Khandha, the Aggregates, as Person and Sati, Awareness

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 48:41

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sambhudassa Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sambhudassa Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sambhudassa

Homage to the Buddha, the blessed, noble and fully self-awakened one.

I thought this evening we'd have a look at the ground upon which the Buddha builds the whole architecture of his teaching: the word *dukkha*. And then to look at the five *khandhas*, which is really a deconstruction of our person, our personhood. And then just see what we mean by *kamma* from that point of view.

This word *dukkha* — the root meaning is two words: *du* and *ka*. *Du* just means hard and *ka* means to bear: hard to bear. And it's variously translated as suffering, unsatisfactoriness, etc. But this doesn't simply include those things that are obvious suffering like physical pain. That's pretty straightforward, physical pain. But it also includes pleasure. Pleasures are pleasant while we're enjoying them, but the problem is they're transient and therefore they never actually produce what we want, which is — I mean, what we're trying to head for is a continuous and perfect happiness. I mean, that's the definition of *nibbāna*. But it's not quite an emotional happiness, but we'll come to that, hopefully, in the fullness of time.

So this word *dukkha* includes all our physical problems, all our mental sufferings, our emotional problems. But it also includes all the delightful side of life because it disappears. And at base, it includes this existential angst, all this business around sickness, ageing, and death. So in a sense, *dukkha* is a view of life as basically unsatisfactory.

And that in itself isn't a problem. That's the thing. The actual sufferings of life and the joys of life and sickness, ageing and death are in themselves not the problem. The problem is how we relate to them. And this is the problem of attachment, indulgence, wrong view. And this roots itself in this whole idea of a self.

So if we just for a minute stop with this business of a self. Now, what do we actually mean there? What the Buddha is proposing is that there is something in us which doesn't belong to this psychophysical organism — and we'll deconstruct that as he does it in a minute. He says there's something in us which is not that, and the discovery eventually, of course, is that it's none other than this very awareness.

Now, the image I use, or should we say the myth I use, to give us an idea as to what's happening is the myth of Narcissus. So remember, Narcissus looks into this pond and he sees this beautiful youth and he

falls in love with it. And that draws him into an embrace of this figure in the pond. And of course, he drowns.

So water is always — not always, but mostly in mythology — something that's creative. And so if we think of the mind, the heart mind, the body heart mind, this whole organism as a pond, the awareness is looking into it, and it looks into it and it has that feeling of presence. So when you're in a very quiet moment and you're just with yourself and you just get that sense of just presence, right? It's not the self of embarrassment. It's not the self of trying to get something. It's just that sense of being, that sense of presence. That is our first construction, right? And it's through that that we enter into the world that's being created by this psychophysical organism.

So what we're doing in meditation is we're pulling ourselves out of that pond and sitting up back onto the bank of that pond. And when we do that, we get that sense of being the knower, the feeler, the one who is experiencing. And everything that's happening is happening on that screen — you might say the surface of the pond. But of course you can see through the pond into the pond. So this consciousness that we have is multi-dimensional and it contains everything that we experience both at a physical level and a heart emotional mood level and at the intellectual level, the imaginary level — everything has to manifest on that surface, right? And that's the *khandha*, the aggregate of consciousness.

Now, these consciousnesses are arising and passing away because they can only hold one sense base. So if you're watching a film on the telly and you're having a biscuit and a cup of tea or something, and you're hearing what's happening, you're seeing what's happening, we get that impression that it's all happening at the same time. But actually, in Buddhist psychology, these are all minute, infinitesimal little consciousnesses that run one after the other and give us the impression of wholeness. And that's really seeing impermanence at the level of how we create the world we experience. And that's all based upon this psychophysical organism.

If we understand that when we are pulling ourselves back onto that observation post within ourselves, and we're observing and feeling and knowing physical stuff that comes up, emotional stuff, and even mental stuff, then we've already pulled out of that delusion of being this organism. Now, in order to reinforce that, the Buddha then, as it were, begins to deconstruct this very organism, and he splits it up into these aggregates, heaps, right? And the first one is the body.

Now, it's a very strange situation we're in, because I definitely feel myself to be in the body, and often when I'm enjoying something, or when I've got a headache or whatever, I definitely am the body, right? And yet, when I question myself and ask, well, what is it I know of the body? It's an infinitesimal amount. For instance, at this present moment, our toenails are growing. Have you any idea that that's happening? It's only when you look down every so often and you think, well, I've got to cut those toenails, right? We never actually experience a toenail growing.

