

The Madhupiṇḍika Sutta

A Meditation Guide



Radhika Abeysekera

Dedicated with Gratitude to the Dhamma Teachers
of the Past and the Present.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta



Preface

This book is dedicated to my Dhamma teachers. I am fortunate. I began my study of the Buddha Dhamma through reading Dhamma books of great monks and lay devotees who had practiced the Theravada tradition of Buddha Dhamma in Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Then, I had the opportunity to meet and practice under the guidance of some of these teachers and their student monks, and lay teachers who brought the teachings to the West.

This book is a meditation guide based on some of the teachings of Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajīva Maha Thera, of the Nissarana Vanaya Monastery Mithirigala, Sri Lanka who taught the gradual path to reduce desire using the Non-reactional or (Bare Attention Path) of *Ceto vimutti*. The book also includes and was augmented with select teachings of Bhikkhu Katukurunde Ñāṇananda Mahā Thera of the Island Hermitage in Sri Lanka. Discourse translations were taken from writings of Bhikkhu Bodhi of the Chuang Yen Monastery in New York, USA and by Bhikkhu Thanissaro of the Metta Forest Monastery in California, USA.

My grateful appreciation, to these great teachers and the great pioneer forest tradition monks such as Ajahn Mun, and Ajahn Chah of Thailand and Mahasi Sayadaw and Sayadaw Pandith of Myanmar. Also, Acariya Buddhaghosa who authored *Visuddhimagga* which was translated as The Path of Purification by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and Paravahera Vajiranāna Maha Thera who authored Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice for their dedication to teaching, writing and translation of discourses and books for the benefit of both Western and Eastern devotees. All of you were my inspiration and guide for the writing of this book.

This book was reviewed for accuracy of the Dhamma and Pali terms by Venerable Panadure Chandaratana Thera of Mithirigala Nissarana Vanaya. I am very grateful for his careful review of the text and patience with all the questions that I asked to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the material. I could not have completed this task without his assistance.

This meditation guide is addressed to mature students of Dhamma, including the young Sri Lankan adults born in the West. English in plain language was used for ease of understanding and Pāli terms were included to retain the full meaning and flavour of the Buddha Dhamma. Also, a summary of the previous chapter was provided for easy reference and retention of previous material covered.

The *Madhupiṇḍika sutta* is a profound and complex discourse that introduces the reader to an accurate understanding of the Buddha's teaching on mental proliferations. It addresses how the pure mind (*citta*) of name and form that arises in the sense organs on contact, is defiled in the faculty of the mind resulting in corrupted perception, concepts, fabrications and mental proliferation. It also addresses how this process and mental proliferation can be restrained and prevented using present moment awareness (mindfulness) and wise reflection.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thera has used this complex discourse with great skill and aptitude to introduce the reader to meditation that leads to the Path to Freedom based on gradually reducing desire using the Non-reactional Path of *Ceto vimutti*. In addition, I have augmented the book with select teachings by Katukurunde Ñāṇananda Mahā Thera's book *Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought* and also introduced the reader to the Wise Reflection or Not-self Path of *Paññā vimutti*. Therefore, this book serves as a meditation guide to all persons.

The book also focuses on the difference between the false view of a permanent self (*sakkāyaditthi*) and the role of the ego that is promoted by craving, conceit and false view (*taṇhā, māna, diṭṭhi*). It concludes with a glimpse of the mind of an Awakened Being using quotations from the teachings of the Blessed One that highlight the dangers of mental proliferation and promote both the Non-Reaction Path and the Not-self path.

It is hoped that this book will be of great benefit to persons interested in an easy to read meditation guide based on the *Madhupiṇḍika sutta* in English. With this goal in mind, this book was written and compiled with great care, effort, and devotion. Any errors and omissions in the material are due to the inadequacy of the author. Your forgiveness for any shortcoming is appreciated.

May all Beings be Happy, Peaceful and Contented!

Radhika Abeysekera
August 23 2019

Contents

Chapter	Page
1. What Does the Recluse Proclaim, what is your Doctrine?	01
2. How Does One Prevent Quarreling with the World?	06
3. Cause and Effect	13
4. Mental Proliferations can be Restrained and Managed	25
5. The Mind of the Awakened Being	35
6. Glossary of Pali Terms	51

Homage to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the Fully Awakened One!

Homage to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the Fully Awakened One!

Homage to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the Fully Awakened One!



Chapter 1

What does the Recluse Proclaim, What is your Doctrine?

*"The sort of doctrine friend, where one does not keep quarreling with anyone in the cosmos.
Its Devas, Brahmas or Maras;
Its contemplatives or brahmins;
Its royalty or common folks....
MN18*

Overview

The *Madhupiṇḍika sutta* was delivered by the Buddha in the Great Forest, close to the Sakyan territory of Kapilavastu. This discourse, which is from the *Sutta Pitaka*, was taken from the *Majjhima Nikāya*. This is a deep and profound discourse more suitable for the mature student and may require much iteration of careful reading and discussion.

The *Madhupiṇḍika sutta* addresses the Lord Buddha's doctrine or philosophy with emphasis on the elimination of mental proliferation (*papañca*) and the futility of thinking, reflecting and deliberating on past events (sensual data) that corrupt and soil the calm and purity of the mind. This discourse was dispensed by the Buddha as the result of a question by Daṇḍapāṇi who was a Sakyan by lineage. Daṇḍapāṇi, with walking stick in hand, walked briskly into the Great Forest for his daily exercise. Seeing the Buddha seated under a Bilu sapling, he approached the Buddha and exchanged courteous greetings. Then standing to one side, he asked the Blessed One, "What does the recluse proclaim, what is your doctrine?" The Blessed One replied to his question as follows:

*"The sort of doctrine friend, where one does not keep quarreling with anyone in the cosmos.
Its Devas, Brahmas or Maras;
Its contemplatives or brahmins;
Its royalty or common folks."*

*"The doctrine, where perception (of self) does not overpower and consume the brahmin -
The brahmin who remains disassociated from sensuality,
Free from doubt, His uncertainty cut away,
Devoid of craving for becoming and non-becoming.
Such is what I proclaim, such is my doctrine"*

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

When he heard the Buddha's words Daṇḍapāṇi shook his head, furrowed his brow and left the Great Wood slowly, whilst leaning heavily on his walking stick¹.

The Madhupiṇḍika sutta was proclaimed by the Blessed One and one of his great disciples - The Venerable Mahā Kaccāna who was renowned for his clear and detailed explanations of short, complex teachings. The Buddha assigned titles to his great disciples based on their expertise and aptitude. Venerable Mahā Kaccāna was foremost in explaining in detail, short yet deep and profound sayings of the Buddha. Therefore, discourses that contained the teachings of Venerable Mahā Kaccāna were acclaimed as important deep teachings that required attentive listening.

This discourse enumerates the Blessed One's teaching on the complex working of the mind and the using of this knowledge to purify the mind towards Awakening. It begins by focusing on the arising of mental proliferation and the resulting defilements of the mind. It then leads to the prevention and elimination of mental proliferation and the resulting purity of mind.

The word *papañca* is difficult to translate into English with just one word. *Papañca* has a negative connotation and is identified with falsification and distortion of facts. It is also related to the exaggeration and colouring of facts. The Pali commentaries identify *papañca* as covering thoughts resulting from three types of defilements: craving, conceit and views (*taṇhā, māna, and diṭṭhi*). Mental proliferation or *papañca* hinders and delays the individual's realization of Awakening/Unbinding (*Nibbāna*).

The Importance of Selective Remembrance

In our modern society, great importance is given to memory and the capacity to remember things way back from the past. Diseases such as Dementia and Alzheimer's are looked upon with fear, and great effort and scientific research is performed to strengthen memory power so that one does not forget the past due to ageing.

At the time of the Blessed One, the Buddha Dhamma was an oral tradition that was kept alive and handed down through the extraordinary retentive powers of the great *Arahants* such as Venerable Ananda, The Blessed One's personal attendant. The lines and verses in the discourses were also repeated by the Blessed One for easy retention; wise reflection (*yoniso manasikāra*) and discussion were also encouraged. Memorizing and reciting the discourse using the original words of the Buddha and discussion resulted in extraordinary memory powers in all the great Awakened Beings (*Arahants*).

In addition, the first Sangha Council led by eminent disciples such as Venerables Mahā Kāssapa, Ananda and Upali set in motion the preservation of this oral tradition for future

¹ The commentaries state that the Buddha was aware that Daṇḍapāṇi was arrogant and had a quarrelsome nature.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

generations. Together, five hundred *Arahants* ensured the importance of careful preservation of the Dhamma but also enforced attentiveness, careful listening and retention of the original words of the Buddha and his great Disciples. This does not imply that the modern methods of increasing and strengthening one's memory power are inferior. However, it should be noted that in the modern world, little or no effort is placed on the selection of what one remembers, and the impact of these memories on the clarity and calmness of the mind and its feelings.

In fact, most people would not even know how they select or chose to recall from the numerous memories from events of the past. They may, however, agree that some memories lead to grief and sadness, some to conflict and anger and others to joy and happiness. Some people may even agree that some memories are best forgotten but they have no idea how to manage or control the selection of their memories or the resulting reflections and thought.

Some people may agree that some memories and the resulting reflections lead to sensuality and passion or anger and conflict and that some memories lead to dispassion, clarity and calm. Despite this, most people are not selective in their reflections and deliberations. If they knew how to select and guide their reflection to wise choices such as those that lead to clarity, dispassion, and calm, and they were selective, then there is the possibility of realizing the state of mind where one does not quarrel with the world. There is also the possibility of realizing the same level of purity of mind as the Buddha and his *Arahants* of 2600 years past. Unfortunately, the majority of the people are not even aware of the selection process. Nor are they aware of how they can steer or guide the mind and its contents to a conflict free, calming dispassion that eliminates all quarrels with the world.

