

12 REFLECTIONS THAT ARE CONDUCTIVE TO LIBERATION

6th Sept. 2000

Earlier this week somebody asked if I could give a talk on the four objects of contemplation in the Ānāpānasati Sutta (MN 118). Those things one should contemplate when one has just emerged from a deep state of *samādhi*, a deep state of calm. How can one use these four reflections as taught by the Buddha to weaken the defilements and undermine the illusions caused by the defilements? How can one use these reflections to see the Dhamma, to release the mind, and gain the powers and the fruits of the practice?

It's my experience that whatever the Buddha said in the *suttas* always has a very profound and deep meaning. And because it's profound and deep it has a very powerful effect on the mind. It has in a much greater result than you anticipate. So when the Buddha advised in the Ānāpānasati Sutta to contemplate these four things, they are obviously very powerful reflections. I'm sure most of you would know what those four reflections are. In case you have forgotten them they are *anicca* (impermanence), *virāga* (fading away, dispassion), *Nirodha* (cessation), and *paṭinissagga* (letting go, abandoning). You all think you know the meaning of *anicca* and you might think you know the meaning of *virāga*, *Nirodha* and *paṭinissagga*. But if you really knew the meaning of those things you would be able to uproot the defilements and see non-self. You would be able to give up clinging to the wheel of *saṃsāra*.

All these words signify something. It's only when we fully understand what they're pointing to and completely understand their meaning that we can say that we know those things. A sign that you understand is that the mind is released and you experience enormous peace, bliss, and a sense that something has been destroyed.

Freeing the Mind

So, this is much more than a mere intellectual grasp of concepts. This is the experiencing of those concepts. It's actually being *anicca*, feeling that thoroughly and

completely. It's being *virāga*, it's being *Nirodha*, and it's being *paṭinissagga*. In the other words, it's understanding it so completely and fully that it's as if one is standing in the middle, in the very centre of these words, and seeing in all directions exactly what they mean from the inside out. This is what we mean by the power of the mind to create insight.

It's very significant that the Buddha places these reflections after the first twelve steps of the Ānāpānasati Sutta. The first twelve steps are deliberately arranged to create those states that we call *jhānas*. And since as we are passing through these twelve states I'll bring everyone's attention to the states of breathing in, breathing out, developing *sukha*, experiencing *sukha*, and experiencing *pīti*.

Those of you whose meditation has yet to take off, will do well to really reflect on these instructions of the Lord Buddha. When you're doing the meditation on the breath, when you are watching the breath, when you have the breath in mind, don't just watch any old ordinary boring breath. Make a resolution, a gentle suggestion to the mind, "May I breathe in just experiencing *pītisukha*, may I breathe out experiencing *pītisukha*." The bliss, the happiness of contentment, is achieved by developing the perception of the 'beautiful breath', in my terminology. Once you start to develop that then your meditation has some power. You are getting into the nitty gritty of the meditation on the breath. You will find that you don't have to force the mind. The mind wants to play around with this, it wants you to sit more and more, it wants to have more and more seclusion. The mind starts to move away from the worldly interactions between people, books, food, and sleep. The mind wants to have more time with this beautiful breath. It is satisfied. Incline the mind to go ever deeper into ever more profound states of stillness and bliss.

Each one of the first twelve stages of the Ānāpānasati Sutta are calming the mind and feeling *pītisukha* evermore deeply, evermore calmly. And the last stages bring the mind to this sense of stillness and relinquishment, freeing that mind of the previous steps. Freeing the mind means bringing it into the *jhāna* realms. It is freeing the mind from the world of the five senses, freeing it from the last vestiges of the hindrances, freeing it from the body, freeing it from the senses. That's what we mean by freeing

the mind, and that's the *jhānas*.

Anicca

After those *jhānas* have been achieved, the mind is so powerful, deep, and profound and it has the ability to really contemplate fully. The mind should then take up one of these four reflections, in the sense of just suggesting to the mind '*anicca*'. The mind has already been well enough conditioned through hearing the Dhamma, through reading the Dhamma, and through some of the insights that you have already attained, that it should have enough of a clue to get on to the scent of *anicca*. Just as a dog finds the scent of some buried treasure or some illicit drugs and follows that to its source, the mind finds out what *anicca* is truly about.

