understand or accept this because the belief in 'self' was so firm. But Buddhism asks or encourages us to just look, look at things in the most, to observe them and see that fundamentally there is just the body, stimulation by the various sense objects, and then mind is aware, mind knows those experiences. This happens quite naturally, automatically. That's all there is.

Now there is a crucial natural fact that you would do well to observe. That if there is no stimulation of the nervous system, no stimulation of the eyes, ears, nose, etc. feeling (*vedanā*) won't happen. There is no feeling without stimulation of the nervous system. However, once the nervous system is stimulated, whether by the eyes, the ears, or whatever or through the eyes, ears, or whatever, you can't help it, you can't stop it. *Vedanā* happens. You just can't stop it.

There is feeling, as soon as the nervous system is stimulated. Now, here what we are calling 'feeling,' *vedanā*, is very simple. There is basically just two kinds, positive & negative. If the stimulation of the nervous system is comfortable, soothing, attractive, agreeable, then that is called *sukha vedanā* or just 'pleasure.'

If however this stimulation of the nervous system is uncomfortable, disagreeable, painful, that is negative, negative feeling. So once the nervous system is stimulated, we can't help it. There will be either positive or negative feeling.

Now, once we see this fact that without any stimulation of the nervous system, without any sense activity, there is no feeling, then we can start to see that. On the other hand, once there is stimulation, first we see what happens when there is nothing stimulated, then we can watch the stimulation carefully, clearly. That if when the nervous system is stimulated, then there is some kind of feeling, this stimulation is soothing, comfortable, then it is positive feeling. If it is uncomfortable it is negative feeling or painful. Now, if the mind is ignorant, if the mind experiencing this doesn't understand what's going on, then these positive & negative feelings give rise to liking & disliking.

The ignorant mind says 'this is positive.' The ignorant mind takes this to be negative. There is first just the feeling of positive & negative and then, because of ignorance, the mind gets into liking & disliking, loving & hating.

This happens only because of the mind's ignorance. If however there was proper knowledge of how this is working, there is wisdom, then the mind just sees 'oh, this is just feeling, it's just feeling.' There is nothing positive nor negative about this feeling. It just happens. It's just a natural response to the sense activity. And that's all.

And if there is wisdom in the mind, there is no need for liking & disliking and the ego and suffering that comes from liking & disliking.

For the embryo, when we were all embryos or just fetuses in our mothers'

wombs, at first there wasn't really a nervous system. There wasn't a functioning nervous system and therefore there was no feeling and there was no liking & disliking. So there was no *dukkha*. But once the fetus developed enough, once the nervous system developed, some point there became an infant with a working nervous system. And then when that nervous system, fully functional nervous system was stimulated, then feelings could happen.

When the feelings occurred, then they were discriminated into the categories of positive & negative. This is the starting point, this is the basis for *dukkha*, for suffering in all religions. This is the starting point of all suffering – when the feelings are discriminated.

So in Buddhism we give a lot of importance to the *vedanā*, the feelings. When there is no feeling, there is no positive & negative, and so there is nothing to get, to make an ego out of, and so there is nothing, there is no problems in life. Without ego there is no problems, there is no heaviness, there is no strife, tensions, stress, no *dukkha*.

But as soon as there is feeling, if the mind is ignorant, it discriminates positive, negative, liking, disliking, and then the ego and all the problems, the heaviness, the conflict and turmoil of ego is born.

So we say that *vedanā* is the starting point of suffering and we give a lot of attention to these feelings, the natural feelings of positive & negative towards sense experience when our nervous systems are stimulated. This is something we must understand through our own observation and experience.

The fetus grows, the nervous system develops, and then the fetus or the infant is born. When the infant is born its nervous system begins to function and that means it begins to experience the world. It begins to experience things. For example, one of the first things to experience is the mother's breast and milk which is naturally delicious and good for the infant.