And I've got this book on biology, which every page has some detail in it, which is quite amazing. I mean,

it's beyond acceptance in a way. For instance, I picked up this little bit of fact — the brain has 12, I mean, you might know this, of course, but for me, it's a bit shocking. The brain has 12 billion neurons and 50 billion supporting glial cells. Now, I haven't a clue what a glial cell is, but there's 50 billion of them. And they're all up here in my head. At least I think I've got that amount. I might have a bit less. But even so, there are billions, not thousands, not millions, billions — 12 billion neurons and 50 billion supporting glial cells. And the fact is that if I hadn't read that book, I basically wouldn't know that. I've no experience of a single neuron. And that shows you how ignorant I am of how my brain works, but it works. I mean, generally speaking, I'm fairly happy with it. I could wish it to be just a little bit more quick, but there we are.

So wherever you look at the body, what you find are these cells. What they say is there are trillions of cells that make up the body and they're all dying, they're dying and then they're replacing. And they tell you that every seven years you've got a new body, but not for an instant have I felt anything dying as such. And yet this is what I'm told that's happening. So there's a disconnect between my experience of the body as something that I feel I'm in, I'm of, I feel it, I can move it around, wave my hands about, and yet the body itself has its own agenda, and its own agenda which I have no control over. Obviously the most shocking one is growing old and dropping dead, which is not something I'm particularly looking forward to.

So you can see that when you actually contemplate the relationship we have with the body, it's very minimal, very minimal. And it's all dependent upon our senses. So these five physical senses give us information and it's from this information that we construct the world that we're experiencing, the outer world at least, and of course some of the inner world, the pain, the pleasures, etc.

If we then ask, well, what is it that we're actually experiencing right down there at that physical base? The Buddha points to these four great elements. And that's what they're called, the four great elements. And this includes, I'm sure you know them, earth, water, fire, and air. And what they're referring to are specific types of sensations.

Somebody once asked me or somebody once had this big doubt and said that these things don't exist in the actual material world. It doesn't match with science, as it were. And that's where the confusion sometimes lies. The Buddha is not talking about the external world as a scientific object. He's talking about the internal world and how we experience the external world.

So when it comes to feeling, we can always go into feeling and discover the basic pieces or parts that make up that particular feeling. So if we take a very simple instance of just pain in the knees from sitting, first of all, you get this word "pain," right? And you draw your attention to it. Now, in the process of *vipassanā*, we also see the reaction that we've got to the pain. But what we're interested in at the moment is recognising that the word "pain" is a concept, and it carries with it all our understanding about pain, all our personal experience about pain, what we've read about pain. So we're not actually experiencing the pain as pain, as

a sensation — we're experiencing the concept that we're putting onto the pain. In order to experience the pain as pain, you have to go into the pain. And when you go into the pain, what you discover is things like heat, pressure, tightness, etc.

And so there, we're beginning to deconstruct our physical nature. And in so doing, we're taking away this concept of pain and we're just there with the body as it gives us information. And that's where the Buddha is pointing to because right there we can see this process of impermanence much more clearly. These little sensations are continuously arising and passing away. But it also deconstructs for us this pain, right? So that's this process of really understanding what he means by our physicality.

So it's the same with our eating — we're getting down to the actual experience of just the taste before we describe what food it is. So you have to go right down to that physical base. It's the same with hearing, but the other senses are much more difficult to grasp — the hearing and the seeing.

There's a book called "Just Seeing." I can't remember her name now. And obviously her insight was the way that what she was looking at broke up into all these different little pixels. And she talks about seeing the world like these pointillists, those artists that use little dots to create the image, trying to copy photography, I think. And just for a moment there the world split up into all these pixels, and that's the information that's coming in on the retina.

When it comes to the ear, right there at the ear drum, there's no sound. There's only pressure. It's the pressure of the waves of the pressure waves of air that are hitting the drum in the ear. So there's no sound in the universe. There's only these pressure waves. But because we have this mechanism inside us to determine what the meaning of it is in terms of sound, from that point, from that point of just this pressure, these little drummings on top of the eardrum is taken into the mind and it's the mind that creates the sound.

So this driving our attention closer and closer to the physical base begins to deconstruct our experience, and in deconstructing the experience and seeing it as a process, one thing after another, it just takes away that sense of something substantial, some entity, some wholeness, right? So that's all the business to do with the body.