The Buddha has shown us the method that leads to a pure mind with clarity, dispassion and calm. However, over the past 2600 years we have lost some of his teaching. Many things are now being taught as Buddhism. You will need to sift through the teachings and extract the pure Buddha Dhamma that the Blessed One taught. You will have to observe the mind and see if the Dhamma talks (or TV programs) that you are listening to and absorbing lead to the qualities of freedom (*vimutti*). There is a state of mind that is free of corruptions and defilements and it is available to all without discrimination. It is equally accessible to royalty and the commoner, men and women, the young and the old, the wealthy and the poor. However, to access the benefits of this doctrine that does not lead to entanglement, quarrels and conflict, one has to be selective in one's choice of intake and recalling from memory.

The Buddha's doctrine does not lead to entanglement, quarrels and conflict. There is no need to quarrel, prove that you are right, or win. This is not because of the fear of losing, because of lack of clarity or aptitude in presenting one's opinion. It is because there is no clinging or binding to the concept of self that leads to entanglement. It is also because the Buddha and his *Arahants* do not propagate an opinion. They propagate a doctrine that they have experienced as Truth. This teaching is deep and profound. Therefore, I will use an example to make it easier for you to understand the quality of the teachings.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

When one cuts a jack fruit, which has sticky glue like sap, one applies coconut oil on the knife and the hands. Then the sticky sap will not stick to the knife or your hands and one can cut the jack fruit easily without getting entangled in the sap with sticky hands. Similarly, the Blessed One's doctrine, like the well-oiled hands and knife, does not lead to clinging and binding to external objects. Clinging and binding leads to the perception of self and the ego. This leads to the need to win, to protect the ego and reinforces the concept of self. It also leads to arguments, debates, much un-necessary talk, exaggeration false speech and gossip. Even if there is no verbal articulation there is a continuous stream of mental chatter. It can even permeate your dreams.

In the Buddha's doctrine there is no clinging, binding, conceit or arrogance and there is clarity of vision. One has eliminated craving, conceit and false views (*taṇhā, māna, diṭṭhi*). One has also experienced not-self. His doctrine leads to the pure mind of an *Arahant* that has eliminated suffering by eliminating clinging and binding.

The Wandering Mind

At present, past memories result in thoughts that disturb your meditation. The breath, is free of all defilements but your mind slips away immediately to events that arouse the defilements. Let us experiment and see this in our meditation. Let's meditate on our breath for a few minutes and then reflect on where our mind has wandered.

Let us assume that today is our first day of meditation in a five-day residential retreat. Most of you have taken leave and come from a busy work and/or home environment. It has been a challenge to get your work done in time to leave and you also had to juggle the needs of your children. Some of you had to drive through the rush hour traffic to get here and barely made it on time. It is quite possible that your mind wandered to a stressful event that occurred at work or at home. You had some measure of peace and calm when you were aware of your in-breath and out-breath but you lost it when your mind wandered off and you started thinking of what happened at work or in your home. It seems as if our stress or suffering begins with remembering and the resulting reconstruction of an event with thought. This is more pronounced if the event remembered is important and binding to one's ego or image of self.

This is because; perception of self and endorsement of self is re-enforced through remembering and inappropriate thought or reflection (*ayoniso manasikāra*). Remembering leads to thought, the creation and sustenance of "the one who thinks" and the endorsing of the false view of self.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Therefore, you must act in a manner such that there is no need to remember past events especially when you are in meditation or engaged in daily tasks. The present moment is comprehensive, complete and free of hindrances and defilements. The mind does not need to go to past events and relive them or to fantasize into the future to fully experience the present moment. One can be in the present moment and be free from defilements. But the mind goes back into past memories that result in constructed thoughts and defilements again and again. This is because of *samsāric* habits of endorsing the false view of self through remembering and mental proliferation of past events. The Buddha has given us two methods to break this *samsāric* habit of endorsing the false view of a permanent self (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) and the self-image (*māna and diṭṭhi*) through mental proliferation. We will be discussing the Blessed One's doctrine of prevention and cure in the next few chapters.



Chapter 2

How Does One Prevent Quarreling with the World?

Monks with regard to the cause whereby perceptions and remembering (ideas/concepts) born of mental proliferations overcome a person;

*If nothing is found there to delight in, welcome and hold onto,
Then this is the end to the underlying tendency to greed/lust (lobha),
The underlying tendency to anger/hatred (dosa), and
The underlying tendency to delusion and false views (moha).....*

Chapter One Summary

- The Buddha`s doctrine does not lead to entanglement, quarrels and conflict.
- The un-awakened mind goes back into past memories that can result in mental proliferation and the arising of defilements.
- The term (*papañca*) is translated into English as mental proliferation. It has a negative connotation and is identified with falsification and distortion of facts. It is also related to the exaggeration and colouring of facts. Mental proliferation includes both reflections of the past and fantasizing`s of the future.
- This happens because of *samsāric* habits of endorsing the false view of self through remembering and mental proliferation of past events.
- Perception of self and endorsement of self is reinforced through in-appropriate remembering, in-appropriate reflection and mental proliferation.
- Perpetuating the perception of self and endorsement of self-image (ego) leads to binding and delay in liberation from this *samsāric* journey.
- Therefore, restrain in sensual intake and selective remembering is important.
- The present moment is comprehensive, complete and free of hindrances and defilements.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

- The Blessed One’s doctrine addresses both prevention (of mental proliferation) and cure (from mental proliferation that has occurred)

When Daṇḍapāṇi left the Great Forest, the Blessed One went back to the Banyan Park of Nigroda where He was residing and sat down on the seat prepared by the monks. The Blessed One then told the congregation of monks of the questions asked by Daṇḍapāṇi and repeated the answer that He had given him in the Great Forest. Then a certain monk questioned the Blessed One by saying “Lord, how does one ensure that one does not keep quarrelling with anyone in the cosmos.....devoid of craving for being and non being.”

The Blessed One answered his question by saying:

Monk with regard to the cause whereby perceptions and remembering (ideas/concepts) born of mental proliferations overcome a person;

If nothing is found there (sensory data, ideas and concepts) to delight in, welcome and hold onto,

Then this is the end to the underlying tendency to greed/lust (lobha);

Anger/hatred (dosa), and the underlying tendency to delusion and false views (moha).

The underlying tendency to doubt (vicikicca), the underlying tendency to conceit (māna),

The underlying tendency to desire for being (bava taṇhā), and

The underlying tendency to ignorance (avijjā).

This is also the end of taking up rods and bladed weapons, and the end of arguments, quarrels, disputes, accusations, divisive, malicious speech, and false speech. This is where the evil, unskillful actions and speech cease without remainder.

Having said this, the Blessed One got up from his seat and went into his dwelling. Unable to understand the meaning of this brief statement and not wanting to disturb the Blessed One, the monks decided to approach Venerable Mahā Kaccāna who was praised by the Blessed One and by his esteemed colleagues for explaining in detail complex and brief saying of the Buddha².

Identifying Mental Proliferation

In chapter one, we learned that *papañca* is translated into English as mental proliferation and that it has a negative connotation and is identified with falsification and distortion of facts. It is also related to the exaggeration and colouring of facts. We also know that it leads to

² The commentaries state that the monks present were former Brahmins well versed in the religious scriptures (*vedas*). Therefore, they were conceited because of their knowledge of the ancient theory. The Blessed One used this method of teaching to subdue their conceit.

quarrels, arguments and conflict and that these runaway thoughts (which include both past reflections and future planning) can overpower a person and lead him into wrongdoing against their better judgement. It is important that you can identify mental proliferation so that you know what you are up against and can prevent it from occurring.

In the above short stanza the Blessed One gave us another clue for identification of mental proliferation. He said “If nothing is found there (in sensory data, ideas and concepts) to delight in, welcome and hold onto,.... Then this is the end of ignorance.....This is also the end of arguments quarrels....”

The blessed One gave us a method of elimination of mental proliferation that leads to arguments and quarrels. The Pali words he used *abhinandhati*, *abhivadhati* and *ajjosāyati* cannot be translated into English with just one word. The Pali term *abhinandhati* is translated as ‘to delight in (sensory data, ideas and concepts)’. *Abhivadhati* is translated as ‘welcoming (sensory data, ideas and concepts) by endorsing and communicating with others’. *Ajjosayati* is translated as ‘holding on tight to concepts and the resulting *papañca* to the point of being obsessed, overpowered and overwhelmed’. We now know that if we did not delight in, welcome and communicate with others, hold tight to the point of obsession that sensory data that we experience from the eye, ear, nose,...etc. would not lead to mental proliferation, arguments and quarrels.

Applying the Buddha’s Technique to Prevent Mental Proliferation

We will see how we can use this short but profound teaching of the Blessed One, in the present day and times to ensure the elimination of quarrels and conflict. The Blessed One and his Noble Arahant disciples had experienced the Truth of the teaching and were confident in their knowledge and realization. They were also content and satisfied with what they experienced. They had no desire or need to argue or debate with anyone with opposing views. They had no fear, no doubt in the Buddha Dhamma and no desire to prove anything to anyone. Despite this, many contemporary teachers challenged the Blessed One and his Noble Disciples to debate and questioned them with the hidden agenda of irritating and annoying the monks so as to engage in quarrels and debate.

The Blessed One and his Noble Disciples saw through these contemplatives deceit and remained cool, collected and unperturbed by any challenge thrown at them. They did not rise to the bait of jealous and insecure contemplatives.

Let us use an example for clarity. We switch on the television by using the remote control. If the batteries in our remote are dead, no matter how many times we press the ‘on’ button the television will not start. The message that is being sent by the remote does not reach the television. Similar to the non-reactive performance of a remote without a battery, the message or hidden agenda of contemplatives bent on quarreling and arguing in harsh tones,

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

does not reach the Buddha. The Blessed One does not react to their innuendos, slander and malicious words.