Once the mind is powerful it can follow the scent. That is called *yoniso manasikāra*, the work of the mind which goes back to the source. Just like a bloodhound finding the source of a scent and following it unerringly to its place of origin, this is what one does with the contemplation of *anicca*. Don't use just your thinking mind and all the ideas you had about *anicca* in the past, because many of those thoughts will not be capable of releasing the mind from the *āsavas*, from the *kilesas*, the defilements and the fetters. That would be a superficial investigation. If you just suggest *anicca* to the mind – it's amazing, even though these will be areas which you've never seen before, places where the mind has never gone before – because of the power of the mind you will be able to penetrate those areas of the Dhamma wherein the treasure of Enlightenment lies. You'll be able to go deeper, not just into your old ideas but into something very new and very profound, into *anicca*, the impermanence, the instability, the irregularity, the lack of continuity.

These words are pointing to one thing, one aspect of the experience of life, of being. You see it as something that is completely insubstantial. To see it like that simile for *vedanā*, or sensation, a drop of water falling on a puddle, 'Plop!' it's gone. Experience it. Even with a fast camera you can hardly catch that moment. It arises and passes away so fast that all you can say, as the Buddha explained, is that there is something there because an arising is seen. But at the same time it is substantial, because its passing away is seen almost immediately afterwards. And this is what we

take to be life, what we take to be the world, what we take to be ‘me’, what we take to be mine. It is something so insubstantial that you can hardly catch hold of it because it’s passing so quickly.

You allow the mind that has been empowered by the deep states of *samādhi* to play around in that area, to be drawn ever deeper into the full meaning of that word. And, as with many searches leading to deep insights one will always have to overcome the two barriers of fear and excitement in order to get to the very heart of these things.

The barriers of fear and excitement are not just barriers to *jhānas* they are also barriers to deep insight. We fear insight because it destroys something that is very close to us, something that we’ve got so used to, which we feel literally naked without. Just as we’d feel embarrassed and afraid of taking our clothes off in the hall with all these people around because we’d feel unnatural and insecure, in the same way, when you take away these clothes that are your ego and your sense of self, when you undress all those views and see what’s truly there, it can be very fearsome. It takes a great deal of courage, the courage that can only be generated from deep states of *samādhi*.

The monks, hermits, and sages of the past, who dwelt in caves in the mountains and in the forests, have always been known for their courage. Not just the courage to live in such harsh conditions – the dealing with the pains of the body, the lack of food, or the lack of sleep – but the courage to face the obstacles to deep insight. They were willing to die for the truth. And when I say willing to die, it’s not just in the sense of the body dying, but also all their ideas and views, their ego, their pride, everything that they’ve ever known or hoped to know has to be abandoned, given up. *That is the courage of letting go!* Usually it’s only when the mind has the power of deep meditation that one can really be courageous and overcome that fear. One is empowered, strong, like a great warrior who goes against an army of thousands and scatters them with the confidence and courage energised by the power of *samādhi*. But excitement can also come up so easily, the excitement of seeing something deep and profound. “Wow! At last!” That thought, that movement of the mind, obstructs the attainment of deep *samādhi* and stops the attainment of insight. To overcome the fear and to overcome the excitement so that you can really see truth for what it is, you

need the calm which is developed by deep *samādhī*. You need that sense of inactivity, the stability of the mind that does not react, but which just sits there and watches, no matter what happens. The sort of mind that can sit there and just watch even if Māra comes and says “Boo!”, or if a beautiful lady comes and strips naked in front of you. It is a mind that is absolutely unmoved no matter what happens.

