

Craving

Uncontrived, Dedicated Practitioners' Group

Graduated Discourse 7

December 13, 2022

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We continue with the gradual training, the overview of that.

So we started out with the various things that the Buddha tells a person who is kind of ripe to hear the Dharma inspiring them with generosity and virtue and the heavens, the gods.

And then since they're ready, he tells them that renunciation actually has a lot of blessings to it.

And then at that point, their mind is, at the sutta says, ready, receptive, free from hindrances, elated, and confident.

And that is when the person is ready to hear what's called the teaching special to the Buddha, which is the teaching on the Four Noble Truths.

And last time we talked about Dukka.

One thing I mentioned is that we tend to think that we already know about Dukka.

I mean, when somebody says, well, Dukka is the Pali word for suffering, we think, oh, okay, I know all about that.

I've got all these problems and so forth.

And that is true in some sense, it's not meant to be anything obscure or exotic.

Everybody knows that there's Dukka.

But we might not have understood it very deeply.

I mean, these are not really trivial teachings.

And so yes, there is an immediate ability to connect with Dukka.

But it might be that part of the continuance of Dukka in our life, the ongoing nature of it, is that we might not have quite totally understood it.

So maybe if we were to look at Dukka from a wise perspective, taking in what the Buddha says to look at it, we might see something different.

We might see something new besides what we already know.

So that's maybe the proposition.

So one thing that we might see if we investigate Dukka, which is after all to be understood, that's the task that goes with Dukka, is that we might see what occurs along with Dukka.

Usually, we're so enraptured by the Dukka that we just focus on that and how we can get rid of it and how terrible it is and whose fault it is and whatever.

But we may not see that there are other things that are present along with Dukka at the same time.

I mean, I've already asked that question.

So the teaching on the second Noble Truth names this quality Dukka Samudaya that we're supposed to look at.

And this is often translated as cause, the cause of Dukka.

But the word Samudaya, Samudaya, does not really mean cause.

In fact, it doesn't mean cause.

There are other words that mean cause, that are perfectly well, like hey to, for example, used straightforwardly to mean cause in the suttas.

So what does Samudaya mean?

More accurately, it means arising.

So we're talking about the arising of Dukka in the second Noble Truth.

So what is it that co-occurs with Dukka?

With the arising of what does Dukka arise?

And the answer straightforwardly given, we don't have to guess, is tanha, which is craving.

Translated is craving.

Usually we could say clinging.

That's also also present when there's Dukka.

But the classical teaching focuses on craving this quality of tanha, which is not a, it's also not an obscure word in Pali.

It's a very common word.

It means thirst.

You know, when you say I'm really thirsty at the end of a long day, you would say tanha.

So it's not a technical word.

I've also heard it translated as hunger.

But as usual, the Buddha is taking a certain term and giving it a specific meaning in his teachings.

And the task associated with tanha is to abandon it.

There are three flavors or types of craving that are spoken about in the classical teachings.

So we'll take a look at those with the thought in mind that if we are experiencing some kind of Dukka, we might be looking for whether or not one of these types of craving is there or some associated clinging that goes with when we have this kind of tanha in our mind.

So the first kind of craving, it will not be a surprise.

It's craving for sensuality.

Kama tanha.

Kama is K-long-A-M-A.

It's not the same as kama per karma.

Kama, K-A-M-A.

K-long-A-M-A.

And it means craving for sensuality, craving for pleasant, sight-sound, smells, tastes, touches.

Some teachings even include thoughts, the sixth sense.

And some just talk about five bodily senses.

I don't think this is surprising.

Again, it's not surprising.

This is not anything uncommon.

We know that we want things.

It's not challenging.

But so then we have to look more carefully and we'll get into this later about what is it that's actually craving and what is normal desire that we need in order to get through our life.

But we can definitely understand that there is sensual craving for humans.

We really like certain things and people's wanting of certain things has led leads to problems in the world.

Like in our own household, we might have some problems in our relationships because somebody else in the house wants something that we don't want.

So they want it.

We have not wanting for it.

There's conflict.

It's pretty straightforward.

And then a lot of the problems in the world come from wanting things on a large scale, wanting power, wanting resources from other people, etc.

It's sort of endless.

All the things that we could want physically.

We tend to trivialize this sometimes when we talk about it.

As wanting donuts or pizza or something like that.

But this actually runs really deep.

