

Training the Mind for Buddhist Art

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

A Dhamma lecture given at Suan Mokkh on 10 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).

In our first talk we spoke about Buddhist art. In the second talk we discussed the way of entering into Buddhist art. Today we will speak about training the mind in order to have and use Buddhist art.

It's an art to train successfully and then it's to use that beneficially, it is an even greater art.

So there is art in both the training, to train successfully and the highest art then is in using it beneficially in everyday ordinary life.

We can say, put this briefly, by saying it's the art of using our breathing advantageously in all the responsibilities and work of our everyday life. To train so that we can use the breathing beneficially in all the responsibilities and activities of ordinary life.

We can look at this from two perspectives or in two aspects: that of being a body of knowledge and understanding, a body of human knowledge or we can look at it as being culture, a culture which comes down to us from very ancient times.

We can say this because when we look through the history of using the breath, of meditating with the breath, we see references to very ancient times. Even in the earliest times when humanity was first making progress in culture or in its development, our primitive ancestors, living in the forests and caves,

were able to make use of the breathing on a certain level, on the level appropriate to that stage of development. Part of this knowledge of the breathing is rather instinctual. That it's quite easy for the human being to know that certain kinds of breathing give us strength and energy which can come in very handy in the struggle of life. And so, based on that, human beings have struggled to gain some mastery over the breathing and use it to their benefit. And then the times came when certain men would go off into the forest, into the wild, as hermits and ascetics and such things, and these men would meditate and explore quite deeply the possibilities of the breathing until they understood it more and more deeply, until it became a certain science, a particular branch of knowledge of humanity.

This knowledge and understanding of the breathing then developed further until reaching its highest point or state in the Buddha's time. But this isn't to say that this was only the Buddhists who understood this. This knowledge and practice with the breathing was very widespread. All the different religious groups and spiritual seekers had knowledge of this. It was widespread and widely put into practice, it wasn't just limited to the Buddhists. Now, when it was in general usage the common or neutral term for this body of knowledge was *prāṇāyāma* (to control the breathing, mastery of the breathing). And this was being used for training the mind for certain religious or mental benefits. This knowledge developed to its highest point in Buddhism and has since then come to be known, or in this one particular form has come to be known as *ānāpānasati bhāvanā* (development of the mind through mindfulness with breathing in and out). These various practices with the breathing were then put into their highest form, the most scientific and systematic approach and then since then no one has been able to come up with a better usage of the breathing. So we say that the highest development of this breath science, breathing science came in the Buddha's time.

Please understand that this is a science but it's a science of the mind. Nowadays when we think of science, we almost always think of material science, physical science, to the point of which we think of science is merely about material things. But one should be aware that science is also a science of the mind such as this mindfulness with breathing is science. But it is not just of the mind because life also includes the body so there must be some proper understanding of the body as well. So this is the kind of science we're talking

about. Please understand that mindfulness with breathing is a kind of science. It has the method and the systematicness of a science.

When we speak of science, we generally mean something that will bring us certain material benefits. When we think of science we think of something that is going to uncover material benefits for us. But when we speak of art we speak of something that has to do with beauty, it has to do with balance and harmony with great subtlety, refinement, and skill. So art is something higher, more refined, more beautiful than science and so we speak of mindfulness with breathing then as an art.

Science aims at material benefits. But art aims at beauty, at subtlety, at refinement. This is what mindfulness with breathing is about. It's an art of living in this world in the way that brings the best results. However, it's possible to use both the art and the science together. We can bring them together in ourselves, in our way of living, so that we have both the science and the art. We can have these in the way we live our lives – both science and art. We can have a life which is *ānāpānasati*, a life which is mindfulness with breathing all the time. In this way our life will become both a science and an art. It's possible to have a life which is governed and protected by mindfulness with breathing all the time. We need to train ourselves to this level.

Our lives are filled with thinking, speaking, and acting. We use these three words as a basic way of explaining and examining what we do in life. We think, we speak, and we act.