Once you abandon those obstacles to insight you find the mind wants to find the truth. The truth of something like *anicca*, releases the mind from its prison, *saṃsāra*. It shatters the fetters; it arouses the bliss of freedom. It’s that joy, happiness, and bliss born of freeing the mind from what one intuitively, instinctively knows is a great burden, a great suffering, a great cause of torture to the mind and the body. Instinctively one knows that, and the mind delights in getting closer to finding the key that unlocks all our chains and frees the mind from *saṃsāra* once and for all. There is something delightful about that insight. Once one can get past those barriers that delight will just draw the mind ever inwards, to play with the meaning of *anicca*, to get to know it intimately, to penetrate to its very heart, to its very core. So, you now know what the Buddha meant by *anicca* and you know what Venerable Koṇḍañño meant in the Dhammacakkappvattana Sutta (SN LVI. 11) that we just chanted: *yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbantaṃ nirodhadhammanti* – all arisings are of the nature not just to cease but to stop once and for all, to end completely in *Nirodha*. That is, all, everything, the complete works, which is truly amazing. You start to see that all this that we know, all the *dhammas*, are of the very nature to cease completely with no remainder. *Nibbāna* becomes clear, *Nibbāna* becomes possible, and *Nibbāna* becomes obvious: It is the ceasing of all things – the flame going out and the fire completely quenched until there is no trace of that fire. Even the imprint of that fire is completely gone.

When one can see the actual ceasing of things, in the same way as Koṇḍañño saw, one sees that, whether it’s the body, feelings, perceptions, formations, or consciousness – all the six types of consciousness –all of these things are of that nature to cease completely without any remainder. You see that all of these things that we take to be real, that we take to be hard and solid, are of the nature to disappear without any remainder. You see *anicca* to that degree; not just as the rise and fall, with the fall

giving the energy for another rise, but the rise and fall with no energy left, with nothing remaining, without anything to give rise to new experiences, to new phenomena. So many people in the world think of *anicca* as a ping pong, a yo-yo, just going up and down, never seeing the full meaning of *anicca*. Because they don't understand cessation, because they can't see the real emptiness, the real *suññā* of the sensory world, of the five *khandhas*, they can't see the emptiness of everything. They still think that somewhere there is something real. Without seeing the ending of everything we will always think that somewhere there is something solid. Somewhere 'I am'. Somewhere is the real me, the cosmic me, the cosmic all, or whatever we try and posit the 'self' as. *Anicca* is insubstantiality, irregularity, something: which was is no longer there, as if this whole hall had suddenly vanished without anything remaining, not even the shadow. Just complete emptiness, not even a vacuum, nothing left. Nothing you can measure, nothing you can rationalise, nothing, just emptiness. Gone! Only when one can see *anicca* to that degree has one got a hope of understanding what the Buddha meant by the Four Noble Truths, and what the Buddha meant by *anattā*, non-self.

These are all aspects of one thing. So if you can put those ideas, suggestions, and guides, into the mind, the mind might then follow. The mind might go deep; it might go so deep that it goes to the heart of *anicca* and sees it, knows and realises it. When you come out afterwards, then you'll be able to say '*yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ*', (whatever things are subject to arising): the body with all the *vedanās*, the pleasure and pain, beauty and ugliness, all the nice words and rotten words you hear, all the inspiring and stupid thoughts, all the beautiful and disgusting food, sweet and disgusting smells, all the happiness and sorrow in your mind, all your plans, memories, and consciousness through all the six senses – you see them as things that arise and you know that all of them can and must eventually completely cease with no remainder. Everything you ever thought is completely gone, having no remainder. Also all your moments of consciousness: one day no other consciousness arises, it has ceased forever. All the bodies you've ever worn through *samsāra* have ceased without remainder. All of your happiness and pain, your agony and ecstasy cease; all of that ceases without remainder. It is no more. It is done with, finished. To actually see that gives you the insight of *Aññā-Koṇḍañña*. If you can't do that with *anicca* you

can try it with *virāga*.