So this is [30:33 ??]... so then positive feeling, to drink the milk is comforting for the infant, so positive feeling arises. But if something else gets in its mouth, it might be uncomfortable or painful and the infant cries. Or if the infant opens its eyes, and then it sees something soothing or attractive it smiles, it sees something unattractive or frightening it cries.

And so there is the custom of putting all kinds of beautiful and soothing things around the baby's crib, and even to play soft, soothing music, and to make sure

that everything smells fragrant and nice, flowery, and then to keep the baby in warm, soft, clothing and blankets. So that there is nothing but soothing, pleasing stimulations. And so at this point the baby is learning what pleases it and what displeases it. 'I like this' or liking, disliking. And so positive & negative starts right here, with the liking & disliking.

They are just the basic feelings of agreeable, disagreeable, comfortable, uncomfortable start at first, and then the mind experiences these, and then there is liking & disliking, positive & negative.

Now, the mind that experiences this is just the same ordinary mind, just the element of consciousness which is inherent in life. There is no need for a self, for a spirit or something to experience these feelings, to concoct the positive & negative. It happens naturally.

This is all something that we need to study. It's very important for us, to scientifically, systematically study how our senses work – to study the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind sense. What these senses are, how they are stimulated by their objects, forms, sounds, odors, flavors, touches, and mental objects.

And then to study feelings, these positive & negative, pleasant & unpleasant reactions when the nervous system is stimulated.

So we study the nervous system and the feelings that arise depending on the nervous system. We study it very carefully and we see that this happens without requiring any self. There are merely natural mechanisms. Once the nervous system is stimulated, then there are the feelings – positive & negative.

Because of ignorance the mind takes the positive feelings to be 'good.' Whenever there is positive feeling we say 'good, good, good.'

And when the feeling is negative or when it is unpleasant, we say 'evil, bad, evil.'

This is how good & evil arises. It's how the ignorant mind labels these positive & negative feelings. So this is how this problem of good & evil which will trouble us for our entire lives usually, occurs.

Then another name for all of this is 'original sin' or 'eternal sin.' When there is taking just the ordinary feelings to be good, to be evil, this can be considered the original sin. If one doesn't understand this, one will not be able to end

suffering. If one does not understand this, regarding things as good & evil, then it is not possible to quench *dukkha*, to end suffering. But if one sees this and understands it, one sees what this so-called 'original sin' is and how it works, then one is able to end suffering.

Now we spend our whole lives hungry for the positive. We hunger for the positive and we're afraid of the negative. We hate the negative and are afraid of it, so we spend our lives being tormented and burdened by our hunger for the positive and our hatred and fear of the negative.

For example when you receive a telegram, as we open the telegram our hands shake because there is both the desire for the positive, our hunger for something positive and our hatred and fear of something negative and so our hands shake as we open the telegram. Being kind of burnt on both sides by both positive & negative. When there is this positive & negative, there is no peace because the mind is being shaken and rattled by this positive & negative. There is no peace, the mind isn't calm and still. And so there is no real happiness. There is just the hunger for the positive and the hatred and fear of the negative

There is peace, there is real happiness only when there is no positive & negative, when the mind is free of this hunger & fear, then it is calm, quiet, and peaceful. This peacefulness is blissfulness or happiness.

The way to find this is to be free of this positive & negative, to be free of the hunger & the fear. When we take a test, when as students or civil servants or whatever, when we take a test, as we take the test we are tormented all the time by both positive & negative, by our hunger for positive results & our fear for negative results. Or when we do any work in this world, we are tormented simultaneously by our hunger for positive results, for getting something good from our work & our fear of any negative or bad results.

For most of us, just about everything we do is tormented by both our hunger for the positive & our fear of the negative and this happens over and over again in just about everything we do. But we should look carefully and we will see that sometimes, occasionally, if just by accident or just coincidence, there will be moments when the mind is free of this torment. We're not just talking about when the torment is relatively subtle, when it is not happening on the usual crude level.