Now, we can take that investigation into feeling. Now, again, feeling comes at the point where you're describing to yourself, where you determine to yourself whether something is pleasant or not, pleasant and unpleasant. That's how we immediately categorise feeling. And that's the dual world we live in, right? I mean, there's a whole area of neutral feelings, but if we really look into those neutral feelings you'll see they shade off into slightly unpleasant and slightly pleasant, and that's the business of the mind. It's part of, I suppose, just being able to survive in the world — to know what's pleasant and what's not pleasant if you're a hunter or something.

So as soon as these basic sensations come in, they are immediately described by us to ourselves as being

pleasant or unpleasant. And that's what the Buddha means by feeling. And these feelings are two types. There are the ones that are coming from the body itself and there's ones that are coming from the heart mind. So our emotional mood life.

Now, just as we penetrated down into a physical feeling to discover that it's actually just made up of all these various different little sensations, so we do it with an emotion. So an emotion comes such as, say, anxiety. And by first of all, recognising this is anxiety, this is anxiety. And then when you're steady, when you're feeling at ease with it, to actually go in and sink into it. Sink into it and to discover the sensations that make up this feeling of anxiety. And you may discover a lot of heat, a lot of agitation. And by doing that, you're deconstructing anxiety and beginning to realise actually, it's just a feeling.

That somehow we take this feeling, we give it a perspective by putting a concept on it — anxiety — and then we identify with it. We say I am anxious. And that's how the suffering builds up. But actually when we go down to the feeling of anxiety as a direct physical experience in the body, well it's just a bit of heat and commotion. That's all, see? And it's by deconstructing these emotions like that, that we lose a fear of them, that we begin to get a handle on them. And we recognise that anytime I feel like this, all I have to do is just sit with it, you see. And of course, there's the therapy because the heart then releases that energy outwardly as a feeling. And of course, it dies out.

So these feelings, Buddha collects all that in one word, *vedanā*, just feeling. And so he doesn't make a distinction between, at the base, he doesn't make a distinction between mental and physical feelings. That's the next step up when he says, well, if you look again, you'll see that some sensations, some feelings, pleasant, unpleasant, are coming from the body and some are coming from the heart-mind. And when it comes from the body, sometimes you can't do anything about it. I mean, physical pain, chronic pain and all that. And one of the techniques of getting used to chronic pain, if somebody has such a thing to suffer, is to begin to deconstruct it and see it just as sensation. And then at least it's bearable, it becomes bearable. It can never become a pleasant experience, but at least it becomes bearable.

When it comes to emotional stuff, it's surprising how close sometimes it relates to physical feelings. I mean, heat and agitation — these are actual physical feelings in the body. So this touching of the body and mind, is the place where we put our attention and that's where we see it as feeling. And in both cases, you can then penetrate it to find out the little bits of sensations that make up this so-called feeling, such as the heat and commotion or agitation that goes with anxiety. So that's the second *khandha*, the second heap of experiences that we have. And this is how we explore them.

Now, the third one is a little bit more, shall we say, difficult because it's to do with concepts. It's to do with perception and concepts. And what we have to recognise there is that when we have a particular experience, we create a photocopy of it in the mind. It can be a physical thing like eating an apple. It could be something that you see, a visual thing. It could be some intellectual understanding. But at some point, there's a copy of it in the mind, a little photocopy. That's your perception. And the more you have of that

experience, this perception grows into a concept. So if for instance — I mean apples for instance, everybody's eaten an apple, and we have a concept of an apple.

Now there are all types of apples, sweet apples, sour apples, cooking apples, small apples, big apples. There are lots of types of apples, but we definitely know they're not oranges. And that's what a concept does. It allows us to categorise everything.

But unfortunately, it also distorts what we're actually experiencing. So these concepts of an apple also come with a value judgment, what I like. So I like sweet apples. And if I chew into an apple that's sour or that has a certain bitterness to it or that it's too soft or whatever, I immediately get that reaction of not wanting it. But if I'd never tasted an apple before, and this was the first apple I had, which had a little bit of bitterness and a little bit of softness, I'd say, well, this is an amazing fruit. And you would build up your concept from there about apples and what you like.

So our concepts are quite constricting. And part of our process is to get beyond concepts and to get to a point of no preference. I mean, that's one of the signs of liberation that we don't worry about whether the apple is soft or hard, bitter or sweet, you just eat the damn thing. So concepts are really one of our biggest enemies when it comes to the process of liberation.