Virāga

People talk about *virāga* as being dispassion but that's only one possible meaning for the word. The meaning that I prefer is fading away. It's almost like a precursor to *Nirodha*, something that happens before cessation is experienced: *virāga*, the fading away of things. After you've experienced a *jhāna*, you can contemplate that word *virāga*, fading away. The whole idea of fading away is relinquishment. It's not relinquishing things, rather it's you doing the disappearing act, you becoming the invisible man, so invisible that you just completely disappear and nothing is left. In this way there is the fading away of all phenomena: the fading away of the body, the fading away of the world outside, the beautiful fading away of feelings – the happiness and sadness that occupies the mind even more than thoughts.

The great problem of existence is pleasure and pain. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have an end to that problem, to have all the business finished once and for all, to have all your work completed? How can you ever rest when you have pleasure and pain? How can there ever be comfort, contentment, stillness, and peace when *vedanā* is still active? It's impossible. People in the world try to generate *vedanā*, try to generate intense *vedanā*, thinking that that is the way to experience happiness and fulfillment in this world. Sometimes people watch films that frighten the hell out of them or they go to sad movies where they cry their eyes out. It's amazing: they just want more intense pain, more intense pleasure. That's the way of the world. The way of the Buddha, the way of the *samaṇa* (recluse), is to calm all of this, to watch it fade away – to watch the *vedanās* of the world, the intensity of feelings of the world, get less and less and disappear. The longer you stay in monastic life the more you see that now you don't shake and quiver with *vedanās* as you did as a lay person. You see that whatever the world gives you with its vagaries, with its uncertainties, the mind doesn't shake. What before would be a very unpleasant *vedanā*, now doesn't shake the mind. What before would be incredibly pleasant and exciting, now is not. The *vedanā* is beginning to fade away and with that fading away of *vedanā* comes a softening. With the gentling of *vedanā* you get this beautiful peace, and that peace by itself is a type of happiness which people in the world can rarely even understand, let

alone experience.

People in the world think that if all *vedanā* starts to disappear then how can there be happiness. How can there be bliss when you're not doing anything, just sitting quite still? The most bliss you can ever experience in this realm is in deep meditation. Sitting here some of you have experienced it yourselves. If you really want happiness, the happiness of the mind exceeds all other pleasures; it not only exceeds them in its amplitude of happiness, in its degree of pleasure, of raw bliss, but also in its depth and profundity. This is not a shallow superficial thing; this is something that is a rich happiness which you sense when you experience it. It's happiness that is going to the core; it's not just covering you in some fine raiment that you understand is not real. There is something real and meaningful here. As you go into that deep happiness, into that deep stillness, you understand that through the calming of *vedanā* you get all the contentment, all the satisfaction that you ever wanted. From the fading away comes the treasure of getting closer to emptiness, getting closer to *Nirodha* and *Nibbāna*, where everything is gone. When one understands *virāga* in this particular way it will lead you not just into insight but also into calm. It will lead to your 'self' fading away, the knower and the doer disappearing, fading, fading, fading. And as you play around with that concept you begin to understand not just the end of the path, not just *Nibbāna*, but you understand why you are practising this Eightfold Path. You understand that *virāga* is all about fading away.

When you start practising the precepts and the rules of the monastery so much of the harshness of your character fades away. That's the reason people who have been monks or nuns for many years become very soft, gentle, friendly beings, people whom lay-people just love to be around. It's as if all of their harshness and unpleasantness has faded away. That's the result of the precepts, of keeping rules, of keeping *sīla*. Certain aspects of your personality fade, and it's wonderful to see the fading away of what is really quite unwholesome: your ill will, bad speech, and bad actions. When they fade away you understand what this path is all about. Once those things fade away you can see how through sense restraint other things are also fading away: those excitements and titillations that once would occupy your whole day are fading away. You're allowing all your old memories to fade away – all of the past

with all of its difficulties and also its pleasures. You allow it all to fade away to become a person with no history, no past, someone who can let go of time. All your worries and plans about the future, they too are fading away.