The world naturally moves towards arguments, quarrels and conflict. What was the Blessed One's method of letting go and not hearing so as to be un-affected by innuendos and harsh criticism? The Buddha gave a preventative method to be used and practiced before you succumbed to mental proliferation and a defiled mind and a more complex method to follow if you have already made contact and succumbed to past memories and mental proliferation.

What does one do if a person approaches you with the intent of drawing you into unnecessary argumentative speech? You are aware that you have strong opinions that attracts and bind you to the topic at hand. You are also aware that it would lead to angry heated argument with hard feelings and no winner. You walk away and do not fall for his bait. You know what you should do; yet, you are drawn into an argument against your best judgement and have no control over your thoughts and resulting words. It happens both to the innocent, who are unknowingly drawn into debate and the experienced persons, who are confident that they can keep their cool, strategize and win.

In this instance we are talking about an external source of conflict and articulated speech. What if the enemy lies within? What if you are fighting to manage and control runaway thoughts that are drawing you swiftly in to harsh, cruel and malicious thoughts? It is happening so fast that you are overpowered and overwhelmed. The mind has taken on a life of its own and you have no controlling power. You are entangled in a web of thorns and cannot extricate yourself. Therefore, you cannot think and work this out when it happens. You must know the method of exit, and have practiced it beforehand so that you are well prepared when the emergency occurs.

Every workplace has a fire plan that needs to be known by all and hold periodic fire drill practice. The fire exit plan is prominently displayed at all exits and everyone knows that they must exit in an orderly manner to a pre-identified safe place. Periodically the fire alarm is set off and the practice drill is rehearsed. When a real fire starts, and the alarm rings, the plan unfolds as practiced and the building is evacuated in an orderly manner to a court yard across the street where it is safe.

Your safe place for the fire of mental proliferation is the breath. The breath is free of defilements and is your oasis. The breath is free from the fire of greed and lust, aversion and hatred, and delusion and ignorance. Therefore, you must practice again and again to bring the wandering mind that is seeking delight in dangerous places back to your oasis. The place where you feel the in-breath and the out-breath is your oasis.

You have to be well prepared, watchful and diligent. The defilements of passion/lust, rage and delusion (*rāga, dosa and moha*) can engulf you in flames and burn you to ashes at an incredible speed. Awareness and great effort are necessary to ensure that the plan to action is executed in an efficient and timely manner. You need mindfulness/awareness to catch the first whiff of danger - the gentle mist of smoke that rises even before the fire alarm is set off.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

You need practice to execute the plan swiftly and smoothly. And you need great effort to fight any dangers you may find lurking around the corner ready to strike back, hinder, delay or block your escape route. You must practice coming back to the present moment over and over again both in meditation and all your daily tasks. Then you will be ready when the real fire starts.

If you cannot bring the mind back to the present moment, the awareness of breath now, then you will never be able to do it at death. The quality of the mind at the moment of death is important because it influences and determines the place of re-becoming. Do not let runaway thoughts that lead you to mental proliferation overpower you. Be vigilant and aware so that the moment the mind wanders you bring it back to the awareness of breath. It is too late and difficult once you have gone too far. Catch it at inception before the first whiff of smoke has distorted and corrupted the thoughts into a raging fire of mental proliferation. That is the danger zone. Practice diligently so that if you indulge in mental proliferation, then you have the strength and knowledge to get back to your oasis of safety, swiftly. The present moment is your oasis.

Some of you may now be able to identify the first whiff of mental proliferation by past experience of thoughts that lead to arguments, quarrels and debates. You may also be able to catch such thoughts when you find that you are delighting in them, communicating with others and selling your point of view and obsessed with winning the argument. This is spiritual progress. Continue practicing present moment awareness using the breath and when you are engaged in your daily tasks.

Beneficial Thoughts Masquerading as Mental Proliferation

The Buddha has claimed that an untrained mind runs on the tendencies of desire, hatred and delusion. But once you understand it and do away with them, then according to the Buddha, six other very subtle tendencies may come to surface³. If you do not control or master the gross ones, you never see these subtle formations. Even if you recognize them, they appear to be beneficial and in your best interest, but in the long term they are misleading. Until you come up to this level, you never confront with them directly. Even if you confront them, it appears to be beneficial, but ultimately you lose the present moment mindfulness. These seemingly beneficial future planning, does not allow the mind to be here and now. You end up with daydreaming, fantasizing and story-telling that you feel is beneficial to your well-being. These are mental proliferations that tend to distract you when you have subdued gross desire, hatred, and delusion. They are past reflections and future planning of a beneficial nature.

³ Beneficial thoughts related to one's - relatives, places of dwelling such as villages, cities country etc., unblemished character, health, contribution to the welfare of others and gain and fame

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Those that are progressing on the path beware. Your thoughts are no longer with desire for sensual pleasure or arguments, quarrels and conflict. Desire can come to you in the form of kindness, caring and good-will. You now want to help others. You delight and endorse the runaway thoughts saying they are beneficial in nature. You cannot pull someone else out of the mud when you yourself are stuck in the mud. This is how the latent desire (*anusaya raga*) works. It works in a deceitful and underhand manner. You cannot help others until you reach a higher stage of stability. The great Sayadaw U. Pandita said, “Half boiled potatoes should not be teaching”. Don’t run off now and start to teach. There is still work to do on the Path”. Be vigilant for deceitful dhamma (*vañcanika dhamma*). Know that this underhand deceitful dhamma is latent desire. In the end it can lead to quarrels, arguments and conflict.

In this instance the lay teacher, or the monk has to be very patient and compassionate. Let us take an example. You want to help someone who is quick to anger. The student may not want your help. You have the best intentions and know you can help this student. Beware because he may lash back at you. Then you too may be drawn into anger. Or a good student may feel that you are jealous of their abilities when you teach them about deceitful dhamma that are runaway thoughts of helping or teaching others. The monk then has to be patient like a father is with his son. With compassion the monk has to teach them to let go of these thoughts even though the student may think that the monk has impure intentions.

You know how the Buddha prevented his step brother, Venerable Nanda, from disrobing and going back to Janapada Kalyani his former bride-to-be. The Blessed One had to trick him by appeasing to his desire for his bride-to-be. The monks have to use all their wits and wisdom to seek the appropriate method or technique to help a promising student who is drawn away by mental proliferation. We have to prevent runaway thoughts that will be harmful to our students. Mental proliferation can lead to hell. Nothing can be done after lightning strikes. Just before it strikes you have a chance to help a person. Therefore, monks have to be vigilant and wise with promising students. Many dhamma strategies have to be used by the monks to assist students overcome the deceit played by consciousness - the great magician of illusion. Therefore, watch out for defilements that come disguised as beneficial thoughts of kindness and compassion.

If you see a snake just before you step on it you will pull your foot away. It is too late if you have already stepped on the snake. The snake will strike and his poisonous venom will kill you. Know beforehand that as you progress in the Dhamma the defilements will lure you into danger. You need to be prepared. This requires practice so that you are not led astray by seemingly beneficial thoughts.

Endorsing euthanasia is another form of deceitful dhamma. Many students have asked me for my opinion on euthanasia. This is another example of deceitful dhamma arising not as sensual desire or anger and hatred but as kindness and compassion. Do not be fooled into endorsing euthanasia. This amounts to the killing of an animal or human being. This is taking of a life.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Science will not catch this deceitful dhamma that masquerades as kindness and compassion. But the Buddha did. If this is not corrected by the teacher it is not the students fault. This is a result of our conceit and the preservation and endorsement of the self and the self-image or ego. The student will not realize this. Also beware as it can come in the form of boredom and sleepiness. You are progressing well and have come to a cross road. If you delay and let the beneficial thoughts over power you, you may miss this opportunity.

Instead of walking into the mud and then washing away the mud by coming to a retreat, try staying away from the mud. If things go wrong then you must get back to your safe place, your oasis. Be mindful in all your daily tasks. You will see that the mind has wandered away from your task at hand. When you have too much work, you have a good chance of your mind wandering in to things that you delight in and like to welcome by discussion with others. Always keep the mind inside the confines of your body. Keep it to the position of the body or the task you are working on now.

Advertisements and commercials on television pull you towards sensual pleasures. If girls are so pretty why do we have so many beauty parlors? Think about this. Now boys are also frequenting beauty parlors. What is happening to our youth? This is commercialization by companies to steal your hard earned money.

Sri Lankans are well known for their practice of generosity (*dāna*). Every one gives alms to the monks and the needy. I am not saying that you should stop the practice of generosity. This is a very good quality that is integral to our society. I am saying that you should take the next step on the path; the practice of virtue or morality (*sila*) seriously. However, they get into a rut and stop there. It is time to move from generosity to virtue. Many in our country do not observe the precepts of virtue seriously. They say, “This is not important or it is too hard”. They also say, “What harm if I take alcohol at a party I know my limit or what harm if I tell a small lie and exaggerate the truth? It is just a white lie”.

Moving from morality to one-pointedness (*samādhi*) is even harder. All we have to do is to close the eyes and go to a quiet place and sit. This happiness (*nirāmisa suka*) is higher than what you are seeking at present. It is not the happiness of the five senses. Our Buddhists are stuck in the practice of generosity and talk often about their acts of giving. This strong delight in the practice of generosity can result in conceit. If you delight in these thoughts, welcome them and enjoy conversing and discussing with others, and are obsessed by them know that this is deceitful dhamma. This is defilements arising as thoughts of generosity. Bring the mind back to the breath once, and then you will know that it can be done. All who are present at this retreat know this. Be prepared for these deceitful beneficial thoughts. Then you can go to your safe place, your oasis. Then you can go to the defilement-free in-breath and out-breath. Keep going back to the breath again and again. If you fall back into the sensual realm (*kāma loka*) it is difficult to get back on track. Don't go looking for excitement. What you know is enough to reach the safe place, your oasis.