I mean, this is not to be trivialized.

I think the kamaton hot just because it's the first one named and it's the grossest and the most obvious.

Underneath, we really believe as human beings, we really believe that we need certain material conditions and we can be very upset if we don't get them.

Each person has different hang ups, but they're, they're, they can be quite non trivial.

And they shift over time also in practice.

I've noticed, I mean, you start out with, you have kind of the top level blunt ones that you know, like maybe some people come to practice, for example, from recovery programs or something.

And they know that they have an addictive tendency towards certain things that are obviously not good for them, but they can feel that craving.

And they find, find ways to work with it.

Or we arrive knowing that we, you know, we really eat too much or we have, we buy too much or compulsive shopper or we can't get rid of anything in our closet.

And so things are piling up in our garages flow.

And, you know, we know we have certain top level things.

And so we learn to manage those and that's good.

But then over time, we start to realize, oh, actually, you know, there's, there are subtler ones underneath that, like, you know, the temperature of the house, human beings are very sensitive to temperature.

And, you know, do you get upset if it's too cold and somebody wants to turn the heat down and, or, you know, the blanket, there aren't enough blankets on the bed and simple things like this, but they can really lead to challenge in our minds if we overblow them.

I'll talk later about the, the way we create bonds and how some bonds are stronger than others.

I mean, the strength of the bond is kind of related to how upset we get by not having access to something or by losing access to it.

That's a measure for us.

So, you know, for some people, it's like, okay, fine, you know, that person doesn't want it.

I want it, but no big deal.

And other things, it's like, ah, you know, I have to, you know, the same thing for a different person could be a very big deal.

So, you know, we can check for ourselves how strong is that bond for me related to this object.

It's not about the object.

It's always about our mind creating a bond there.

We can also measure it by our unwillingness to give up something in order to get something better.

Sometimes we hold on to something not because it's that great in and of itself, but even if something better comes along, we just, we don't want to give up this that we have.

It's kind of, yeah.

So there's a, a sutra actually that talks about this, about this strength of the bond.

And it gives some kind of striking analogies.

So I guess the Buddha says first that if a coil, you know, a little small bird is bound by a rotting vine, you know, that would actually be a strong bond for a bird.

You know, even a rotting vine could bind a quail.

But in contrast, an elephant, for example, not only are they not bound by a rotting vine, obviously, but an elephant might not, not even be bound by a leather, a leather strap.

You know, an elephant could break through that even if a dog couldn't, for example.

So there's, it's something about the character of the fetter that matters relative to the one who is bound.

So there's like different factors here, right?

And so we want to be more like the elephant than the quail in general.

We're making ourselves stronger, but also it matters what our mind has done to create a bond.

Are we making it more, is it more like a rotting vine that we could easily rip out of if we wanted to?

Or is it more like a thick leather strap that we couldn't maybe if we were weak, but we could only if we were as strong as an elephant get out of it.

So that's kind of the analogy that's given first, that people are meant to say, oh yeah, okay, I can kind of get that concept.

And then as the Buddha does, he turns it to practice, he turns it to actual people.

And he says here, he gives the analogy, you're going to have to pardon the gendered language and ideas, please.

You'll see how strong your bond is for those things.

Because the Suta language is kind of funny.

So I want to read the actual language.

So he gives an analogy of a poor man and a rich man.

So he starts with the poor man and he says, there was a poor, penniless and destitute man.

And he had one dilapidated hovel open to the crows, not the best kind.

And one dilapidated wicker beds dead, not the best kind.

And some grain and pumpkin seeds in a pot, not the best kind.

And one hag of a wife, not the best kind.

And he see you're laughing.

Some people are laughing.

So we can turn change it to something else.

And so but then this poor man sees a monk, and he sees a monk who's just living, you know, out under a tree with an alms bowl, and he thinks, wow, how healthy, how beautiful, how simple, that life looks much happier.

But he can't give up his poor things.

He's so kind of attached to that way of being, it feels comfortable, he can't really imagine what it would mean to give them up.

And so he stays with his situation, and he doesn't change.

And then in contrast, there's a rich man who has many good things, he's described as having gold ingots and filled granaries and lots of land and people working for him and all these, you know, wonderful things supporting him.

And, and he too sees a monk sitting under a tree and thinks, huh, that looks pretty good, you know, it's kind of complex my life and that looks healthier, looks easier, you know, simple.