In the lay world people spend almost all of their life in the past or the future. When that fades away you're left with the beautiful present moment, just the 'now'. Once things start to fade away you understand that you have to allow thinking to fade. Not to cut it out and stop it, not to try and destroy it – that's just doing it through power, self, and ego, through a sense of 'me' – but to allow it to fade. The word *virāga* is beautiful in its meaning. By taking away your interest, by taking away your sense of value in these things, they fade and disappear, if you're patient enough to give them time. They fade, and you find yourself meditating on the breath. Everything else has faded away: your past and your future, all those stupid thoughts, all of your business, all of your lust. The body is about to fade away because all you have is just the one breath you are watching. So much has faded and disappeared, and now you are watching the breath fade away. The breath gets softer and softer, more and more beautiful, and more and more profound, fading, fading, fading. With the fading away of the breath, the 'doer', this very active, problematical control freak, is fading, fading, fading. It's hardly doing anything at all. When you get to the beautiful breath nothing much is happening; even consciousness is fading. Instead of consciousness being spread all over the place, much of consciousness has faded away. Sight consciousness, sound consciousness, all faded, disappeared. Smell and taste consciousness, faded away into nothing, ended, ceased. You've just got this very refined sense of touch on the breath, just in this moment, a very subtle breath, nothing else is felt in the body. It's all fading away. That gives you so much happiness and pleasure because *dukkha* is fading, disappearing. At last you are beginning to understand the Path. The Path that you've been hoping for, the Path that you ordained for, the path you have been searching for, studying for. What you've been born for is happening. You are experiencing the fading away of suffering – not just thinking about it, not writing a book about it – but you're right there when it's happening and it's beautiful, wonderful, and inspiring. You see the Dhamma start to manifest as suffering fades away. The process takes over because this is what the mind has been born for; this is why the whole process is happening at last. Once you start to allow

everything to fade away, the breath fades and you're just left with a *nimmitta*. The *nimmitta* was there all along just covered by the breath. When the breath fades it reveals the *nimmitta*. The simile the Buddha gave is that it is like the clouds obscuring the full moon. When the clouds part the moon manifests. The moon was there all the time it was just that it was covered. The moon here is the reflection of your mind. It's always there; you're just attending too much to all these other things. When the breath fades away, there is the mind experienced as the *nimmitta*. It allows the last bit of the 'doer' to fade away, things disappear, and you enter a *jhāna*.

Whenever you experience the *jhānas* and reflect on them you see they are all stages of letting go. That's the reason a lot of people can't gain *jhānas*: they are holding on to too much attachment, too much clinging; they just won't let these things fade. They try to either make them fade or try and keep them out of fear, out of stubbornness. But the way into *jhāna* is to allow them to fade away. The fading away of the 'doer' is completed in the second *jhāna*. The fading away of consciousness now starts to happen as more and more things are let go of. The mind gets more and more refined in these different stages of *jhāna*, until everything fades away completely in the experience of *Nirodha*. Afterwards, you see that the whole process is a process of giving up, letting go, abandoning, and relinquishing.

Nirodha

All these beautiful Pāli words in Buddhism are seen as an experience. You've walked on the path and they have been the signposts, the sights along the way. This is what it looks like on the journey. This is the territory and, as these things all fade away, you understand what *virāga* truly means. *Virāga* is the Path. By letting go, by relinquishing, all these things happen by themselves. But you especially understand *Nirodha*, the ending, the cessation of things. That is a very hard word to understand because we only know things that are there. It's hard to perceive something that is not there. Without understanding *Nirodha* we're especially unlikely to allow the possibility of that which we are truly attached to and cling to, to cease. It's always partial. Those things that we don't like, that we don't want, we can allow them to cease. But there are some parts of us that we do not want to give up, that we do not want to cease, that we do not want to disappear. This is where attachment and

clinging stops us from experiencing the fruits of cessation and understanding its meaning as an experience.