Chapter 3

Cause and Effect

Dependent on eye and forms, eye consciousness arises.

The meeting of the three (eye, form and eye consciousness) is contact.

With contact as cause there is feeling

What one feels one perceives.

What one perceives one thinks about.

What one thinks about one mentally proliferates

What one proliferates with the source of perceptions and fabrications (and those born of) proliferation overcomes the man (by endorsing the concept of self and the image of self)

With respect to past, future and present forms cognizable through the eye

MN18

Chapter Two Summary

- If one delights in ideas, concepts and thoughts, welcomes and talks about them to others and holds on to and is obsessed by the resulting mental proliferations, then it will lead to entanglement, arguments, quarrels and conflicts.
- Look for the first whiff of smoke. You know your mind and topics, events and places that can arouse your defilements of anger or desire. Take preventative measures the moment you stray. Get back to the present moment, your primary meditation object or the task at hand.
- The mental proliferations can arise as beneficial thoughts of kindness and compassion. This is deceitful dhamma masquerading as beneficial thoughts. One must be vigilant to identify this run away past reflections and planning, that can appear to be beneficial thoughts.
- Preventing mental proliferation is easier than trying to control thoughts that have proliferated.
- Therefore, one must act the moment delightful ideas, concepts and thoughts that one wants to proliferate by sharing with others arise by bringing the wandering mind back

to the in-breath and out-breath when in meditation, and to the task at hand in our daily life.

- Our society is well-known for their practice of generosity. The path consists of generosity, morality, one-pointedness/single-mindedness and wisdom. We must be serious about observing the precepts of morality. A strong foundation of morality is required to move to the practice of Breathing Awareness Meditation so as to realize one-pointedness.
- The breath is your safe place, your oasis. You must bring the wandering mind back to the breath again and again.
- Do not run after excitement. If you fall back to the sensual world it is a challenge for the monk or teacher to bring you back to pleasures of the mind.

Visiting with Venerable Mahā Kaccāna

Approaching the Venerable Mahā Kaccāna the monks sat respectfully on the side and repeated the Blessed One's brief explanation to them and added that the Buddha had subsequently retired to his dwelling place without giving the detailed meaning. Explaining that they did not want to disturb the Blessed One, they asked him courteously to analyze and enumerate this brief teaching of the Buddha, in easy terms so that they could understand.

After reminding the monks that coming to him for clarification when the Buddha was present was like coming to the branches and leaves of a tree when the heartwood was available, Venerable Mahā Kaccāna agreed by saying, "In that case listen and pay close attention I will speak".

Venerable Mahā Kaccāna then taught the monks how mental proliferation arises in the mind. Without remaining in the present moment which is complete and free of defilements and corruptions the mind wanders into past events again and again and relives the events. The mind then adds to what it recalled from memory with what we should have and should not have said and done making it richer, more to our liking and a distortion of facts. This results in mental proliferation which the Blessed One has referred to as *papañcasaññasaṅkhā* after loop back and corruption in the Madhupiṇḍika sutta. This is translated to English as mental proliferations that are born of and corrupted by perception (*sañña*) and ideas/concepts (*saṅkhā*).

Venerable Mahā Kaccāna then went on to enumerate the Buddha's teachings by explaining in detail the workings of the mind in the six sense bases or faculties. He explained the workings of the mind by starting with the faculties of the eye. He then moved on to the faculty of the ear, nose, tongue, body and the faculty of the mind. Venerable Mahā Kaccāna

explained in detail that dependent on eye and form eye consciousness arises. The meeting (contact) of the three - eye, form and eye consciousness resulted in feeling. (In the eye this experience of feeling is referred to as seeing). Similarly dependent on ear and sound ear consciousness arises. The meeting (contact) of the three - ear, sound and ear consciousness resulted in feeling. In the ear this experience of feeling is referred to as hearing. Venerable Mahā Kaccāna then applied this process of cause and effect to each of the five sense organs and the faculty of the mind. He then explained that what one feels one perceives and what one perceives one thinks about and what one thinks about one proliferates.

The Sensing and Operation of the Six Faculties

The world as we know of is dependent on what see, hear, smell, taste, touch and cognize. Our five sense faculties take in sights, sounds, smells, flavours and tactile sensations from the outside world upon contact that results in seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and tactile sensations. This is the only way that a person can take in information from the outside world. These mental objects (*dhamma or dhammarammana*) of what we see, hear, smell, taste, and feel are then identified and processed by the faculty of the mind based on memory, past conditioning, perception, inference or knowledge.

Once you understand that two faculties are in operation for seeing and identification of the object seen, or hearing and identification of sound heard, you begin to realize that the sight seen, the sound heard and the odour, flavours or tactile sensation experienced or felt is happening within the body in one of the five sense organs. The identification and perception or views of what is seen, heard, ...etc. is happening based on past memories in the faculty of the mind.

Our opinion or view on what we saw, heard, tasted smelled and touched is just a personal view based on past conditioning, knowledge and experiences. With this understanding one realizes that differences in views and opinions are inevitable. We live in a complex world with an ever growing population of billions of people. Globalization and air travel have resulted in the meeting of many minds from many distant parts of the world. We each have had very different, experiences, upbringing, knowledge and perceptions all of which are very dear, real, and important to us. Differences in opinion and views are bound to occur in this diverse community. Left alone, arguments and conflict are bound to occur. No one likes to lose. We all want to be winners.

This chart helps to understand the functions of the five sense organs on contact. The meeting of the sense organ, external object and appropriate consciousness results in contact and the seeing of image/colour by the eye, hearing of sound by the ear, smelling of odour by the nose, experiencing of flavours by the tongue and feeling of tactile sensations by the body. Contact or sense impingement results in feeling which manifests as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling in the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

A mind object (*dhamma* or *dhammarammana*) arises in the appropriate sense organ when seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and tactile sensations arise and these mind objects then act as the external object to the faculty of the mind. The meeting (contact) of the three – the faculty of the mind, the mind objects that arise in the sense organ and the consciousness acting in the faculty of the mind recalls from memory or remembers similar mind objects that it has stored. The mind object is then identified in the faculty of the mind.

Functions of the Five Sense Organs and the Faculty of the Mind on Contact

Sense Organ	External Object	Consciousness(<i>Viññāṇa</i>)	Arisen Mind (<i>Citta</i>)
Eye	Image/Colour	Consciousness arising in eye referred to as eye consciousness (<i>Chakkhu Viññāṇa</i>)	Seeing
Ear	Sound	Consciousness arising in ear referred to as <i>Sota Viññāṇa</i>	Hearing
Nose	Odour	Consciousness arising in nose referred to as <i>Ghāna Viññāṇa</i>	Smelling
Tongue	Flavour	Consciousness arising in tongue referred to as <i>Jivhā Viññāṇa</i>	Tasting
Body	Touch	Consciousness arising in body referred to as <i>Kāya Viññāṇa</i>	Body feeling - Tactile Sensations
Faculty of the Mind	Mind Objects (<i>dhamma</i>)	Consciousness arising in faculty of the mind referred to as <i>Mano Viññāṇa</i>	Recalling from memory – remembering

These five minds (*citta*) that arise in the five sense organs are pure. So is the act of recalling from memory if one has not corrupted the sense data. If one has a working sense organ and a working faculty of the mind and there is contact or meeting of the three items identified in columns 1-3, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting sensing and recalling from memory will occur due to cause and effect. These two actions (the seeing and the identifying based on memory) happen in less than a split second. Therefore, one does not realize that two faculties are being used each time one sees, hears, smells, tastes or touches an object and perceives and identifies it. There is no doer, no self and no soul or controller; this *citta* that arises in less than a split second is known as the *prabhassara citta* or pure mind. The faculty of the mind can recall from memory only mind objects that have arisen in one of the five sense organs. But it has the capacity to defile and corrupt these memories.

The resulting perceiving and thinking (*sañña* and *saṅkhāra*) that occurs after remembering and perceiving is where defilements arise. The faculty of the mind has a dual role. In addition

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

to recalling from memory or remembering and perceiving, the faculty of the mind has the ability to think or generate constructed thoughts.

Thoughts that Arise in the Faculty of the Mind

Recalling from memory (perceiving) results in identification of the mind object (applied thought) and evaluation of the thought (sustained or evaluating thought), in the faculty of the mind. It can also result in fabrications (*saṅkhāra*) and mental proliferation if one delights in, welcomes and talks about it with others and holds tight to it so as to be obsessed or overwhelmed by the thoughts.

The following chart identifies the functions including the four types of thought that arise in the faculty of the mind once remembering has occurred.

Functions of the Faculty of the Mind on Contact

Sense Organ	External Object	Consciousness(<i>Viññāṇa</i>)	Arisen Mind (<i>Citta</i>)
Faculty of the Mind	Mind Objects (<i>dhamma</i>)	Consciousness arising in faculty of the mind referred to as <i>Mano Viññāṇa</i>	Remembering Perceiving- <i>sañña</i>
Faculty of the Mind	Mind Objects (<i>dhamma</i>)	Consciousness arising in faculty of the mind referred to as mind consciousness (<i>Mano Viññāṇa</i>)	Directed/Applied Identifying Thought (<i>vitakka</i>)
Faculty of the Mind	Mind Objects (<i>dhamma</i>)	Consciousness acting in faculty of the mind referred to as mind consciousness (<i>Mano Viññāṇa</i>)	Sustained Thoughts (<i>vicāra</i>)
Faculty of the Mind	Mind Objects (<i>dhamma</i>)	Consciousness acting in faculty of the mind referred to as mind consciousness (<i>Mano Viññāṇa</i>)	Fabrications (<i>saṅkhāra</i>)
Faculty of the Mind	Mind Objects (<i>dhamma</i>)	Consciousness acting in faculty of the mind referred to as mind consciousness (<i>Mano Viññāṇa</i>)	Run-away Thoughts / Mental Proliferation (<i>papañca</i>)

To understand the thoughts that occur in the faculty of the mind one needs to distinguish between applied or directed (identifying) thought, sustained thought, constructed or fabricated thought, and mental proliferation (*vitakka*, *vicāra*, *saṅkhāra* and *papañca*).