And he is able to give up all of his wealth and ordain.

So there's something about the person and the bond to the stuff, it doesn't have as much to do with the stuff, that's kind of the bottom line, it's not about the stuff, it's about the other things that are related, the mind that's relating to the stuff, essentially.

And I think we can see this in our own life.

I mean, I'll just ask this question, you don't have to, you just answer in your mind, you know, do you have some really simple thing that you can't, there's no way you can give it up, it's a trivial thing, nobody else would care about it particularly, but you don't want to give it up because it has some meaning that's created in your mind, of course.

Whereas you probably maybe even have in your life done, I can say this to meditators and people in the Dharma, maybe you've done some pretty amazing acts of dana and generosity

where you were willing to give up something that the average person might not want to give up a job, a large amount of money, your time to care for someone, something like that.

So I'm really, you know, a pretty generous thing, you didn't have a bomb there, even though it was something precious to you.

So what's the difference, you know, there's something about this degree of caughtness.

So for myself, I, for a while, I had a, I had all of Carl Sagan's books, because I was a big Carl Sagan fan for a lot of my life, I still am actually, I really appreciate what he did and somehow he was the one who turned me on to curiosity.

I was at the right age to watch his TV show Cosmos and, you know, I had all his books at one point, and I was needing to lighten up and I, you know, was wanting to get rid of a bunch of books, and I couldn't get rid of those ones.

It was really funny.

I have now, by the way, I don't, I think I, maybe I kept the one, I don't know, but you know, they're not, they're not that valuable on any grand scale, but they had meaning to me.

You know, just books really, I probably wasn't even going to read them again.

So that's, you know, that's one thing that I had created a bond to in my mind.

And another time, I accidentally bought a sofa that didn't fit in my apartment.

I didn't realize that when I bought it.

And so when they delivered it, it couldn't fit and it was a problem.

So, and I, you know, was, I bought it new.

So it was not a trivial purchase, but because I couldn't use it and I didn't really want to deal with it, I sent it off anonymously to a women's shelter.

And I didn't even, I, yeah, I didn't tell them where it came from.

And I never thought about it again.

Didn't matter.

So that was, you know, so the, just to be clear about this, since people can get bound up about these Dharma teachings about renunciation and giving up and so forth, the right answer is not always that you give away something, you know, it's like, it's wrong if you're keeping it and it's right if you gave it away, it can go wrong the both, both ways, you know, you can, you can be perfectly right to keep something that has meaning to you as long as you're not, you know, so attached to it that it's causing dukkha for you.

And you can give away things that you shouldn't have, because you thought it was more Buddhist or more something to give something away at a certain time.

We might just be doing it out of aversion, for example, or out of some, you know, false idealism.

So what we need to do is check for the, about this bond, you know, check if it's, if there's something extra going on there with this item in your life that's going to lead to dukkha.

And that's why I said earlier that sort of cryptic phrase, and it changes over time, because there might be something that's not a feather to you right now, and it's fine for you to keep it and enjoy it and so forth.

And 10 years from now, when your practice has matured a little bit more, it is a bond.

And there is dukkha and it feels heavy and you have to get rid of it.

But getting rid of it 10 years earlier would not have been the right thing.

So there's no, you know, one size fits all, you have to keep checking, is there a bond here that's leading to dukkha?

And it will change as you change.

So it's sometimes hard for people to hear that sensuality includes relationships.

It does, it does include relationships.

The clinging that we have to friends and family falls into this category.

Objection, objection.

Isn't it true that, I'm imitating, isn't it true that we're supposed to have attachment to people in our lives and so forth, and we should have good intimate relationships?

And yes, yes, that's all true, that it was not about the attachment, but the good relationships are necessary for humans and are the foundation of the past, to have spiritual friendship and to have dharma friends and relationships with teachers and so forth.

But isn't it true that you would suffer terribly for some of the loss of or change of some of these relationships?

Yes.

And that's dukkha.

That is dukkha.

It goes very deep.

This one, remember I said, don't trivialize the sensuality category.

It goes very deep because it includes people also.

Now, to be fair, the one with people does go into the other two kinds of craving that we haven't talked about yet that are related to identity.

So that and that runs quite deep also.

But the basic things like this person makes me feel good and this person gives me things and supports me materially, those kinds of things are part of the common category.

So we have to look quite deeply here.