One of the insights that are most likely after a *jhāna* experience is the insight into the meaning of *Nirodha*, because this is one's first experience of anything absolutely vanishing and completely ceasing. The five senses that were there once are now, for a long period of time, no longer there. In the simile that I have given before about the television set, it's not just the program changing, it's the whole television set – which has been there as long as you can remember – disappearing. All you see are the programs on the screen, changing. Now for the first time in your memory the whole television set has completely vanished. It's completely gone, it is *Nirodha*. The very possibility of that was completely beyond you; you couldn't even conceive of that happening. But after a *jhāna* you know it has happened: you've been there and you've experienced the profoundness of cessation. That which was once impossible you have experienced. You've seen the five senses gone; you've seen the 'doer' gone. In the second *jhāna* you're completely, absolutely frozen. No *cetanā* (intention) is possible, no control at all. The mind is absolutely still, with a stillness you cannot conceive of. You cannot even imagine it.

Those *jhāna* states are weird, and that is why people who haven't had any experience of them they always fall flat on their faces when they try to explain them. They haven't got a clue what those things are. Once those states are experienced for what they truly are, then you can really see that something very big has gone, especially the going of the 'doer'. The 'doer' has been most of what you thought you were. That's what we call the 'house builder' in Buddhism. It's one of the biggest causes, if not *the* cause of rebirth. It's what keeps *saṃsāra* going – always building new houses, new tasks, new things to do – It makes the wheel go around. You see that 'doing' has completely, absolutely gone. You're just sitting there absolutely still, frozen, no 'doer'. Because there is no 'doer' that's the reason there's no movement – I really mean no movement – just one mind object for a long period of time without even a wobble or a shake, but life is still there. Once that is experienced and you emerge afterwards, you've seen something that you thought impossible: an absolute disappearing and going to cessation. That which you thought was an absolute you

realise is impermanent, and it can fade and actually end in peace. Once you can admit the possibility of such cessation then you can understand *anattā*. There is nothing substantial here because you know it can cease absolutely, completely. There is nothing remaining whatsoever, not even a cosmic or un-manifest consciousness. Cessation is cessation is cessation. If there was something left it wouldn't be called cessation.

Once you can see that from your own experience it gives you the fuel for the experience of Stream Winning, it gives you the seed. Cessation has happened and you can start to understand that what you took to be self, what you took to be me, what you took to be mine, is subject to cessation, it is *Nirodhadhamma*. You now know what *Nirodha* means. You know it applies to all the five senses, you know it applies to will, and it's only a small step to know that it applies to consciousness as well. That which you thought was you, the 'one who knows', ceases. It goes completely without any remainder. When you see that degree of *Nirodha* you have the opportunity to experience the Enlightenment experiences. You see the path of inclining towards cessation, not towards building up more things, more possessions, more thoughts, or more attainment's. Allow everything to cease by giving up, relinquishing, and letting go. You see how little one can live with. You see how few thoughts one can keep in one's mind. You see how little one can sleep, how little one can eat, how little one need talk, how little one need think. How much can you give up? After a while one inclines to giving up the whole lot. *Nirodha* happens, and you see that *Nirodha* is the highest happiness. It's well worth doing and then maybe you can have some idea of the fourth contemplation, *paṭinissagga*.

Paṭinissagga

Paṭinissagga is giving up, rejecting, or forsaking. I encourage the study of Pāli in this monastery because it does uncover some things that do not always come out in the translations. The word *paṭinissagga* you might recognise from the Vinaya, from the tenth, eleventh, twelve and thirteenth *saṅghādisesas*. *Paṭinissagga* is a noun. The verb for it, is *paṭinissajjati*, and it's used for a person who abandons their wrong course of action. In the tenth *saṅghādisesa* it is ceasing to cause a schism, in the eleventh giving up support for a schism, in the twelfth giving up the refusal to be admonished, and in

the thirteenth giving up the criticism of the act of banishment. The same word *paṭinissagga* is giving up views, ways of using the mind, thoughts, perceptions. It's abandoning on that level; it's not so much giving up material things such as your robe, your sugar, or worldly possessions, or for a layperson your money, car, etc.. This is giving up on the very deepest levels of cognition. We can give away many things in this life but what we find it hard to give up are those things that we call our mental possessions – our pride, our sense of self, our knowledge, and our sense of being someone who no one else can tread on, all those senses of an 'I'. That's what we find hard to abandon. But it has to be abandoned if one wishes to become Enlightened. The sense of self with all its ramifications – the stupidity, pride, and pain – creates more fire that burns you inside. It's called *dukkha*.