Applied (identifying) thought and sustained thought are usually seen together and seem to imply identification of and deliberate intellectual reasoning or analysis of, the applied thought. Mental proliferation on the other hand seems to stand alone and signifies the last stage in the process of sense cognition. The term *papañca* implies a grosser conceptual aspect

of the proliferation of thoughts and one that has their origin in sense perception. One must however, distinguish between sustained thought, fabrications, and mental proliferation (*vicāra*, *saṅkhāra* and *papañca*) as all three seem to imply a spreading of the applied or directed (identifying) thought. Sustained thought denotes the discursive aspect of the intellect but has the finer, controlled investigating and deliberating features of thought⁴. *Saṅkhāra* which is constructed thought or fabrications imply the beginning of the falsification. Mental proliferation borders on verbosity and implies runaway thoughts that one has lost control over. These are thoughts that have consumed and over powered the individual. They can be thoughts regarding the past or plans for the future.

We need to know how the pure feeling of seeing, hearing smelling, tasting ...etc. and the applied thought of identification transforms into dangerous and destructive mental proliferation that overwhelms and consumes the individual. We also need to know the root defilements that affect the change and how the individual gets caught up, and swept away by this tidal wave that results in living in concepts as opposed to reality, and leads to delay in one's spiritual progress.

Examples that Illustrate the Arising of Mental Proliferation

Let us use some examples to make it easier to understand:

1. The terms applied thought and sustained thought (*vitakka* and *vicāra*) are often used together in Breathing Awareness Meditation to identify the in-breath and the out-breath. Identification of the in-breath as the in-breath and the out-breath as the out-breath is known as applied thought or directed thought. When one can sustain awareness with the in-breath and out-breath one starts to notice discriminating factors. The in-breath is felt in the nostril and out-breath above the upper lip. The in-breath is cooler, the out breath is warmer. The in breath is dry and the out breath is moist. The in-breath and out-breath were long at the beginning of the meditation, now they are shorter. The in-breath and out-breath were gross, now they are more subtle...etc. These evaluations are known as sustained thought. In this instance both applied thought and sustained thought are free from defilements as your primary meditation object; the breath is free from hindrance and you are in present moment awareness. The two words are used together and sustained thought is controlled and investigative in nature
2. The Zen tradition illustrates the change that can occur in the Faculty of the mind with a story. A Zen master, senior monk and novice monk are walking back from the village to their monastery at dusk. A narrow foot path that winds its way through a forest connects the village to the monastery. The Zen master leads the way followed

⁴ Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought - Bhikkhu K. Ñāṇananda

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

by the senior monk and the novice monk. They walk mindfully eyes down cast one behind the other on the narrow path.

They are passing by a still pond when a sound is heard. The Zen master says, “plop” and continues mindfully down the path without looking up or missing a step. The senior student (who had walked this path before) says, “frog” then continues mindfully with eyes down cast. The novice monk hears the sound and remembers the sound made when he was throwing stones into a still pond in the village. This was his first time on this path. Perceiving it as a stone being thrown, he looks around fearfully. The rustling in the tall grass behind distracts him completely. Assuming that someone is following, he walks fearfully looking distractedly over his shoulder at the tall grass and bushes behind. He is assailed by runaway thoughts and mental proliferations and images of being stoned or attacked.

Hearing will arise when the ear, external sound, and ear consciousness meet in contact. The Zen master articulated the sound he heard as ‘plop’. This was his teaching to his students.

Most of you are aware that the Blessed One gave a similar teaching to Bāhiya. The Buddha said, “In the seeing there should only be seeing, In the hearing there should only be hearing in the smelling, tasting and sensing only smelling tasting and sensing,...etc. for all six faculties⁵. Then there will be no false applied thought (*vitakka*) identifying based on corrupted perception (*saññā vipallāsa*), no resulting false evaluation (*vicāra*), no fabrications (*saṅkhāra*) and as a result, no mental proliferation (*papañca*) born of perception and ideas/concepts (*sañña, saṅkhā*). Even if powerful forms cognizable by the ear, come into the range of the ear (or one of the other sense organs), they do not obsess the mind; the mind is not affected. Instead it remains steady and unshaken and ‘He’ observes its passing away.

Bāhiya who was spiritually advanced realized Awakening with this short but profound teaching. This level of sense-restraint stops short at the point of sense data and limits it to just the appropriate sense base through right view, non-attachment or letting go.

The senior student recalled from memory and identified (*vitakka*) the sound as a frog jumping into the water. He had walked the path before and heard the sound and seen a frog jump. He wanted to ease and calm the mind of the novice monk who was walking the path for the first time in the dark. He did not, however, analyze, dwell or delight in the sound and the identification of the sound. He let go with non-attachment.

⁵ Bodhivagga of Udāna in Sutta Pitaka

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

The novice monk heard the instruction of the Zen Master and the senior monk but went into past memory and was overwhelmed by his perception of the sound and subsequent constructed thoughts (*saṅkhāra*)⁶. This simple story illustrates the arising of mental proliferation (*papañca*) born of perception and ideas/concepts (*sañña*, *saṅkhā*) in the mind of the novice monk.

The identification of applied thought by the novice monk was not based on the present moment instruction of Zen master or senior monk but a past recollection from childhood. Mental proliferation was born of perception, ideas/concepts and constructed thoughts or fabrications (*saṅkhāra*). It is also possible that other childhood experiences promoted the thinking and fear. Sustained thought, which is controlled, intellectual investigation, seems to have been missed as the teachings of the Zen master and senior monk were completely overlooked.

3. Let us take another example. Two friends are going for a walk and hear a sound in the distance. The hearing of the sound takes place in the ear and is a result of the meeting of the sound waves, ear and ear consciousness. One has no control over hearing, if one has an ear that is not hearing impaired and there is meeting (contact) with the sound waves and ear consciousness one hears. The faculty of the mind then identifies the sound that is heard based on memory, past conditioning, perception or knowledge as the sound of a bell.

One of the friends identifies the sound as a church bell. The other said it was the sound of a hand bell. Our identification of the sound is based on past experiences of similar sounds. Both persons may be wrong in their identification or one of the two may be correct and one may be wrong. In this example one of them was correct and one was wrong. When they round the corner and see the source of the sound, they realize that it was the sound of a hand bell. This is how conflict may arise. If this identification was inconsequential it does not go any further. The friends laugh and joke and continue with their walk. But if each of the friends was sure that they were correct and had argued about it and made a wager for \$100, then we would have had a winner and a loser. We now have a conflict situation. The bell is rung, and a sound originates outside the body. Hearing takes place in the ear. However, the identification and perception of the sound takes place in the faculty of the mind and is based on past experiences of a similar event.

This simple example can be extended to all types of differences in opinion and view. We each have strong view on things that matter to us. Political views, religious view and professional opinions are held close to heart. The stronger the bond to our opinion or view the greater will be the effect of the resulting conflict. Arguments arise due to differences in views and opinions. Wars are a result of escalated conflict. In a diverse

⁶ *Saṅkhāra* translated to English as volitional formations or fabrications

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

world with very different past experiences, conditioning and perceptions conflict is bound to happen. This is the norm.

Once you understand that two sense faculties are in operation for hearing and identification to occur, you begin to realize that the sight seen, the sound heard, the odour smelled, the flavour tasted and the tactile sensation experienced or felt is happening within the body in the mind. Our opinion or view on what we saw, heard, smelled, tasted and touched is just a personal view based on past conditioning, knowledge and experiences. With this understanding one realizes that differences in views and opinions are inevitable. We live in a complex world with an ever growing population of billions of people. Globalization and air travel have resulted in the meeting of many minds from many distant parts of the world. We each have had very different, experiences, upbringing, knowledge and perceptions all of which are very dear, real and important to us. Differences in opinion and views are bound to occur in this diverse community. Left alone arguments and conflict are bound to occur. No one likes to lose. We all want to be winners.

4. This final story will illustrate the danger and destruction of mental proliferation (*papañca*) born of perception and ideas/concepts (*sañña, saṅkhā*) which is influenced by the defilements of craving, conceit and (false) views. Once there lived a king who had three sons. Knowing that the forest and kingdom beyond had much to teach, and wanting to test his sons for their ingenuity and skills, the king asked them to venture into the forest and come back with a unique skill that they had learned from the forest. The three sons agreed to part ways and come back in seven years to show off their learnings. They were each determined to oust their brother to win the kingdom

The three sons came back from the forest and kingdom beyond that they had learned from in seven years, eager to show off their skills to the king. The youngest son said that he could identify any bone found in the forest, and make a full skeleton of the appropriate animal from it. The king had a bone brought from the forest and placed it before his youngest son. The son then made a large skeleton of a tiger. The second son, not to be out done, said that he could add the flesh and skin to the skeleton so that the animal would look life-like. He then added the flesh and skin. Before them stood a large majestic tiger. The eldest son smiled with pride and informed the king that he could give life to the life-like tiger. The moment the third son gave life to the tiger it pounced on the brothers and devoured them.

This is a story that is often used to illustrate the destructive nature of mental proliferation and the deceit (*vañcanika*) of the consciousness that the Buddha compared to a magician. It sets brother against brother and friend against friend. Ego centric craving, conceit and views can blind one to make foolish decisions. Strong desire or craving, conceit and preservation of the belief of a permanent self and the self-image or ego can result in mental proliferation

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

(*papañca* and *papañcasaññasaṅkhā*) that are born of and influenced by corrupted perception (*saññā vipallāsa*), and ideas/concepts (*saṅkhā*) that is as dangerous and destructive as the ending of this story.