You can have even a concept of *nibbāna*. You read about it and there's this idea about it being blissful. You'll often hear the bliss of nibbāna. And so we immediately think that it must be some amazing emotional experience. But there's no emotions in nibbāna. So when somebody says to Sāriputta, how is it you talk about the bliss of Nibbāna when there's no emotions, there's no moods, there's nothing there? He says, well, it's the very absence of emotions and moods. That is the bliss of Nibbāna. Try to get your head around that one.

So as soon as we have some sort of concept, it's immediately limiting and distorting by the very nature of concepts. And of course, when these concepts become great, big, grand things like freedom, democracy, well, I mean, it just becomes personal ideas.

And our process of meditation is really, when we're sitting in vipassanā, is to really stop all that business. And that's one of the purposes, remember, of using a single word. Because what that word does, at least it draws this intellect down to a very simple concrete concept. So you're lifting or moving or pushing or pulling. These are still concepts, but at least it's not creating a process of thinking about something. And we're always looking through the word, right? The word isn't meant to be right in front of us.

Some people who begin noting find that they can't actually get to the feeling of things because the word is so tight up against them. It's like a barrier to actually feeling something. And what this tells a person is how this awareness, this ability to feel, to directly experience is being locked into a concept. And it's only by... so we say looking through the word or around the word or under the word or finding some way of, as it were, letting the word go and actually getting down to the feeling of it, that this awareness, this intuitive

awareness, liberates itself from conceptual thinking. And that's really very much part of our process.

And that doesn't mean to say you can then forget all about concepts, not at all. You use them when you have to use them. But in order to begin to see the world as it really is, we have to see the limitation of these concepts.

I mean, just on a grand scale, you can see that people in the East, I'm thinking of places like China, Japan, etc. People there have a very different concept of society. They have a feel for a community in a way that the Westerner, because of this accent upon the individual, doesn't have. So for us, our rights are so important. We jump up and down. It's my right, it's my right. Whereas for somebody who sees themselves as part of a community, it's much more in a sense of connection, a sense of beauty to others.

So it's a real alive present day separation because of this concept we have of who we are. As a Westerner, I think of myself as an individual pod and I can do my own thing in my own way in my own time. And if I were an Easterner, I'd be thinking much more, well, what are the others doing? How can I work with them? So you can see that these concepts that we have of ourselves are by definition limiting.

So for the Easterner, the idea of being your own agent is difficult. And that's why I presume, this is my own little understanding, why they're much more happy with authoritarian regimes. So you can see that conceptual thinking is quite a problem for us. And we have to really see it.

And the greatest concept, of course, that really is at the root of everything is this concept of a self, this concept of that idea of being a me, an individual, whole, entire person, the basis of everything that we build up into being a person. So this is undermined by really understanding ourselves as a collection of these different heaps, these different aggregates.

And it's not just an intellectual process, remember, it begins there, but you actually have to see it, you have to feel it, you have to see that a sensation, that an emotion is just sensations, that's all it is. And that thinking, you don't have to believe a thought, you don't have to describe yourself by a particular set of concepts, being able to step outside them.

So that's this whole business of perception and conceptualisation. And remember, this also includes memory. Often, my teacher once said, he said, there are these five aggregates, and he went through the five aggregates, and then he said, and there's memory. The Buddha forgot memory. It was like everybody's jaw dropped.

And the reason why the Buddha doesn't talk about memory as such is because our memories are hidden from us. What we're working with moment after moment are these concepts and these ideas, these feelings, et cetera, et cetera, that arise in the present moment. So the Buddha is not denying memory. It's just that as soon as you remember something, it becomes something that's actual. But all the past is hidden to us unless it comes into our consciousness. So in terms of the Buddha's understanding, it's not pertinent to seeing ourselves as we really are.

And then the fourth one is *saṅkhāra*. Those things that are compounded. I mean, people try to translate it in some ways like volitional conditionings or concoctions. One writer called them concoctions. But I think it's much easier for us to see them as habits. These are our habits.

And the thing about a habit is that it's driven by will. So the Buddha is quite clear that an action and the will are the same thing. And that's why, when we are having a meal, that's the time to really make that distinction between a desire, which is only potential, and then it's suddenly empowered by an act of will. A decision is made and the power goes into that desire and it begins to manifest.