The noble truths are meant to be engaged with not just met intellectually or psychologically or here's the theory about this or that, what humans need.

You have to look for yourself.

What does it mean to have craving within a close and mostly joyful relationship?

There can be craving there.

And once again, we have to discern what is normal healthy desire, what's useful for being connected to this person, and where's the part that leads to dukkha?

I think it's pretty hard to get all that right as a human, but we should try.

What's extra?

Essentially, what's extra in this relationship?

Okay, so moving on then, we have the second kind of craving.

Craving for becoming.

Bhava tanha, B-H-A-V-A.

So humans want to be somebody.

We want to be somebody.

We want an identity.

We want a role, a rank, a position to be seen in a certain way.

We want a project that helps us have a mission in the world.

And then when that one ends, we'll go on to the next one.

Yeah, we definitely want to exist.

And we want to exist in a certain way.

This goes really deep.

And to be avoided at all costs is having no one to be, no role, no recognition, not to be needed.

This is almost like death.

Wouldn't that be kind of like death?

So this is a big one.

But the Buddha says, "Oh, look at all the dukkha there, because are we in control of all of that?"

No, no, we're not.

And so then it doesn't go the way we want it to.

And there's a lot of dukkha.

So you can see this, maybe a relatively kind of what, formal way that we can practice with this, let's say, is that the retreat conditions mimic this a little bit.

They provoke some of this grasping.

To be on a silent retreat, you're not getting eye contact.

So you're not getting that instant validation from other people.

You're not able to play social games very much, although let me tell you, people do.

But you're not able to as much because you're not speaking.

You can't assert who you are in quite the same way, although again, people do.

But without the speech, you can't as easily assert who you are in certain ways.

So what happens is we place great importance on the one area where we have a role, the yogi job.

Boy, do you see that?

I'm going to be the best vegetable chopper.

I'm going to tell everybody else how they automop the floor.

We see people writing notes to managers.

I've managed so many retreats.

And there's always a couple people on the retreat who write lots and lots of notes, probably because they're having trouble with the silence, just so they can get a note back.

So they can feel like they're seen.

This is all part of Bapataanha.

And it's okay.

It's okay that it's there.

You get to see it on retreat.

Or people write notes to the teachers with commentary about their Dharma talks in the hopes of creating some kind of dialogue so that they can what know who they are.

So they have a standing, a place.

Sometimes you will argue just so they can know who they are and somebody will, you know, take them up on a fight.

And then they finally, yes, I've got a role to play.

It's really twisty and turny how this particular one works.

And we can see that this kind of craving runs very deep just by watching our own behavior and thoughts around this.

How often do we need to assert who we are and make sure people know?

And I've started to, you know, you have to catch your language.

And you're speaking, if you say things like a specific situation comes up where, for example, you don't want pepper on your salad in the restaurant, you know, the waiter comes by with the pepper thing and you don't want it.

But instead of just you just say, no, thank you, I don't want it, you explain to the person you're eating with.

I've learned about myself that if I have too much hot stuff, I'll sneeze and sneezing is bad these days because of COVID.

You know, it's like, why don't you have to say that?

You know, you generalize something from a specific situation into an assertion about yourself, about who you are, what you like in general.

I mean, sometimes that's conversational.

But often we're just creating self in that moment and declaring it so that we know who we are, they know who we are.

And you know, there's so then again, we have to check what's the extra and what's the, you know, kind of important for having a normal social conversation.

The Dharma gives us a lot of interesting opportunities to practice with this one.

Carlotta.

Sorry for the interruption.

But it seems to me that for what you're saying, all goes into the intention.

All goes into what?

Into the intention.

The intention.

Right.

Because let's say the same example of the paper that you put.

If my intention is to actually do a little bit of show off and getting people to know me, then applies what you're saying.

But if the intention is not there, it would be normal conversation, wouldn't it?

Yeah.

Yeah, I did say that we could, there are times when we could just have normal conversation.

Yeah, we have to check our mind is so tricky about slipping in self assertion and other sorts of things.

We should, we, we, I'm only talking about us.

We need to look at our own mind.

If somebody else says something, we can't project what their motivation or intention or so forth was.

We can't go around judging other people about, you know, that person has too much of this and that I'm talking about how we would self examine and check whether or not we can check when it's coming forth like that.

We have to ask ourselves, you know, was I feeling uncomfortable?