We need to think, speak, and act and deal with our thinking, speaking, and acting by having mindfulness all the time. Our way of dealing with these basic activities of life is to be mindful. And we can do this through mindfulness with breathing.

Now, one can have *ānāpānasati* all the time when one's thoughts, speech, and actions are always done with mindfulness of breathing in and out. If all our thoughts, speech, and actions are done with this mindfulness of breathing in and out, if one is well-practiced, well-versed, expert in this, then our lives will be lived through this mindfulness with breathing.

Now, if one isn't extremely well-practiced in mindfulness with breathing, then it won't be possible to have it with one all the time. So it's necessary to

keep practicing, to practice, to review, to train in this over and over again. Until one reaches the level of expertise where one has this mindfulness with breathing, where one lives through, with and through mindfulness with breathing. This is something that you won't be able to do in just ten days. It's something that we all must continue to be working on, continue developing until we reach the necessary level of expertise.

Next we will speak about the way of training and developing this understanding and skill. We will talk about the techniques of doing so. You can think of this as being a kind of technology but it's not the ordinary materialistic kind of technology that we are most familiar with. It's a technology of the mind and we can develop and make the most of this mental technology. This is what we will be speaking about henceforth.

The overall practice of mindfulness with breathing is broken up into four areas or four basic subjects of life. The first is the breathing. The second are the feelings (the *vedanā*). The third is the mind (the *citta*) itself, and fourth are all the things which surround life (*dhamma*). These are the four fundamental subjects of our practice and investigation of life. The *kāya* (body), the *vedanā*, feelings, the *citta*, mind, heart, and *dhamma*. We should understand these four words correctly in order that we will ensure a proper study and practice.

In the first area of practice we train with the breathing. We work with the breathing until we can use the breathing to master the body. Although we train with the breathing, we will develop mastery over the body so that this body is very strong and is perfectly active. We can get the best kind of body for our purposes through training with the breathing.

In the second area of practice we train with the feelings. We train and study with the feelings until we become masters over them. Being masters of the feelings means that they don't get out of control and they have no ability to cause problems for us. So we work with the feelings until we can master them, especially to have mastery over the feeling of excitement. When excitement is out of control, when it's in charge, we become very stupid but when we can master this feeling of excitement, then it won't have the ability to make us foolish.

So this second area is to gain mastery over the feelings, especially feelings of excitement. If we can't control excitement, then the results will be mindlessness. When we get excited we lack mindfulness and when there isn't

mindfulness then we fall too much under the power of the positive & the negative and then our mind gets into very foolish circumstances, what we call the defilements of greed, anger, and delusion. And then this leads us into all the different kinds of problems that we meet in life. This is what brings on *dukkha*. This is an example of how important it is to master the feelings. If we don't master the feelings, then it is impossible to be truly mindful, and then we fall too much under the power of the positive & negative.

So in this second area of study, we practice with the feelings until we understand them and gain mastery, until we become masters of the feelings.

In the next area of our practice we work with the mind directly. When the mind is correct, then everything is correct and when the mind is wrong, then everything goes wrong. So now we study and practice with the mind until we have mastery over it. When the mind has self-mastery, when there is this mastery over the mind, then the mind can be kept always right. The mind will always be proper and fitting, as it needs and should be. This is how we become masters of the mind.

The fourth area is to study and train with all the things that surround us, which here is called *dhamma*. This means all the things that surround us. These are all the things which can be the basis of attachment, all the things which are ready to deceive us and trick us into attaching to them. These here are all called *dhamma*. Now, Dhamma the way it is used in this case isn't the Dhamma which is the correct practice, the doing of our duty that allows us to live in the world without *dukkha*. This is another meaning. The meaning of *dhamma* that means everything, all the things, all the natures which surround us and which we attach to.

In this area now we train and study all of these things. We practice with them until they have no ability to trick us into attachment, then the mind is above all these things, the mind has mastery over all these things which surround us, to the point where they can no longer trick us.