We're talking about when the moments when there is no positive and no negative in the mind at all and you'll see that those moments are the moments when there is real peace, when there is genuine peace and happiness. That

moment the mind... when the mind is... when there is no problems you'll find that that's the moment when you feel there is no sense of anything being a problem or any burden. Everything is free, wide open, light.

We should study these moments because they are very important. They show us what is possible. Or maybe because we've begun to understand how these things work and have begun to practice according to this understanding so that there are more of these moments where the mind is free of positive & negative, no longer tormented by the hunger, hatred, and fear.

And then we see, we can begin to see what real peace is, what real happiness is. But in our modern world we are totally infatuated with the positive. Entire nations and economies are now dedicated to the positive. Our economies produce nothing but consumer junk – notice we call them 'consumer goods,' consumer 'positives' – in order to feed this hunger. But the hunger, there is always this fear that it won't be good enough or that it will break or get lost. And so now we are so dedicated to the positive, our hunger for it is so obsessive that it keeps us plunged in this torment of hunger, hatred, and fear.

But if we can start to understand what's taking place and how these things work, then we can begin to practice. We can practice in a way so that we understand, and instead of getting caught up into this positive & negative, the liking & disliking, the hunger, hatred, and fear, one can see it as it is and allow the mind to remain peaceful. The peacefulness is there if we'll let it be

So it's very important to study these things if we seek peace, if we seek an end to suffering.

These things we're talking about don't depend on any religion, they don't belong to any religion. These are just what happens naturally. All the religions in one way or another aim to help us deal with this situation. Some of the religions talk about it in very human terms, very... in terms of selves and egos, and this makes it very difficult to understand the real underlying mechanisms because there is all this talk about selves and soul and all that.

Other religions talk in very abstract Dhamma, technical Dhamma language and this can be very difficult to understand. Still, all the religions are in their way aiming to help us to be free of suffering, the suffering of this hunger, hatred, and fear regarding the positive & the negative. And if we can understand and end or quench this positive & negative, this is the meaning of freedom or salvation in all the religions.

We can put it in much more brief terms. When the mind is above and beyond all positive & negative in Buddhism that is called ‘Nibbāna.’ That is called ‘the realization of Nibbāna.’

In Christianity it is called ‘to be united with God,’ when the mind is beyond all influence of positive & negative. We call it Nibbāna. One can call it ‘union with God.’ You can call it what you want. You can belong to whatever religion you want, you don’t have to change that. We ask only one thing, to be above, beyond all of the power of positive & negative. That’s all we ask.

Now, we’re talking about this in order to show you that both positive & negative equally cause suffering. The positive makes us hungry and this hunger is suffering, is *dukkha*. The negative leads to hatred and fear which is also suffering. So both positive & negative are identical in the sense that they both equally cause suffering.

But if one is above, if the mind is beyond this positive & negative, which means just removing, removing the positive & the negative from the mind, then there is no suffering.

So by just this one little thing, by merely removing positive & negative one has all the religions, all the great and marvelous religions. You’ll have them all, whichever you prefer or the whole kit and caboodle of them just by removing this positive & negative.

Now, we are not speaking just out of a kind of nationalism, but we’d like to talk a little bit about Asia. To this West of Asia where the Jews, in Palestine, this extreme western edge of Asia and there very long ago the Jews untethered the deep understanding that one should not attach to good & evil. This appears in the very first pages of the Jewish Bible. If you don’t realize this, then you ought to go and study it. But at the very beginning of the Bible is the teaching to not attach to good & evil.

On the other extreme of Asia, in the Far East, in China, Taoism taught essentially the same thing, to not attach to *yin & yang* – *yin & yang* or positive & negative. And then in the middle, in India, both Hinduism and Buddhism were teaching roughly the same thing. In Hinduism, not to attach to *punya & pāpa*, which would be good & evil, we could translate them; in [Thai] Buddhism, not attach to *kuson & akuson*. *Kuson* is what is wholesome and good, *akuson* is what is unwholesome, unhealthy or in short positive & negative.