You know, why am I, why do I need to say this?

Was I not sure who I was?

Did I want somebody to see me in a certain way?

And they slip out so easily.

My Dharma teacher tells a story of a time when he was leading a group.

I mean, he was leading a weekly group and had happened that one of his friends, like some colleague of his, came to one of his Dharma talks to check out his group.

I don't know, maybe to see how you run a group.

I don't know what it was, but it wasn't somebody who was a student of his.

And without thinking, he was just chatting with them before and then was about to go and start the group.

And it slipped out of his mouth.

He said, by the, you know, I didn't prepare this Dharma talk tonight.

And then he thought later, why did I say that?

You know, like, it wasn't part of any of the conversation, you know, was he hedging in case it wasn't very good?

Then, then, you know, then they wouldn't think that he always spoke like that.

Or was he showing off?

They're like, I didn't even prepare.

And if it's a really good Dharma talk, they'll say, wow, he didn't even prepare for that.

You know, it's like he was like, what was going on?

And he didn't even know exactly, but, you know, it just slipped out of his mouth.

So we have to be, you know, there's the mind is operating at really sort of tricky levels under there.

He was pretty sure it wasn't just a casual statement, you know, that didn't have anything to do with his self.

So, yeah.

This one goes very deep.

We're not going to eliminate this Bhavatanatil, I think, Arhantya, because I think all forms of conceit are related to it.

So it goes very deep.

So don't worry that it's there.

But notice it.

See, and see that there's a little bit of dukkha associated with the tension of I want to be seen a certain way.

I want to make sure you see me a certain way.

Or I feel okay about myself in a certain way.

And don't be hard on yourself when you do see it, because, you know, it's there.

So then we get to the third kind of craving.

Craving for non-becoming, Vibhavatanat, V-I-V-H-A-V-A, Tanat.

So in a sense, this is the opposite of Bhavatanat.

So it's craving for non-becoming.

But it has some subtlety to it that's useful to draw out.

You know, why did the Buddha name that as a separate kind.

There's a number of things about it.

I've looked at this one somewhat carefully, because it gets short shrift often.

And so I found I didn't understand it very well in Dharma talks, because you get to it third, like now, it's already been half an hour.

So I'll speak about it just for a few minutes, right?

But I'll see what I can do.

Actually, I'll try to say more.

So it has to do often with a distorted view of liberation.

So it involves actively wanting to eliminate an identity or to end experience.

So we have some distorted idea that we need to get rid of some identity.

Now at the top level, it's just, you know, I don't want you to see me this way.

I want to make sure you don't.

You see, you know, that I'm not X.

But it runs much more subtly than that also.

The Buddha taught that it's too extreme to actively want to eliminate things in order to become liberated.

So there's this Sutta from the Gitti Buddhika that goes like this.

I'm going to read just the whole passage.

"Held by two kinds of views.

Some devas and human beings hold back and some overreach.

Only those with vision see.

And how do some hold back?

Devas and humans enjoy being, delight in being, or satisfied with being.

When Dharma is taught to them for the cessation of being, their minds do not enter into it or acquire confidence in it, or settle upon it, or become resolved upon it.

Thus do some hold back."

So that's about Bhava Tanha.

Then he says, "And how do some overreach?"

Now some are troubled, ashamed, and disgusted by this very same being.

And they rejoice in the idea of non-being, asserting in as much as this self, when the body perishes at death, is annihilated and destroyed and does not exist after death, this is peaceful, this is excellent, this is reality.

Thus do some overreach."

So there's Bhava Tanha, not quite the opposite, right?

"And how do those with vision see?"

So the middle way, "Here a practitioner sees what has come to be as having come to be.

Having seen it thus, they practice the course for disenchantment, for dispassion, for the cessation of what has come to be.

Thus do those with vision see."

So the first person described, he's talking about Bhava Tanha, so they have hesitation about moving toward liberation because they're clinging to an idea of themselves that they like, they delight in being, they like being x, y, z, and they think that defines them and they want to be that and so forth.

And so they're not going to be very excited about letting go of the self, for example.

And so this, he says that, you know, you can't get liberated from that today.

So they're holding back, they're holding back from actually letting go into a deeper piece, a deeper piece than having a satisfying identity.

And then he says, "But the second person talks about is displaying Bhava Tanha, where they're ashamed and disgusted and they don't want their self."