We can summarize all of this by saying, one becomes master, one gains mastery over all these things, one gains mastery over the body, one gains mastery over the feelings, one gains mastery over the mind itself, and finally one gains mastery over all the things that surround us.

In short, one becomes master of everything. One has mastery over all things and therefore there is nothing which can become a problem for us. There isn't anything which can cause problems or difficulties for us when there is this mastery. We won't be enslaved by anything. Nothing can enslave us into problems, into *dukkha*.

Another meaning of this mastery and implications of it is 'being victorious.' One of the names of the Buddha is the Victorious One which means the Buddha was victorious over all the low, harmful, and deceitful things, which are called *māra*, all the temptations in life. The Buddha was victorious over them and mindfulness with breathing was his means to victory. And so to be master, to gain this mastery is to be victorious over all these things so that none of them can trick us or deceive us into anything low, harmful, or dangerous.

Now, many of you have heard of the Buddha's explanation of the word 'Buddha' – the one who knows, who is awake, who has blossomed fully. You can see probably then that this could not happen without being victorious. One knows and then wakes up and then from waking up there is this blossoming, to bloom, to blossom fully with life, in life. How could that happen without victory? Without victory what could blossom, how could there be any blossoming?

And so one of the essences of the word 'Buddha' is this victory, this quality of being victorious. The question now is whether you understand the meaning of victory and defeat. We're worried that you don't understand what victory is, and then you, by default are quite satisfied and content with defeat. If we don't know what victory is then we will settle for defeat and even think that we are quite well off in our status as slaves in servitude.

Defeat means to surrender to, to be satisfied with, to be content with all the kinds of sensual pleasures, with all the sexual pleasures. When we take satisfaction in such things, this is to surrender to them or to be defeated by them. When we do so then the mind is under the power of positive & negative. To be victorious is to not just let the mind go, being satisfied with and content with all these things, to not let the mind just fall for all the positive & negative things which surround us, but to be above these things, this is what victory means. So we must understand, understand what is meant, if we're going to have a choice between victory and defeat. Otherwise, we just settle for defeat,

laughing at the positive, crying at the negative, under the mercy of these positive/negative things, in servitude, in slavery.

We live in a world that is full of industry, that worships industry and technology, that produces all kinds of things that are designed to defeat us. Our modern world is full of positive & negative things. Our economies are dedicated to producing positive things in order to defeat us. When we live in a world like this, a world that is full of, cramped full of positive things which are meant to attract us, deceive us, and defeat us to the point where we're always being bounced around, sometimes with greet, sometimes with anger, sometimes fear, other times excitement. This is the way the world is. This is the way people seem to want the world to work.

But this is the world that we live in, the world that we must live in. If we have no choice then we need some means to be victorious, to raise ourselves above all of that, lots of all that chaos and strife, to be above this obsessive worship of the positive which we find in our modern or so-called modern world. We need some form to be victorious over the four areas of life, the body, the feeling, the mind, and dhamma. Mindfulness with breathing is our means to victory.

Now we will talk about the way of practicing *ānāpānasati*, mindfulness with breathing. The first thing we must do is prepare ourselves. In order to practice we must be ready, so we will prepare our bodies, our living situation, our food, our clothing, our lifestyle and so on. We prepare ourselves so things are orderly, so things are balanced and peaceful. We refrain from doing things which will interfere with our practice. We don't go wandering the streets at night. We put aside addictive substances. We cease sexual relations and so on. All the things which make our minds chaotic and restless, we put aside. We prepare our physical situations and our lifestyle. We live in a proper discipline and restraint in order to prepare ourselves for practice.

For example, when you come here, you stay over at the meditation center which has been set up for just these purposes, to provide sufficient conditions for practice. So while you are here, please make proper use of the facilities and stay within the discipline that is asked of you. This will enable you to be, to prepare yourself to be physically and mentally ready to practice mindfulness with breathing.

Discipline is very important and necessary for our practice. To have disciplinary rules and regulations is necessary. So please understand these. Understand their necessity and follow them wholeheartedly so that you are ready and able to practice correctly.