Now, the process is that with an action, so you've performed an action and there's consequences, of course. That's the kamma. We'll come to that in a minute. But once you produce an action and you repeat an action, then you're building up a habit. And when you put all these habits together, that's our personality, that's our character. And once that's set, your destiny is right ahead of you. And it's only by reflecting upon our habits and beginning to see that some of them are taking us to the cliff edge, and some of them are taking us up to the mountain, up the Nibbānic mountain, that you begin to try and get rid of some and increase the others.

So these habits are a collection of things that we ourselves have created. We've done it from our sense of wisdom or lack of wisdom. We've empowered these desires. This is what we have created within ourselves. My habits are my creation. Now, it might have been done because of somebody's advice. It might have been done because somebody told me to do it. It doesn't really matter. Eventually, the process is internal, and I've made the decision, and I've created the habit.

And in this sense, you begin to understand that nobody can actually make you suffer. Nobody can make you suffer. All the suffering is made by us. These are our habits, our mental states, and I've created them. And once we recognise that, then we also begin to realise that just as we've created them, we can uncreate them. And that's part of the therapy of our process when we sit in meditation.

Because when you sit with a habit which is causing you problems, I don't know, something like a quick temper. So by sitting with that feeling of anger and allowing it to evaporate, to release itself, we're undermining the habit of anger. Now, anger itself is like a balloon inside our psyche. And it is not actually attached to an object. This is a funny thing. So for instance, it's not that somebody standing on my toe is causing the anger. It's my reaction to somebody standing on my toe, which is causing the anger to arise.

So in other words, these mental states that we have, these habits, these emotional habits that we have, don't actually have an object. They are a way of reacting to something. And because of that, because the outer world and other people are not the direct cause of my unwholesome mental states, because of that I can actually heal myself. If other people caused me suffering then the only way to achieve Nibbāna is to get rid of all these other people. But that isn't the way that the Buddha pointed. He said, no, the problem is us internally.

So these saṅkhāras, these habits, our job is to allow these unwholesome ones to evaporate and to build up the ones that are beautiful. And we can do that. In the sitting, we're tending to allow the more unfortunate mental states to evaporate, but then in our daily lives, that's when we can build up our goodness, our goodness power, puñña. Sometimes that's translated as merit, but it's much better to think of it as goodness power.

So that's where this transition comes from vipassanā into daily life. That's where the Eightfold Path comes in. Right speech, right action, right livelihood. So it's through action in the world that we can actually change these habits also. In fact that's the most powerful place to do it because it's only when we come up against things that make us anxious, depressed, angry and so on that we can actually work with it right there as it takes place and undermine the energy that we put in reinforcing those states.

So these saṅkhāras include that sense of desire, the wrong desire, the reactions that we have to things. And it's seeing the reaction and allowing the reaction to dissipate and allowing the original mental state to arise and evaporate. That is the process of healing, of healing the heart with therapy.

And as I say, it definitely happens when you're sitting. And if we've got this awareness, this mindfulness in daily life, it'll also happen just in ordinary daily life. Because you're aware, like for instance, you talk to somebody and you can feel a little bit of irritation coming. So that awareness has to be both on the person who's talking, but also inwardly. And when you see this irritation rising, you don't join in. You just let it burn a little bit. You put your attention on what the person is saying. Whereas often what we do is we immediately identify with this. I'm right and that person's wrong. And before you know it, it's all shouting.

So the saṅkhāras are all the habits that we have, that we've created ourselves, and that this is where our creativity actually lies, that we can move away from all those habits that we find unwholesome and which are a pest to other people and move towards habits which make us inwardly happy and delightful to other people.

And then finally, there's this consciousness, right? And we've already touched upon that with Narcissus looking into the pond. Everything has to arise on that consciousness. Now, unfortunately, the Buddha, like he's had this massive breakthrough and the language, he can't hold it in the language. He can't make up a word to actually express things. So he's always playing around with words. Words depend upon the situation that he's describing.

And so often he'll talk about vijñāna, consciousness, as something that discriminates, which actually is the effect of these saṅkhāras, this ability to understand on the screen of consciousness. But when we go down to that root position, which is the contact, that place of contact of consciousness with the physical body, consciousness with emotions, consciousness with thought, when we get down to that point, there's always an object, the internal object or the external object. There's always a sense base. The sixth sense, remember, is the mind itself. It's the mind that senses emotions and images and all that, and consciousness.