And so they try to, they claim, "Oh, thank goodness, when I finally die and get rid of all this, that's going to be peace."

This is actually a view that a lot of people hold here in the West, in some form.

Most, a lot of people, not all, not most, but maybe not, I don't know what the proportion is, but a fair number of people believe that death annihilates everything for a person.

Others, there are religious people who have other ideas about that.

So, but we often see, if you look carefully in your mind, you may see death as a kind of relief, a time when our problems and struggles will finally end.

You know, it's like, especially when we start getting old and things get troublesome, it's like, "Oh, when's this going to be over?"

So the Buddha says this kind of active wanting of relief through annihilation is overreaching.

So I think that's an interesting phrase.

Mostly people don't think this way because they're troubled by the idea of self.

So that's like a little more Indian side.

In the West, we don't tend to think about ourselves in that way.

But if we're growing on the, as we grow on the Dharma path, even if we're Westerners and are conditioned with those ideas, there can come a time when we start to be irritated by the self.

You know, enough teachers like me say, "Notice yourself.

Notice all that selfing.

Notice how painful it is to be really wrapped up in ideas of yourself and get stuck on those."

And we start to say, "No, these teachings on not self actually are kind of liberating.

And it is kind of troublesome that I keep creating this self."

And so we start saying, "How do I get rid of it?"

I want to get rid of the self.

I want to stop selfing.

I want to eliminate this activity in my mind, generating a lot of a burden around this perfectly natural in a sense, natural in the sense that if we don't do anything about it, it's their tendency in the mind."

So then we do feel troubled by the self.

We want to get rid of the self.

I've had people say, "How do I stop selfing?"

Heidi.

It sounds like you're saying that the first form, the clinging, and then the opposite is a form of aversion.

Yeah, pushing away.

Yeah.

So it's like the difference between letting go and wanting to get rid of.

Exactly.

Yeah, it's the same thing except regarding the self, regarding identity, who we are.

And he brings in a kind of nihilism or?

Yeah, nihilism.

Yeah, wanting to eliminate the self.

And sometimes we think, "Well, death is going to be it."

And then I won't have to deal with it.

So he brings in this extra piece about death, that I won't have to deal with anything anymore because at death everything gets annihilated.

Of course, in Buddhism, there's the idea that, "No, actually, if you weren't done with your work, there's momentum that goes on."

But even if you don't go that far, if you just even in practice, if you're trying to, as you said, get rid of the self, that's aversion.

And it actually still leaves us with a bond.

Remember these bonds we're talking about today.

It still leaves us with a bond to the selfing.

And so those with vision, how do those with vision see?

This is the third one you've led us into, Heidi, which is that you just see with mindfulness, you see selfing as selfing.

Oh, this is the activity of selfing that's happening.

You don't grasp onto it, you don't push it away, and over time it will fade because it's not being fed with either craving or aversion.

That is the path.

So hard for us to understand that that's what the path really is, is to stop doing things with experience.

And sometimes it takes a lot of effort to stop doing things with experience.

But there's nothing we can do to actively make something and accept, let it fade over time.

There are things that we can actively end, but for the deep things, the deep things that we have to let go of, it's always like that.

So we can fall into this viva-vatthana, this active wanting the self or being or identity or conceit not to be there.

And so it manifests as desire to get rid of the self, desire not to be what one is or how one is.

Sometimes you just are as you are and have to wait for those patterns to fade.

Sometimes it's called desire for no further becoming, which I kind of like, because we spend our whole life being this, becoming this, and then becoming this.

And eventually we get tired of it.

We say, that's it.

I'm not going to become anything else.

I'm done.

Well, you can't do that either.

Even a teacher, you become a teacher and then you become a retired teacher and then you become a patient in a hospital dying.

You can't stop becoming something else, but you can stop clinging to all of those changes in your identity and your role.

So remember, we can't actively push these things away.

We can't just stop.

We could stop internally identifying with any of it.

That would be the end of suffering, but we can't stop being those things as long as we're in our interactive, you know, inner-related role in the world.

Sometimes it exists as the desire to feel nothing or to annihilate experience.

So this is the suicidal side of viva-vatthana, just one aspect of it, but that is, you know, suicidal thoughts are viva-vatthana.

Or the last one I've come up with is, this is a non-canonical list, by the way, in my descriptions of this, in my own reflections, holding fixed ideas about transcendence as an escape from the dukkha of samsara.