The next thing we need to prepare are our bodies, to prepare our noses with which we breathe, and to prepare our breathing so that all these things are in order.

To have a proper nose, to have a clean nose is very useful to make our breathing easy and free.

The next thing we need to have is a suitable place. We need to find a place that is relatively free of disturbances. You won't find a place that is perfectly free of disturbances. One shouldn't be so attached to perfect conditions. One merely need to find a place that is quiet and peaceful enough.

Then the next thing to prepare is our posture. For practice we need a suitable posture, especially one that is stable. We need a secure, firm posture. One that won't fall over. One that will support us as we practice. Now, there are postures which are too tense, which are too forced, and then there are those which are too loose. One needs to find the appropriate posture. One shouldn't force it too much, or be too loose, too easy-going.

Traditionally the posture that is recommended is the lotus posture. Although for some of us it's not yet proper. Some of us can't yet sit that way comfortably but we should give attention to developing a proper posture, one that is very secure and stable, one that is convenient, physically and mentally. As we develop this proper posture then it makes our practice easier and things go more smoothly with less difficulties.

The Chinese have the same difficulty as the Europeans. They have grown up sitting on chairs and so they find it difficult to sit on the floor. So the Chinese have tried to deal with this by meditating on chairs, however, the results have not been very good and so the serious meditators then learnt to sit in what they call the Indian style.

The Chinese refer to the meditation posture as the Indian style or Indian posture. This is something that once you try it, you will see how firm and stable it is. Instead of wobbling on a chair, one sits firmly with one's legs folded in front of one and then you can put your hands on your knees. If you do this,

you'll see that it is very stable. It's impossible to fall over. If you sit in the right posture, even if the mind becomes... [?? 36.40] or unconscious or the mind goes into the subconscious, you still won't fall over because this posture is so naturally stable. This is the posture that is recommended for ease and convenience in practice.

We'd like to take a little time to examine some fine points of posture. We once saw a picture in the National Geographic magazine of someone sitting in the diamond posture. We would like to speak most of all about the diamond posture in which each foot is on the opposite thigh and then one's hands can be on the knees in front. There is a picture of a carving in rock which is at least 4 to 5,000 years old of this. The original is probably in a museum somewhere. We think that this may have originally originated in Egypt and then came to India but the Indians have known how to sit in this way for 4,000 or more years. It's a very ancient and important posture.

Now, some people feel that this is too strain and so they prefer to sit on chairs but to sit in a chair is a little bit too loose, a bit too sloppy. It's important to develop a posture which is more convenient and reliable. So we would like you to now take a close look at the diamond posture. Please watch me. Traditionally the diamond posture is considered the ideal posture. It's the most stable, the most balanced and so on but some people find it to strained or too difficult.

We'd like to advise another posture, which is neither sloppy nor strained. Instead of sitting with each foot on the opposite thigh as in the diamond posture (and you can watch as we do this), you put one foot on the other thigh and then the other foot under the knee, then instead of trying to make yourself sit up perfectly straight, you can take each hand and hold it on your cheeks. Just cradle your face in your hands in a comfortable way and then you can bend down and put each elbow... you put one elbow in the instep of your foot and you can put the other elbow on your knee. If your [right] foot is on your left thigh like I'm sitting, then your left elbow goes in the instep of that foot and then the right elbow on the knee. In this posture, if you try it, it is possible to relax completely. One can be very relaxed and still one is completely stable. It's a very firm posture. In the diamond posture you can't fall over and that's true of this one because you've got your arms to prop you up. You can't fall over. It is very comfortable. If you want, you can even sleep quite comfortably in this posture.

Now, this way of sitting is not in the classical texts. It's not an officially sanctioned meditation posture and so some people will call me a heretic for advising it. But nonetheless it's a middle way it's neither sloppy nor loose. You can sit this way and you can focus on your breathing in any way you need to. This way of sitting doesn't interfere with the breathing. It's still possible to breathe freely and to be mindful of the breathing. So this way of sitting has all the necessary ingredients of firmness, stability. One is able to relax and it doesn't interfere with the breathing.