So this consciousness turns out to be just a screen. And the whole position of vipassanā is to step, as it were, backwards outside the screen. But there's always that sense of a self, which is awareness itself actually catching its own sense of presence on that screen. And that's the first object that we make. That's the first concept we have. And it's breaking through that, that is the point of liberation. And then to be able to sustain that separation in ordinary daily life, that of course is the sign of someone who's fully liberated.

So finally, what then is our kamma? When you look at all this, when we talk about kamma, when we talk about what is it that we are responsible for? What is the consequences? It actually is confined to what we will. So it wouldn't be right to think, say, this body is my personal kamma. This body is a construction that's arisen out of generations of people. And I didn't choose it. I would have preferred a better body. But this one's okay. I'm not complaining. Oh, no. So this one's been healthy, et cetera, et cetera. So I'm definitely not complaining.

But the body, of course, has been given to me. I find myself in a body. The society I am born into with all its language and its concepts and its art and all that is all given. That is also not my personal kamma. If I happen to cross a road and get knocked over by a car, even if I'm not seriously injured, just bumped, you might say, we can't say that's my personal kamma.

Personal kamma, the kamma which is to do with liberation, is this process of purifying the heart of its unwholesome conditionings and beginning to see where the delusion, the fundamental delusion rises, which is this sense of self. So if we go backwards and recognise that what's happening is this awareness, this intuitive awareness, sees itself, gets a feeling for itself, a sense of presence on that screen of consciousness. And it sees on that screen of consciousness the world which the body, heart and mind are creating. And it moves into that world with the idea of becoming happy.

Hence, it has to acquire things, right? The whole position of acquisition is to make us safe, to make us happy. The more you have the better we think we're going to be. It's much better to have a couple of million in the bank than just a couple of pounds. So we're always trying to accumulate things. Once we've accumulated, we find that other people want what we have and therefore you have to defend and you have to protect and that's the aversion. And when the...

when the enemy is a bit too big, you run for it, so there's your fear, so there's your reaction of fight and flight. And these are our basic, unwholesome motivations that run through from that initial delusion.

So it's by doing the opposite, it's by renouncing ownership of things, it's by giving that we begin to undo the delusion, right? So that's the whole process of the Eightfold Path. And undoing the delusion, of course, we go right back to this sense of self. And that's when, at some point, there is this opening of the heart and recognition of this community, this communion that we have with not only people, but all beings. And that's when you might say the path of love takes us towards the end of this very tight sense of me.

And that leads us to a deeper concept about this awareness. But ultimately, through the process of insight, there comes this realization of the uniqueness of this intuitive awareness. And this is what the Buddha is pointing to when he talks about there is an unborn, undying, uncreated, unconditioned, and that's it, that's the statement. He makes other statements too, such as there is a dimension, *ayatana*, there is a dimension which doesn't have any of the other dimensions in it.

Now the word *ayatana* refers to the dimensions of each of the sense spaces. So the sense spaces can't be mixed. You can't hear through your nose, even if you try. So these are different dimensions of experience. And he says that there is a dimension where none of these dimensions can be found, where there's no hearing, no seeing, et cetera, et cetera. There's many times that he points to something which is beyond transcendent of the world that we're actually experiencing.

So our process is through *vipassana* to begin to see these three characteristics. We haven't talked so much about this reaction, which is also part of that *sankara* business of the habits. We pointed to it in terms of acquiring of acquisition, greed, avarice and so on and the opposite of fight and flight. That's all in that habitual thing. That's all part of our true *kamma*.

So the process of *vipassana* is partly to do with purifying that which happens quite naturally. But it's also, or should we say, more pertinent in that we're actually seeing the process of desire. We're seeing the process of impermanence. And we're seeing that from that position of the observer, that things arise of their own accord, that they don't have a possessor. They just happen through habitual practice. So these are your three characteristics.

And in ordinary daily life, it's this process of undoing that sort of selfishness, that sort of constant looking after me as opposed to others, that opening of the heart to other people. And that undermines the self as a concept, as an emotional concept. And that's the process through love, compassion, sympathetic joy, that undermines the idea, the notion of a self. And eventually, of course, there is that liberation. The liberation is from all these wrong concepts, from all these wrong habits. That's what the liberation is.

Very good. So I hope that's been of some use. It's not caused even further confusion, and that you will, by your effort, liberate yourself sooner rather than later.

Transcriptions produced locally using Swiss low-carbon electricity. Corrections and rewriting by cloud-hosted AI.