Please don't buy into all of that, allow it to fade, to cease. See if you can give up all of the aspects of self-view, so that when you do the reflection on *paṭinissagga* it's not the worldly material things that you are giving up, it's the things of the mind. You're abandoning, giving away, letting go of your past and future. In the *saṅghādisesa* rules a monk is asked in front of the Saṅgha three times to give something up, give that up, give that up, if you don't you incur the offence of *saṅghādisesa*. The Buddha is asking you to give up your sense of past and future, and if you don't give it up you get suffering. Give up your thinking, your thoughts; otherwise you get headaches. Give up all of your sense of control: of me and mine, my ideas, my rights, my will, my mind, and my plans – see if you can apply *paṭinissagga* to those. Have the courage and see what happens. What happens is that you become peaceful. These things are the stuff of fetters, the stuff of defilements, the stuff of craving. When you see that through contemplating *paṭinissagga* you are abandoning not just the outside world, you are abandoning the inside world. If you develop that *paṭinissagga* perception throughout the practice of meditation you'll find that meditation gets so easy. In the Indriya-Saṃyutta (SN. XLVIII. 9) there is a word that is very close to *paṭinissagga*, *vossagga* (relinquishing, giving up). The Sutta says that if you develop that mind of abandoning you very easily attain *samādhi*, you attain the *jhānas* easily.

Paṭinissagga, the perception of abandoning the inner thoughts, the inner ideas and the inner illusions, is a beautiful fast track to the deep meditations. See how much you

can give up, especially your ideas, your thoughts, and even some of the ways that you perceive. If you can do that you are applying the contemplation of *paṭinissagga* to developing deep meditation. After deep meditation contemplate *paṭinissagga* even further. You're abandoning all of those mental defilements: cravings, wrong views, wrong perceptions, and the wrong thoughts called the *vipallāsas*, the perversions of cognition, what we call *avijjā*, delusion. Abandoning your delusions you're giving them up, you're allowing them to cease until there's nothing there. If you can do that you can get on the path to deep insights, and you find that you can give up everything because there is nothing there anyway. There's nothing to keep, nothing worth holding on to. As the Lord Buddha said, *sabbe dhammā nālaṃ abhinivesāya* (MN 37), that's beautiful. Again for those who know Pāli there is a related word *nivāsa*, it means lodging, or an abiding. I like to translate *sabbe dhammā nālaṃ abhinivesāya*, as: all, everything completely, is not worth hanging out in, not worth making an abiding in, not worth making a home for the consciousness or for the 'doer'. It's usually translated as 'nothing is worth attaching to', which misses most of the meaning. When you understand the idea of *nivāsa* as a place where you abide, live, and create a home, and then you understand the full meaning and you understand why you can actually abandon everything. You understand why *paṭinissagga*, the abandoning of wrong thoughts, wrong views, wrong thinking, wrong use of the mind, is a path to both *jhānas* and *Nibbāna*.

Conclusion

So these are ways of using those four reflections at the end of the Ānāpānasati Sutta, *anicca*, *virāga*, *Nirodha*, and *paṭinissagga*. When the Buddha taught those reflections he meant them to be done extremely deeply, extremely beautifully, very powerfully, and very wonderfully. Unless you are an *Arahant* never think that you understand these words completely. That's why it's good to allow them to roll around in the mind, allow the mind to play around with them, allow the mind to recognise them. There may have been experiences in the past, in the long distant past, when you knew those words. They can resonate now and take you to the same territory, the territory of the *jhānas*, the territory of *maggaphala* (The Path and Fruit), the territory of peace. So play with those words especially after a deep meditation. They can lead you into *jhānas*; they can lead you into complete release