So if you prefer the diamond posture you are free to sit like that, but if you'd like you can try this other way of sitting.

There is one secret we left out but it's crucial. One must maintain a straight back, or specifically the spine must be straight. So whatever way one sits, one must keep the spine straight. And if you want to sit in this new way that we have advised. first sit with a straight spine and then as you bend down, make sure you bend from the hips or from the lower back. Don't just droop the shoulders in a lazy way but bend from the hips so that one keeps the spine straight. Then if the spine is kept straight as you sit, the lungs will hang freely and the breathing won't be interfered with.

So whatever way we sit, to give the breathing the most freedom and comfort, we must keep the spine straight. So you have the freedom to choose whichever posture works best for you, the one that is most comfortable, most stable, most relaxed, which is neither too tense nor too loose. You have the freedom to choose what works best for you.

Now the next thing is to become mindful of the breathing, to establish our awareness on the breathing. We use the words 'be aware' of the breathing or 'pay attention' to the breathing but the purpose here is to study, to thoroughly investigate the breathing. One must understand the words 'pay attention' with sufficient detail and depth. One doesn't just watch in a kind of lazy or glazed over way but one actually studies, one investigates the breath, all the different possibilities of the breath and how they are. One carefully investigates all the different and all the things associated with the breathing. The Buddha used the word *sikkhati*. *Sikkhati* means to study, to train, to work with something thoroughly in order to understand it completely. So please understand the words 'awareness' or 'pay attention to' comprehensively as we have explained.

So we study all the different kinds of breathing. We investigate the long breathing and the short breathing, the coarse breathing and the smooth subtle breathing. One carefully pays attention to, in order to investigate, until one knows these different kinds of breathing inside out. Note here, we study by actually feeling, by actually experiencing these things. One isn't just guessing and estimating by using thought, by figuring of the breathing but one watches it, one experiences it thoroughly. This is how we investigate the breathing, until we come to the point, where we know the nature of the breathing. Now, the essence of this understanding is to observe, to take note of how the different kinds of breathing influence the body.

Every kind of breathing has its particular effect upon our physical bodies and so we must investigate this carefully. To watch how each kind of breath affects, influences, changes the body until we realize more and more deeply, through our own experience, not just by thinking but through feeling this, we see how the breath and the body are inseparably interrelated. We see that whichever way the breath goes, the body follows in that way. Until one sees quite clearly that one can change, one can manage the body by using the breathing. This is the thing we must learn from our own experience of breathing in and out.

So in the end we come to realize that there are, we can say 'two bodies' or 'two groups' – the Pāli word here is *kāya* which can mean 'body' or 'group.' There is the flesh body and there is the breath body, and to see that these two are interrelated, that what we call our physical body has this flesh body and this breath body and to see how closely related they are and how the breath body can control the flesh body. In the Pāli the Buddha calls this "*sabba-kāya-paṭisaṃvedī*" which means 'thoroughly experiencing all bodies,' which means this flesh body and the breath body, experiencing them together, how they are interrelated and how the breath body influences the physical flesh body.

Some of the English translations translate the word *sabba* incorrectly. The Buddha clearly used the words *sabba-kāya* which means 'all bodies,' but for some reason, some translators translate it as 'the whole body' although there is no grammatical basis for this translation. *Sabba* means 'all.' It never means 'whole.' So the meaning here is 'all bodies' which is the flesh body and the breath body together. And so experiencing this secret that it's not possible to adjust the flesh body directly. You can't just tell it to be relaxed and calm and peaceful. It doesn't work. But one can adjust the flesh body on a very deep level

using the breath body. As one understands this interrelationship more and more, this secret can be used to calm the flesh body more and more. So this is the secret of the first tetrad, the first four lessons of mindfulness with breathing.

So now we can summarize what we've been saying by saying, one now is master over the body. We have a body which is fresh relaxed, healthy, peaceful. We have just the right body we need for further practice of meditation. This completes the first tetrad.