So the idea that we're going to go somewhere else and be free of all this to the peerland and there's something I don't mean in the sense of peerland Buddhism, which is a perfectly valid strand, but we're going to escape in some way.

So the Buddha points out that all of this is also a form of craving or clinging.

We're not aiming to get rid of the self or experience or to become a no-self.

Some people try to become a no-self when they hear about no-self.

Someone says, "Where do you want to go for dinner?"

What restaurant?"

And you say, "Well, I don't really exist, so I don't really care."

You can choose.

You can still choose Italian or Mediterranean.

It's okay.

So anyway, the path of practice is to calmly see this process of selfing as it is, which will naturally lead to its release, so that we're not caught anymore.

The bond isn't there.

So we're pointed back to reality.

We're always pointed back to reality in this practice.

It's not about how we want things to be.

It's about how they are.

Just seeing that, that's enough.

And then this extra that we add on, that's where the dukkha comes from.

So the extra we add on is, "I want to hold onto this," or, "I want to push this away."

So if we can straddle this middle way between holding on and trying to eliminate and instead be able to flow along with the way things change, we would have a chance at actually reaching the cessation of dukkha.

That's next week's topic, the third noble truth.

So there we go.

Questions, comments?

Further becoming?

Sorry, this is a topic you do have to have a sense of humor about though, craving, because it's so painful when we're craving and we look back and see where we were craving and how we got caught up and how we did something stupid and got angry at somebody or whatever got stuck in our ego.

So it's good to have a sense of humor about this.

We're all working on it best we can, but this is really where it is.

It's that craving, Tanha.

I saw Steve's hint first.

I was looking on the website for this class to see if there were recordings.

I couldn't find them, but I know you record.

Yeah, they're on my audio page, about a third of the way down, just above the video talks.

There's a section for dedicated practitioners group.

Thanks.

This was just really wonderful.

Susan.

I think it's kind of interesting because some of the Bhava Tanha items that I've had, I have flipped them to the opposite, trying to get away from them.

Were you overreaching?

Yes.

It was one way and then working with it, turn it into the opposite.

Ultimately, what I usually find out with them is there's nothing wrong with any of it.

What I have to learn is how to use it properly.

All of it is, and I know thinking, all of the thinking processes, I'm not trying to get rid of any of those, eliminate any aspect of myself.

I'm just trying to learn how to use them properly.

Certain things probably aren't useful, like murderous reach.

Oh, no, no.

We can get rid of that one.

Yeah, we can get rid of that.

But I mean, use things skillfully rather than unskillfully and have full use of the full range of being a human being.

Not chop it off and make it less, make it broader.

I think the Dharma can use all channels that are wholesome.

I'll say it that way.

All channels that are wholesome, the Dharma can make use of, and we don't need to try to change those or make them look better or something.

The unwholesome ones we will slowly chip away at if we don't get angry about them and upset and try to push them away and so forth.

But yeah, we can let the Dharma use all of us as a person, or maybe parts that fall away.

There's always stuff that there are things that I used to enjoy, but that weren't unwholesome.

But somehow over time, I just don't feel the need for those things anymore as my mind gets simpler and quieter.

But there wasn't anything wrong with what I used to enjoy.

So I think that there are other things that other habits and interests that are also kind of neutral like that that I've kept and still seem to have and find interesting.

So I don't know how the Dharma works, but I would agree with you that anything that's wholesome is okay for the Dharma to keep using and it will shape it based on the conditions of your life.

Yeah.

We don't know how it's going to look in the end.

Like if we could take a snapshot right now of all the wholesome tendencies and all the unwholesome ones, we couldn't quite say that awakening would be if the unwholesome ones were gone and we had all of the wholesome ones.

The unwholesome ones will be gone, that we can be sure about.

But of the wholesome ones, some will change, some new ones will come in.

We can't know what, yeah, where weakened presence will be like because it depends on the conditions around us also, what gets emphasized.

The unwholesome ones seem to be forgotten.

I mean, to me, they just disappear.

They're not, you know, I don't, they're not part of my life anymore.

So I don't remember them hardly.

That's true.

Sometimes that's, sometimes it's like that.

Or sometimes we remember them because it's useful to do so if we can help others through knowing that we have wise and up in certain ways.

All right, well, I think that's it for this evening.

Thank you, everyone.

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