This story is used because of the language and manner in which the Madhupiṇḍika sutta is played out. The Sutta changes from an impersonal cause and effect format (dependent on this that arises, with this as cause that arises to a third person format (what one feels one perceives, what one perceives one thinks about). At this point the Madhupiṇḍika sutta moves completely away from the impersonality of the Doctrine of Co-dependent Origination to a third person subject. It then ends with, what one proliferates overcomes the man (by endorsing the image of self) with respect to past, future and present forms cognizable through the eye. In this final stage of sense perception the format changes from a third person subject format to an unfortunate or doomed object format. Therefore, we have the comparison of the Madhupiṇḍika sutta to the story of the foolish, unfortunate three sons who were consumed by the tiger just as a person who cannot restrain sense desire can be consumed by *papañcasaññasaṅkhā* (Bhikkhu K. Nāṇananda – Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought) This out of control mental proliferation that is not managed, then can lead to harsh speech and harsh actions such as killing and raping of innocent persons.

To summarize, the Madhupiṇḍika sutta moves swiftly from the absolute truth of using the cause and effect format up to “with contact as cause, there is feeling”. Then the format of the sutta moves to the conventional truth of self and introduces the concept of “I” by stating that “what one feels one perceives, and one thinks about”. Finally the sutta moves to abject misery and hopelessness by stating that “proliferations overcomes the man with respect to past, future and present forms cognizable through the eye” There seems to be some level or possibility of restrain and managing sensual data at the point of feeling, perceiving and thinking by the one that feels, perceives and thinks . But all is lost after one reaches *papañcasaññasaṅkhā*. At this point the sutta addresses the individual as “the man as opposed to “one who feels, perceives and thinks”. This is to signify that he no longer has any control. The man is overcome by the defilements.

The original facts are now lost among all the distortions resulting from perception (*sañña*), concepts (*saṅkhā*), fabricated/constructed thoughts (*saṅkhāra*) and mental proliferations (*papañca*) that are based on craving, conceit and views. All the changes that have been made to the original facts are now reality. By living in the past and distorting the facts the man now lives in concepts which he clings to as truth and me, mine and myself.

We start with reality but later embrace the concepts we have perceived and fabricated that loop back and result in (*papañcasaññasaṅkhā*), and think it is reality. What one thinks one becomes! Fooled into thinking that it is truth we argue and defend our opinion and views and voice our opinion to convince others with arrogance. It is in reality just a distorted opinion. The facts are lost while the concepts or fabricated story remains. Our belief in a permanent

self and ego or our self-image will not let it go. We have to win to preserve our image. This leads to quarrels, arguments, anger, hatred and the use of weapons.

The Arising of Feeling on Contact

Let us examine the feeling that occurs upon the meeting (contact) of the ear, sound waves and ear consciousness. Where does that occur? Does it arise in the ear where the sound is heard or does it occur in the faculty of the mind where the remembering and identification occur? Feeling can take place both in the ear at the time of hearing and in the faculty of the mind at the time of remembering, and identification. Also, the feeling on hearing may change after identification and remembering. Feeling can be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.

To summarize in technical terms, feeling can arise at the time of the meeting of (contact) external object, sense faculty and the appropriate consciousness and also after remembering and identification of sense object, with the meeting (contact) of the faculty of the mind, mind objects (*dhamma or dhammarammana*) that arose in the five sense bases and mind consciousness. Let us use an example for better understanding.

A high-pitched piercing shriek irritates your ears and makes you cover your ears. Then seeing a scared baby eagle caught in a trap you are filled with compassion. Disregarding the danger, you carefully free the bird and watch him lovingly as he flies away with high pitched shrieks of joy. This change in feeling is because of the difference between hearing and processing and hearing after identification.

Your favorite aunt brings her class graduation photograph taken 30 years ago and shows it to you. You scan the picture carefully but cannot identify anyone and have a neutral feeling. Then you spot your aunt in the picture. She has changed a great deal, but you recognize her. Warm memories flood your mind. The holidays together, the fun baby sitter who took you to the zoo and the pool come to mind. The warm pleasant memories make you smile fondly. The neutral feeling before identification occurred in the eye. The warm pleasant feeling arose in the faculty of the mind. This change in feeling is because of the difference between seeing and processing and seeing after identification.

Even though feeling can arise at the appropriate sense base, many iterations are required for recognizable feeling to arise. The speed of the processing that occurs in the mind results in identification instantly. Generally, feeling is sensed after identification. Desire and attachment also occur after identification. Therefore, the defilements or corruptions of the mind occur after identification in the faculty of the mind.

The world is a delightful hodgepodge of diversity with food from various countries, exotic dances, music, and beauty in every person and every country. Instead of celebrating the diversity and experiencing and embracing the differences we tend to force others to agree with our opinion. My way is better! My religion is better! My political views are loftier. My

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

colour is superior! Are they really better? Or is it better just for you? Would you feel this way if you were in the other person's shoes? Would you agree and feel this way if you were born into their world and if you have experienced their life, their joys, and their suffering? Would you feel this way if you are critically ill and the only blood that matches your blood type is from a person from, what you view as an enemy country or wrong colour?

Does it really matter if one person loves pizza and another hates it, if one enjoys classical music and another enjoys pop or jazz, if one is a Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu, Buddhist or Jew? Do not all religions instruct their devotees to be truthful, kind, generous, compassionate and respectful citizens? What then is more important? - Our labeling of the person or the qualities and values of the person? Can we not compromise and let go and live in peace and harmony? Why do we want to change the other person to my way or what I want? Why are we so bound to our opinions, views and wants that we resort to distortion of facts to have our own way? These are valid questions that must be answered and understood so that one can work toward eliminating arguments, quarrels, disputes, accusations, divisive speech, false speech, anger, hatred and the use of weapons.

Countries rush into war to support their views and opinions, but the price we pay in human life and suffering cannot be measured. The blood that runs through the veins and arteries of a man, woman or child does not differ based on the country of birth. The harm that one can do to oneself and others with a foolish quick decision based on ego centric craving, conceit and views can be dangerous, harmful and destructive. *Papañcasaññasaṅkhā* is a hindrance, and dangerous as it results in setbacks and delay in one's spiritual progress. After the danger or tipping point (of-self) one is sucked into foolish, reckless, destructive speech and actions.



Chapter 4

Mental Proliferation can be Prevented and Managed

“When there is eye form and eye consciousness it is possible to point out the manifestation of contact. When there is the manifestation of contact it is possible to point out the manifestation of feeling, when there is the manifestation of feeling it is possible to point out the manifestation of perception. When there is the manifestation of perception it is possible to point out the manifestation of thinking. When there is the manifestation of thinking it is possible to point out the manifestation of perception and fabrications born of proliferations”

MN 18

Chapter Three Summary

- The meeting (contact) of the eye, form and eye consciousness results in feeling. In the eye this feeling on contact is referred to as seeing. This feeling of seeing can be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. Similarly the meeting (contact) of the ear, sound and ear consciousness results in feeling. In the ear this is known as hearing...etc.
- What one feels one perceives and what one perceives one thinks about and what one thinks about one proliferates.
- The world as we know it is based on what we take in from the five sense faculties and perceive, identify and process from the faculty of the mind.
- What we see, hear, smell, taste and feel is unique and personal to us. The flavours that one experiences of pizza are not in the pizza. The flavours and resulting feeling of pleasant, neutral and unpleasant is based on one's taste buds and past conditioning and it is personal to us. It arises within the mind in the tongue on contact.
- Recalling from memory and the resulting concepts, ideas, views, opinions and perception (*sañña saṅkhā*) are based on past experiences, conditioning and knowledge gained through the five sense faculties.
- Feeling resulting from contact with external objects in the five sense organs can change after remembering and identification in the faculty of the mind. An unpleasant feeling on hearing can turn to pleasant after identification. Similarly a neutral sensation on seeing can change to pleasant or unpleasant after identification.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

- Seeing and its identification, hearing and its identification, smelling and its identification,...etc. each arises in the appropriate sense base and the faculty of the mind in less than a split second.

Most of the devotees participating in this retreat have practiced sitting and walking meditation at home and in prior retreats. You have learned by previous experience and trial and error that the mind takes time to settle down. However, you have also experienced the calm of Breathing Awareness Meditation (*Anāpāna Sati Bhāvana*). You would not be here if you did not have confidence in the benefits and calming effects of Breathing Awareness Meditation. This is your fourth day at the retreat and you are seeing the effects of your practice. Some of you may have observed the breath become more and more subtle until you reached the point where you lost the feeling or awareness of breath. This is your safe place, your oasis. Stay as long as possible in this freedom. You are progressing well. Do not try to force your breathing and get back the feel of your breath.

By coming to a meditation retreat you have effectively shut down four of the six faculties (eyes, ears, nose and tongue). The meditation hall is silent; you have closed your eyes and have embraced the rhythm of the daily schedule. The mind is calm and you are observing subtle thoughts come and go without getting entangled. The occasional sound or pain is observed with detachment using non-reactive or choice-less awareness. You have also learned to observe the gross feelings of pain without moving your body and reacting to them. With effort you observe the arising and passing away of pain. A meditation retreat is an ideal environment and it is easier for experienced devotees to realize the benefits of Breathing Awareness Meditation. This is, however, an artificial environment for lay devotees.

The daily practice with intermittent retreats has given us the resources required to cope with stressful situations. But despite our effort and practice there are times when we have experienced run-away thoughts in daily life and in our meditation.