An important word here is the word *kammanīya* which means 'active.' That we have a body that is ready for further practice of meditation, the body that is fully prepared and ready to be used as we need to.

Now we come to the study of the feelings. The feelings are things we can't help. They just happen. They are happening so we experience them. Now, as we've been practicing all along into gaining mastery over the body. Then it just is natural that various strong feelings will occur. There will be an excited sense of satisfaction which we can call rapture. This occurs, this can occur in a very excited way so that the whole nervous system is shaking and bouncing, kind of hopping. Now, these things will have happened off and on previously, but once we gain mastery over the body then we are able to study these feelings specifically. Now, sometimes this satisfaction is very excited, other times it's very calm, it's much more polite instead of this disorderly shaking. It's much calmer and cooler but still there is kind of a bouncing, bubbling excitement which we can call 'contentment.'

Studying these various degrees and the difference between the very excited, almost out-of-control excited rapture, as well as the more restrained, yet still excited satisfaction is the first aspect of investigating the feelings. When it's still very excited, when there's kind of a trembling all over this is called 'rapture' or in Pāli it's called *pīti*. When this excited trembling or rapture is calmed and cooled down, when there is a calm feeling of joy that is called *sukha* or we can translate it 'contentment.' So understanding these two kinds of pleasant feelings, *pīti* and *sukha*, must be, is the first part of our study here.

Now in ordinary life we see these happy feelings, this *pīti* and *sukha* as fun, as wonderful, as something to get excited about, to throw a party and all of that but in the situation of practicing *ānāpānasati* we see them as things which stimulate, which would stimulate the mind. We put aside our ordinary ideas and opinions about the feelings of these happy feelings as being fun and desirable

and the purpose of our lives. We put that attitude aside and study how these happy feelings excite and stimulate the mind.

Being able to control these feelings means that we can control our thinking. If we have mastery over these feelings, then either we can control thought so that there is no thinking or we can make sure that thought only goes in a way that is useful, which is of value and benefit. If we just let the feelings excite and stimulate the mind, thinking can go all over the place. But if we learn to control the feelings, if we can master them, then we can either stop the thinking or keep the thinking on a beneficial and healthy course. The brief formula here is, we can control the mind by controlling the feelings. We can control the *citta* by controlling the *vedanā*.

Next we come to the *citta*, the mind or the heart. This is to master the mind. This is a very difficult practice, the way of practicing here is quite refined and hard to do.

First, we experience all the different kinds of mind. We experience the mind and the many different forms it takes. Then we put the mind in certain states, we force the mind or we control the mind so that it is in a certain way. This is the essence of training with the mind.

So first we get to know all the different minds that we have experienced, all the different minds that we have experienced in life are likely to come back. We experienced these states, these various states of mind. Not only do we experience these states of mind but we use them to get an understanding of the kind of mind we haven't yet experienced. The mind of the *arahant* (the being who is totally beyond greed, anger and delusion). So for example, when there is lust in the mind, we experience that lustful mind and then we can also begin to kind of estimate or guesstimate what the mind is like when there is no lust. When there is anger, we experience that angry mind and then we can also imagine what the mind is like when there is no anger. The same way with delusion. So we experience the different states of mind that we are used to.

And then we also use this to get an understanding of the mind of the enlightened being. And all of this is for the purpose of understanding the mind.

So we study the mind in these various different states. An example of how we do this is, take for instance love. First, one experiences how love bites the

heart. One feels, one experiences that biting of love and then when this love fades away, one experiences how the mind is, the heart is free of that biting.

These one we can experience directly and then one also can get an understanding of what it would be like when love cannot arise ever again, when this erotic or attached love can never happen again. How peaceful and joyful the mind will be. This is an example of all the different kinds of things that can arise in the mind. To explore them in this way, in order to understand the mind thoroughly.

And once one has studied all these different manifestations of the mind then one trains in mastering the mind. The first way to do this is to delight the mind, to delight the mind with Dhamma, to make the mind delighted, contented, satisfied with things that ought to delight it, which can delight it, make it happy in a safe way. So this is the first way of controlling or mastering the mind.