This is the most profound understanding humanity has come across and it was understood across Asia more than 2,000 years ago. Unfortunately since then things have deteriorated. Because of steady material development, people have been more and more distracted away from this wisdom and have more and more forgot it and ignored it. But 2,000 something years ago this knowledge was known across, throughout Asia.

In Europe this never seems to have been known. The Greeks never spoke of this. The philosophy of the Greeks was primarily concerned with material things, with education and politics, and material science. So the philosophy of the Greeks is rather childish, rather immature, although it is quite useful for dealing with material things and so it has its use. Actually it is quite a shame that these two branches, or approaches never quite met. Because with the western, the western facility, which is still very dualistic and all that for dealing with material things, and science, and politics, and economics and the Asian understanding of the mind and of the highest truth, the truth that one should not attach to positive & negative – that good & evil are not worth attaching to – if these two could meet, had met, or would meet, then we could, we could have the material progress. We could make use of these material goods without attaching to them as positive & negative.

So this is a little history of Asian thought that once was well understood that positive & negative should not be attached to but unfortunately in our heavily developed world this wisdom has deteriorated until in most places it is forgotten and ignored and people have no clue about it.

Now we must ask you straight. Have we gotten worse than our ancestors? Are we worse, have we... have things deteriorated since our ancestors' times? Chasing after the positive is not peaceful. There's nothing calm or peaceful about it. The negative disturbs and frightens us. There is nothing peaceful about it. So what have we got nowadays? Are we worse than our ancestors? Please consider this carefully, sincerely. If you do, you'll understand the situation that we are in.

Now we have got all kinds of machines that are designed to produce positive things. Things that will give us or bring us, or the positive will make us positive. We've got many of these machines, whole systems and organizations and institutions set up for just this one purpose, to give us the positive, more and more positive.

But the thing is, the more we hunger for the positive, the more we fear the negative, the larger, the stronger our hunger for the positive and the more we've

got the positive, the greater we fear that we'll lose it or that it will just diminish a little bit. Our hunger is so strong that we have great fear that our positive will just drop a little bit.

The standard of living has to keep going up. Nobody is willing to let it go down to a reasonable level. So this is the world we have. One where we are, we will become more and more trapped by the positive & the negative and so there is more and more turmoil, competition. There is no rest. There is so much hunger and fear that nobody has a chance to rest, always running around somewhere, trying to get more positive, afraid we will get some negative. We are deceived and diluted by this positive & negative.

These things, the positive & negative trick us so much that we are very confused. We're so tricked by the positive, the positive tricks us so much that we are addicted to it without even knowing it. We've got a very strong addiction to the positive without even a clue that this has happened. Nowadays people are very afraid, very concerned about drugs such as heroin, but nobody is concerned about the far greater more powerful and worse addiction, of addiction to the positive. We are afraid of nuclear bombs, of nuclear war but nobody is afraid of the far more dangerous and present fear of the negative.

What's truly frightening, what's really causing us problems right now is the negative and our fear of it. So both the positive & the negative are our greatest problems today. So it's very appropriate that you have come here to find understanding about living above the positive & negative, coming here with the purpose of knowing how to live free of the positive & the negative.

The positive gives rise to ego, to self. The negative gives rise to self. When there is a positive self, it seeks more and more positive and so it becomes more and more infatuated with, more and more addicted to the negative or to the positive.

The negative ego more and more fears and hates the negative and so it becomes more and more attached to the negative – more and more 'detached' you could say – and this negative ego grows and grows, more and more obsessed and afraid of the negative.

When there is these obsessions and addictions, it makes life very troublesome, full of problems, confused, complicated, stressful. So it's time to just throw it all away. To find some way to just throw away, all this positive & negative, all this self, all the ego, to toss it away and be free. This is the art of living, the

understanding that allows us to throw away all this positive & negative, all the self, all the ego, in order to be free.