Venerable Mahā Kaccāna explained that if one can point out or identify contact, feeling, perception, thinking and subsequent perceptions (*sañña*) and fabrications (*saṅkhāra*) born of mental proliferation, then we have many links in which to practice restrain and break the chain of events that take place. However, we must be aware that when mental proliferation takes place that the individual moves swiftly from the impersonal cause and effect line of thinking to a preservation and promotion of self and self-image line of thinking. We must also be aware that unrestrained we will embrace the self and self-image and be overpowered and overwhelmed by it. Therefore, it is best to be knowledgeable, aware and prepared so that one can prevent the onset of mental proliferations. Let us start with restrain of the first link of the chain - contact.

Restraining and Managing Contact in Daily Life

You mindfully observe how seeing arises and realize that in addition to the eye and the object being viewed such as a flower, and the eye consciousness that it requires the contact of the light waves with the eye, to see the flower. If a person stands between your eye and the flower or blocks the contact of the light waves with your eye with a blackboard (blocks the sense impingement), you will not see the flower. Similarly, if the source of light is shut off and the room is dark, you will not see the flower. For seeing to take place there must be contact or a meeting of the three - the eye, form and eye consciousness. There must be an opportunity for sense impingement to occur.

You can then extend the contact to the other faculties. The meeting of the three - contact or sense impingement is required for hearing, smelling, tasting, body feeling and recalling from memory to occur. You need ear consciousness to be present in the ear and the contact of the sound waves on your ear drum to hear sound. You need nose consciousness to be present in the nose and the contact of the aroma of the flower on your nostrils to smell. Similarly, you need tongue consciousness to be present in the tongue and the contact of the tongue with the flavours of the food to taste and, body consciousness to be present in your fingers and your fingers need contact with the petals of the flower to feel the texture and softness of the petals.

We have five sense bases or faculties in form (eye, ear, nose, tongue and body), and the sense base or faculty of the mind. Contact is required with the meeting of the three so that you can see, hear, smell, taste, feel or remember/identify/think. If you cannot thin-slice the time, you may assume that at a given time you can see, hear, smell, touch, taste and cognize at the same time. But this is not the case. In addition, sensing and identification of the sensing requires the appropriate sense base and the faculty of the mind.

We begin our practice by prevention and restraint of contact. Select and choose your sensual intake. If you know that certain television programs, entertainment, environments, and persons increase unskillful qualities such as conceit, anger, gossip, false speech, desire, lust,... etc. avoid these engagements. The faculty of the mind is storing the sense data (mind objects) that you take in. When it is recalled it may be distorted with perception that changes with time and mental proliferations. Be selective and wise in your intake. Choose engagements and environments that lead to renunciation, dispassion and harmlessness. Avoid those that pollute and defile the purity of the mind. Only you can observe your mind. Be diligent and vigilant. Mistakes will happen. Learn from trial and error.

Since identification with sense data results in mental proliferation, one attempts to hold oneself aloof with detached awareness. One attempts to view sense data objectively. The Blessed One said that you should practice so as to see as if you are blind, hear as if you are deaf, smell taste and feel/experience with your nose, tongue and body as if you are dead". While this may sound like a harsh and radical instruction one can weed out and reduce a lot of useless material that has no value to one's spiritual or personal growth through present

moment mindfulness. One can also save a lot of time for quality, favourable activities by being selective in one's intake of activities and engagements.

Watch the mind and observe the intent closely. Do not get involved in events and incidents that are just for the purpose of promoting your sense of self, self-image or ego. Be detached and mind your own business.

As an experiment, continue looking at or listening to one object for a long time and observe how you get tired of it and lose interest. Sensual desire is time sensitive. Observe that our interest and desires wane quickly. Then observe how we tend to move our attention from one object to another to maintain our interest. We are constantly looking for a new experience that is different and more exciting. Know that all phenomena are impermanent, suffering and not-self. Reflect on why we constantly need to be stimulated.

Restraining and Managing Contact in Meditation

Note that it is difficult to see something at a glance. Many iterations of seeing are required to really see. Unlike with the body where one can feel the immediate rise and fall of the body with the breath, one needs many iterations with the other sense organs. Therefore, the breath is an ideal object for one's meditation. The feeling of the breath goes from gross to subtle in a relatively short period of time. You can no longer identify a separate in-breath and out-breath. This is spiritual growth. See it as such. Make this your safe place your oasis. You may get sleepy or you may be bored. Be prepared, diligent and vigilant. Mental Proliferation is not possible when the mind is calm and the breath is subtle and you have lost the feeling of breath.

The experienced *Vipassanā yogi* can see how contact is working while experiencing the primary meditation object. The decision to select a new contact is not done ahead of time. It is decided then and there. When a decision is made it is based on the strongest craving. It happens swiftly and drags you with it and takes you for a ride. After the change in contact is made you enjoy the decision. But when the change happens, you are not aware. You had no forewarning. You did not even know that you had made a choice and let go of the primary object in favour of something more exciting and interesting. You realize that a change has been made only later.

You need to be aware that even when you are with the primary object that others are there waiting at the doorstep to take over. The moment you are unmindful, and you give the opportunity, the breath is no longer the primary object. Instead, you will be thinking or listening or possibly even alternating between listening to a distant song of a bird and thinking about it.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Therefore, in order to take the situation under your control and master the situation, the Buddha suggested that we should go deep into the primary object until the breath is very subtle while in the midst of thinking, hearing, and all the other distractions. Keep focused as much as possible with the very subtle breath without paying heed to the distractions. If you can, you will experience no distractions.

The feeling of breath has disappeared. Maybe at the peripheral level some little signal indicates that you are living. At the peripheral level the subtle breath and the sound waves are there. Thoughts are there and indications are there that you are not dead, you are not sleeping, and you are not unconscious. But the mind does not select a single one of these subtle distractions. It is completely independent of the primary object and external objects. Contact has not taken place as yet. The contact either can select thinking or sounds or pain or you can start forced breathing and get the gross breathing back. However, nothing has manifested at the present moment. Everything remains as a potential or a possibility. In that moment you are not biased. You have not selected anything. Therefore, the mind is in a pure, original and primordial form. (*pabhassaramidaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ*).

When this happens for the first time you may feel lost. You can see that impingements are there, but contact has not taken place as yet. There is an uncertainty or a vacuum. In the past you always hooked up with one of the possibilities. Whatever contact you selected is the consciousness that arises. Body consciousness if it was the pain in your back or legs, ear consciousness if it were hearing and mind consciousness if you were identifying, remembering/thinking. Now you are in a place where the phenomenon has not taken place. All are just possibilities and you have the full potential to choose but you have not committed to one particular thing. When that happens, you can say you are beginning to master contact. That is to say your mind is centered. You will soon see how difficult it is for you to keep this experience. It is like walking on a tightrope. You can lose balance and fall at any moment.

Mindfulness at that level is the highest kind of mindfulness. It is steadfast and mature. Previously you have maintained mindfulness with the help of an object. Now you are maintaining mindfulness without the help of an object.

At the beginning it will take a few days at a residential retreat and 30-40 minutes for you to calm down the breath and go to this kind of a mystic experience where the mind is centered. You see the distractions in the periphery and with great diligence keep them at bay. It is a challenge because this experience is sign-less and with no contact. You may feel as if you are suspended in the center. If you can maintain this experience you can just observe the sounds, and bodily pain without reaction. Your mind will be centered and balanced.

This is what may occur in a continuous full-time 7-10 day residential retreat because the environment is conducive to mindfulness. Your experience is cumulative. Day by day you build on the previous day's experience. You alternate between sitting and walking meditation

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

to maintain continuity in mindfulness. To succeed in this manner, you have to maintain noble silence and continuous mindfulness. You must let go of your day-to-day problems and work and be determined to make the best use of the time you took off from work and family to attend this retreat.

The mind is centered and you can now ‘see’ the numerous distractions of thoughts, sounds and bodily pain come and go. But you have not made contact and attached to any of them. For the first time you can understand that the mind is ‘seeing’ everything but remaining aloof and unattached. It is not hooked up with any of the sense impingements. This is known as objectless awareness. You can never experience this in the sensual world.

To begin with this may be just theory that you may only understand through analysis and contemplation. But you cannot stop there. It must lead to real life meditative experience. Once you have experienced it once, then you must find the way and means of maximizing it. You have to learn to maintain this experience for as long as possible. Just like maintaining a candle flame without flickering in the wind. If there are side currents and cross currents of air the flame flickers. How long can you maintain your mind without a flicker?

Restraining and Managing Feeling

In the Salla sutta the Blessed One said that when shot by the arrow of physical pain a unwise person (untaught world-ling) makes matters worse by piling mental anguish on top of it, just as if he has been shot by two arrows. The wise person (well-taught noble disciple) feels only the sting of one arrow.

When your mindfulness and concentration have matured, you proceed by applying your advancing mindfulness to feeling. Feelings also have their own origin, their middle and end. When you have a feeling that is pleasurable or painful, your mind usually sees only the middle part. We never see the inception; we never see the beginning of the pleasurable or painful feeling because our mind has not yet matured. It is not sensitive enough to observe the beginning and the end. With the maturing of the mindfulness, you can direct the mind towards the early part of the pleasurable or painful feeling. Then you realize that like *rupa* or form (the in-breath and out-breath), that you can explore in depth and penetrate feelings.

One observes the thoughts and resulting feelings with detached observation. Choice-less awareness is used to ensure that you do not promote or escalate the desirable feelings or undesirable qualities of self-promotion and ego. Use the gradual Non-reactive Path (*Apaṇṇaka Paṭipadā*) daily. To be successful this should be a part of your daily practice. It is difficult to employ a technique that one is unfamiliar with when run away thoughts and mental proliferation are rampant.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

One can also restrain this process by using wise reflection/appropriate attention to manage feeling. Instead of looking at feeling as a pleasant, unpleasant or neutral experience one should look at it from the point of view of cause and effect and not-self. You now know the theory of how feeling arises. When a particular feeling (pleasant or unpleasant) is pursued it leads to clinging (*upādāna*) and one encourages proliferation. Then, unskillful qualities such as conceit, anger, malicious thoughts, desire or lust escalate. Therefore, one needs wise reflection the moment unwholesome feeling arises. Catch it at its inception. Divert and prevent proliferation using cause and effect and the Not-self Path. See the root cause. Then disclaim these feelings as not me, mine and not-self. However, if skillful qualities such as dispassion, tranquility and harmlessness are observed, then you know that you are back on the path. Use appropriate attention to manage and direct your thoughts to the Not-self Path (*Atammayatā Patipadā*).