Then secondly, master it by concentrating it, by making the mind stable, clear, and active.

And then after doing that we gain mastery by liberating the mind, liberating the mind from all the things that it is attached to. These are three ways of mastering the mind.

In short, one is master over the mind. Being master of the mind is something truly wonderful. It's a truly excellent ability. To be master over the mind is to have reached a very high stage of understanding and practice. So one should try to do this, one should give ones effort to this so that one can realize this excellent ability. When there is mastery over the mind then the mind can be maintained in a state of stillness. The mind can be kept in a silence and peacefulness, in correctness. So that nothing can shake it or trouble it, or manipulate it. So this is practicing for mastery of the mind.

After practicing *cittānupassanā* (contemplation of the mind) until there is mastery of the mind, then we move on to *dhammānupassanā* (contemplation of *dhamma*).

This is to gain mastery over all the things which surround us. Ordinarily we look at the things around us as things to like & dislike. But now we see that these are things which deceive us and we practice until we have mastery over all these things so none of them can deceive us anymore.

Now, the thing here is to observe that everything is constantly flowing, that all things are ceaselessly changing. This is to see the fact of impermanence of things. So to get out from under the power of things, the first thing to do is to see their constant change in flow, their impermanence.

Keep watching to see that the impermanent things are unreliable, undependable, that all these things cannot be truly being satisfying. They are imperfect and unsatisfying. Further, they just constantly change according to their causes and conditions, they are under the control of causes and conditions. There is no owner of them, there is no controller. These things are all not-self. So one continues to observe these facts until seeing that they are under the law of nature – they just follow the law of conditionality – that they are void of any ‘self,’ of any ‘I’ or ‘mine.’ They are just what they are, they are just as they are, changing, unreliable, undependable, unownable, void of ‘self.’ Seeing the thusness of them, seeing the *atammayatā* of them, the unconcoctableness of things, this is what we call the ‘Nine *Tas*’ (the nine eyes or insights). This is the first step.

But the crucial point, the starting point is to experience the impermanence of things. If we don’t see, if we don’t realize impermanence in things then we have no chance in going anywhere. The starting point is experiencing impermanence, experiencing it within inner experiences, being more and more aware of the impermanence of inner experiences and to see the impermanence of external things, to become aware of *aniccatā* (the fact, the truth of impermanence) while breathing in and breathing out.

So as we see... the more we see impermanence, the more it just continues to seeing all the other facts about things, their unsatisfactoriness, selflessness, voidness, thusness, and so on. And as this happens we begin to feel a particular awareness or feeling which is the fading away of things.

The attachment we have to things begins to fade away. All these things in our lives and around us that we are attached to, now as we begin to see their impermanence, their selflessness, their voidness, that attachment begins to break up, to dissolve, to fade away.

In short, what happens is, we finally start to see that things don’t listen to us. All these things that we’ve attached to, we think that they are going to listen to us and provide us with what we want. But now we realize that these things go their own way, they have got their own stories to play out and so they go their

own way and they don't listen to us. Seeing this, realizing this more deeply, our attachment to things fades away. We can experience, we can feel this fading away of attachment more and more deeply.

The first lesson of Dhamma is the fact of impermanence and then all the other facts that follow from it.

The second lesson is that of the fading away of attachment (*virāga*).

As attachment fades away, it fades away, it eventually ends. If anything just keeps on fading, eventually it comes to a point where it is gone, where it goes out, this is called *nirodha*, which is the third lesson of Dhamma here.

Experiencing that attachment has ended, where there was once attachment, that attachment has faded away until now it is gone, it's ended, it's quenched. This cessation or ending of attachment is the third lesson here. The meaning of this is freedom. When attachment goes out, the mind is free. There is freedom. There is no positive or negative. There is nothing positive or negative anymore which can trick the mind. Nothing can trick it and enslave it. The mind is then liberated from the prison of attachment. The mind is saved from the prison of ego, the prison of self which has been trapping the mind all along, now the mind has escaped. It is free because attachment has ended, has quenched. Let us add one more lesson to complete this set.