Now we come to the one single word that expresses the heart of the problem, this word is 'attachment.' When there is attachment to the positive, there is attachment in a positive way, in order to have more, to get more, to keep. When there is attachment in a negative way, to the negative, to get rid of or fear or something, you should see that attachment to the negative is equal to attachment to the positive. Don't think that attachment is just to things you love, there is just as much attachment to negative things, the things you don't like, the things you hate, the things you are afraid of. Positive & negative are the basis for attachment. This is the core of our problem. This is what we must find the means to remove.

To carry a load of bricks is very heavy, to carry a load of diamonds is just as heavy. Why bother carrying either? Why go around lugging a bunch of bricks or a bunch of diamonds? Why not just drop them and be light and free? If we attach to the positive it's one kind of burden; attaching to the negative is another kind of burden. Either way they are heavy and troublesome. But we can just let go and be free. Why bother attaching to positive & negative?

So it's very good, it's very correct that you have come here and in order to practice mindfulness, to practice mindfulness in the system called *ānāpānasati* (mindfulness with breathing in and out). Through practicing this way you will develop very good mindfulness, and then with that mindfulness one pays attention to things, to the things in one's own life until one understands them, and so this mindfulness leads to understanding or wisdom. The kind of wisdom we have been talking about the last couple of days.

And then mindfulness will keep the mind or keep life on the right track and there will be... and then through this practice you will develop *samādhi* (the stable focused concentrated mind) which provides the strength and energy to do this, to keep the mind on the right track. So through practicing correctly there is mindfulness, wisdom, and concentration. When we have these, when these are sufficient and strong enough, then there is no attachment to the positive & the negative. When there is no attachment, there is nothing heavy. There is no ego, no self and so there is no suffering, no *dukkha*.

And then one is free. One is liberated. That liberation is to dwell in Nibbāna, to live in Nibbāna or to live with God. Whether your goal is to live in Nibbāna or to live with God, your wish will be fulfilled in this way. So it is that we can live

above all influence of positive & negative. We can be, have, live, do all the things that need to be done as are appropriate. Everything that is necessary and proper, correct, can be done, had, related to, concerned and so on. If the mind is beyond, above all influence of positive & negative, then there will be no *dukkha*, no pain, no suffering.

For those of you... most of you here are lay people and that means that you can even reproduce the species. And if the mind knows how to be above the influences of positive & negative, then even that can be done without any suffering, without any *dukkha*. And what is there better in life than that, to be able to do all the things that need to be done, to be, to have, to relate, to concern, to live, all the things that are necessary and right, even to reproduce without suffering, without *dukkha*?

It may seem rather strange but when there is life without self, when there is life without any self or ego, then there is no death. When there is the self, when there is some self, then there is death, but when there is no self, there is nothing to die. They seem kind of strange but this is this is where deathlessness or immortality is found. When there is no self there is no death.

So if one has the wisdom that everything is not-self, that there is life but this life is not really self, if one has this wisdom, then there is no way for *dukkha* to arise. There is no death. If one has this wisdom and then has the mindfulness to live in and with this wisdom. There is always the mindfulness to keep the mind aware that there is nothing worth attaching to as self, that there is nothing worth grabbing onto as self.

Then no suffering can arise. So living with mindfulness, having this mindfulness is central. If we have time we will speak later about having this mindfulness. But for today our time is up and we'll have to finish the talk. So finally thank you for being patient listeners. If we hadn't chosen the best time of day... but we chose the time when the mind is most open, fresh and receptive.

So thank you for coming. We hope that even if you came here as tourists you will be able to leave as pilgrims with something, the most valuable thing in life, in your backpacks. So thank you.

• • • • •

Transcribed by Guykaro Metta (*guykaro_metta@fellowdesigns.com*) in July-Nov. 2016
Audio files: 5125330905020.mp3 & 1990-09 (2) The way of Buddhist art.mp3

© Liberation Park, 2016