There is a rather strange word here which the Buddha used. It means to 'throw back.' We throw back to its owner. The word is *paṭinissaggā* which is to 'toss back.' Here you can understand the meaning if we use a metaphor. Up until now we've been thieves, we've been stealing all kinds of things. Saying this is 'me,' this is 'mine,' claiming all kinds of things which actually belong to nature, to Dhamma. So thus we are thieves.

But now that attachment has ended, we realized, we stopped claiming these things to be 'I' and 'mine' and so it's like we are tossing them back to their rightful owner, to nature, to Dhamma. This is the final lesson, to toss everything back (*paṭinissaggā*) – sometimes it's translated 'renunciation.'

But it is not just giving *up*, it is giving *back*. It is to fully acknowledge that these are all part of nature, having seen that they are not 'I' or 'mine.' This is the completion. This is to complete our lives. To do this is to fulfill the purpose of our lives. Having done this, we have done everything that an individual life

needs to do. After this it's just all extra credit. But this is to complete the meaning and purpose of our life, to be able to toss everything back to nature.

So to summarize, we practice until we are masters of the body, masters of the feelings, masters of the mind and master over all the things in life, all the things in nature which have deceived us and tricked us into falling for the positive & the negative. This is to accomplish everything in life that needs to be accomplished. This is to have realized, to achieve the most wonderful thing there is, to be master of everything so that nothing can defeat one ever again.

So now you can understand the value and importance of ānāpānasati and have a frame work in which to practice it. Now, you won't be able to accomplish everything we've described in ten days. It is necessary that you take what you have started and continue to practice every day, to keep developing this further and further. So that more and more we have ānāpānasati as our partner in life. To have mindfulness with breathing as our partner so that more and more our lives are above all problems so more and more our lives are free of the tyranny of positive & negative, less and less trapped in ego.

Last of all, we would like to take a look at how ānāpānasati brings us to the art or how it is art.

First it enables us to live with, to exist with things which are constantly changing, without any of those things causing us any dukkha. Ānāpānasati enables us to live with things which are constantly changing without them being a problem.

Further, we can live with things which cannot be attached to. There are all these things that we can't attach to. As soon as we try to attach, they bite, and so now we are able to live with them, with all these things which are impossible to grasp at and cling.

And finally this art enables us to live in a world full of crazy people. Don't take this as being a crude statement, but the world is full of crazy people. People who are crazy with selfishness, obsessed with their own benefit. People who are full of attachment and spend their entire lives just seeking their own benefit. People who are obsessed with selfishness. The world is full of crazy people.

Ānāpānasati will... this art will enable us to live in this world full of crazy people without them being of any danger to us. There's nothing much we can do about it. There are going to be crazy people in this world, no matter what we

try to do and according to the material progress in the world, there will be this craziness, this selfishness and obsession with personal benefit. But this highest art will enable us to live in a world full of crazy people without being harmed by them.

Finally, with this art life won't bite its owner. Our lives will not bite their owners. Then we'll have realized the highest success in life, a life that is, instead of biting itself, a life that is blissful and useful, a life in which there is the highest happiness of true peace and a life then which is free in order to be useful.

When life doesn't bite its owner then there is this highest art of living peacefully, blissfully, usefully.

Last of all, let us thank you, give very special thanks for you being very good listeners. Nonetheless you have been very patient and stayed with us to the end. So we thank you for being good listeners and wish you the greatest success in your practice of mindfulness with breathing. Although you may have come as tourists, may you leave as pilgrims. So thank you once again and may you meet the greatest success in your practice. That closes our final talk.

• • • • •

Transcribed by Guykaro Metta (guykaro_metta@fellowdesigns.com) in Feb.-June 2016
Audio files: 5125330910031 & 5125330910032.mp3 & 1990-09 (3) Training the mind for Buddhist Art.mp3

© Liberation Park, 2016