Let us use an example to make this clear. A colleague with whom you were working on a problem bursts out into harsh offensive speech and belittles you. Anger arises instantaneously. You are about to lash back but your training comes into mind and you remain aloof and silent. Instead of reacting with harsh words, you listen to his hurtful words and accusations as just “sound or hearing” in silence and let them go and move to wise reflection.

Instead of blaming your anger on your colleague (an outside cause) you transition into your practice of wise reflection of cause and effect right view and not-self. As a *Vipassana* yogi you are aware that the cause of your anger lies within, not outside.

The anger has arisen within as a result of cause and effect. It is now up to you to identify the “real” cause(s) that lies within. The harsh tone and words were understood because your colleague had spoken in English. The feeling had arisen in the faculty of the mind upon identification and understanding of the words and tone of voice. The feeling was unpleasant. The defilements of aversion, resistance, and anger had raised its head (*dosa*). Angry thoughts and mental chatter had surfaced in your mind but were subdued, dissolved and dissipated by wise reflection and disclaiming.

The continuous stream of words that you were hearing now, could have been in another language. They were just garbled words, just sound. What were the proximate causes and the process that had occurred? Contact of sound waves in the ear followed by contact of mind objects in the faculty of the mind, identification of sound, evaluation, feeling as unpleasant, perception, aversion, resistance, and mental chatter had occurred instantaneously. You continue with the wise reflection and the harsh sounds fade to a garble of undistinguishable sounds.

You relate the pain and hurt to the first Noble Truth of suffering (*dukkha*). You reflect that not getting what you want is suffering, associating the unpleasant is suffering, in short the five aggregates with clinging is suffering. You had expected a respectful discussion and an

amicable solution to the problem. Instead you had experienced a torrent of unpleasant hurtful words. Similar events from the past regarding your colleague had come into your mind aggravating and influencing your perception of your colleague as an unreasonable, unpleasant person. But you were aware that they were just perceptions, concepts, thoughts and views arising from the process of cause and effect. The root cause was your attachment to self and self-image. You disclaim the perceptions (*sañña*), subtle constructed thoughts (*saṅkhāra*), feelings (*vedana*) and your concept of self (*viññāṇa*) that you observe as not me, (that which is) mine, or my-self.

In this example you have used non-reactive awareness, wise reflection and disclaiming as not-self to mitigate the onset of mental proliferation and harsh angry speech. Continuous, consistent practice in meditation and daily life is required to use the training effectively in real life situations. Overtime the solution will just flow through you like a cool flowing stream and extinguish the effects of the defilements. But this takes time. Trial and error is a great teacher.

You can also experiment as follows. Recall and replay a similar incident with a spouse, child or close friend. One will observe that the stronger the attachment and clinging, the harder it gets to manage one's feelings, thoughts and perceptions. One must be more diligent, more vigilant, more mindful, and great effort is required to overcome strong attachment and deep suffering.

Over time, one observes the Four Noble Truths in each incident that leads to aversion, resistance, conflict and anger. One observes suffering - and relates it to the applicable examples the Blessed One taught in the first Noble Truth. The cause of suffering - craving or deep attachment to me, that which is mine, and my-self. The release from suffering - the waning and extinguishing of hurt and pain and the Path one is using - the gradual Non-reactive Path and the Not-self Path.

As with the gradual Non-reactive Path discussed previously the Not-self Path requires practice so that one is accustomed to using cause and effect and appropriate attention with wise reflection. It is difficult to restrain after identification as pleasant, unpleasant and neutral and prolific thinking has begun. One must practice whichever method works, over and over again. Trial and error will teach you. If you are not aware and not mindful the process will overwhelm you and you will be tangled in thoughts before you know it. Therefore, it is best to watch the mind and body for feelings and practice the gradual Non-reactive or wise reflection Not-self path of meditation or a combination of the two (tandem) daily, so that one is prepared if and when strong defilements arise in the mind.

Restraining and Managing Perception

One can also manage this process by using appropriate attention to manage perception. You know that perception is impermanent, suffering and not-self. You have experienced a change

in perception regarding an occurrence after more information became available. You have also, in your daily life, experienced the suffering resulting from corrupted or defiled perceptions that have led to harsh speech or rash actions. Having experienced the suffering and subsequent regret of angry words that you cannot take back, you are ready and determined to manage these deceitful perceptions that the Blessed One compared to a mirage.

You know how the process of cause and effect operates. If contact occurs in any of the five sense bases mind objects arise. These mind objects together with mind consciousness and the faculty of the mind results in recalling of similar events and stored mind objects from memory. If you remain in the present moment you can manage the thoughts and resulting evaluation. But when you recall from memory and identify, you are influenced by what you perceive. Like the novice monk your thought (*vitakka*) and perception (*sañña*) may be flawed. Then the resulting evaluation (*vicāra*) and constructed thoughts (*saṅkhāra*) are flawed. This is how we defile the mind. The constructed thoughts then feed perception and you are in a loop of corrupted perception, concepts and runaway thoughts or *papañcasaññasāṅkhā*.

Restraining and Managing Constructed Thoughts or Fabrications

This is more or less covered in restraint of contact and feeling. Observe the thoughts in a detached manner and let them go. See them arise and pass away. Do not get entangled with them. If you make contact and start fabricating, use appropriate attention, wise reflection and the process of cause and effect to disclaim these thoughts and do not take ownership. These are a result of the process of cause and effect and caused by past habits and desires. They are not my thoughts or my-self. Understand that thoughts that promote ego or self-image arise from the defilements of craving, conceit and view of self or self- image. Disclaim them as soon as they arise. Do not encourage proliferation by delighting in the resulting feeling. Do not encourage mental proliferation because it can escalate to harsh and malicious articulated speech and subsequent regret.

Restraining and Managing Perception and Fabrications Born of Proliferations

This is a challenge and not something that can be done by a beginner. It is too late in the process as the individual is already consumed by strong proliferations that have solidified the concept of self and self-image. The speed at which it happens usually results in mental proliferation, articulation with harsh language and possibly even destructive actions. The subsequent perceptions and fabrications drawn from sense data stored as memory are corrupted and can only lead to greater suffering. You can erase them from memory the

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

moment they arise by using the Not-self path of disclaiming letting wisdom and insight arise. Use appropriate attention and the theory learned of the process of cause and effect to disclaim these perceptions and thought as not me, mine or my-self. Or, disclaim them as being a result of craving, conceit and views. If you are an experienced meditator in the Non-reactive path just observe and calm the mind by bringing it back to the breath and your safe place or oasis.

Note that you are attempting to save the patient after the poisonous snake has bitten or lightning has struck. You need to be strong, vigilant and well prepared. Learn from your mistake and practice mindfulness in daily tasks, and sitting and walking meditation in daily life. This will assist in strengthening the mind as it is a challenge to restrain the mind once the process has started and matured to the danger point of fermentation.

The following Sutta emphasizes the importance of eliminating the root of sensual data (that is recalled from memory) that lead to mental proliferation and the promotion and endorsement of the self-image. It also emphasizes the importance of consistent present moment mindfulness both in meditation and daily life.

*I ask you Great Sage about seclusion and the State of Peace,
With what manner of insight,
And not grasping anything in this world
Does a Bhikkhu realize Nibbāna?*

*Let him completely cut off the root of concepts and ideas (saṅkhā)
(Sensual data recalled from memory)
Tinged with the prolific tendency,
Namely those that lead to the notions of “I am the thinker”
Whatever inward craving there be
Let him train himself to subdue them, being mindful, always⁷*

The eradication of the illusion of ego has to be accomplished through penetrative wisdom based on one's own personality. The meditator has to analyze the mental and material components of the aggregates⁸ of his/her individuality and see them as they are in their true perspective as being impermanent (*anicca*) suffering (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anatta*). He/she has to bring about a total transformation of his/her concept of self.

⁷ Saṃyutta Nikāya - Tuvaṭaka sutta

⁸ Form, feeling, perception, fabrications and consciousness - *Rupa, vedana, sañña, saṅkhāra viññāna*



Chapter 5

The Mind of an Awakened Being

“When there is no eye, form and eye consciousness it is impossible to point out the manifestation of contact. When there is no manifestation of contact it is impossible to point out the manifestation of feeling, when there is no manifestation of feeling it is impossible to point out the manifestation of perception. When there is no manifestation of perception it is impossible to point out the manifestation of thinking (constructed thoughts). When there is no manifestation of thinking it is impossible to point out the manifestation of perception and fabrications born of proliferations”

MN 18

Chapter Four Summary

- The Venerable Mahā Kaccāna uses this discourse, to recommend how to eliminate mental proliferation through present moment awareness or mindfulness and restraint of contact, feeling, perception, and constructed thoughts/fabrications.
- The gradual Non-Reaction Path (*Apaṇṇaka Paṭipadā*) is used to restrain and manage contact.
- We use mindfulness of in-breath and out-breath to observe the gradual calming of the mind until the feeling of breath disappears. The contact that results in the feeling of subtle breath is no longer felt. The link is temporary broken at the meeting of the tactile sensation of the breath, the area above the upper lip/nostrils and body consciousness. Contact is managed so that it does not lead to feeling.
- Object-less awareness is introduced and meditators are encouraged to develop their mindfulness and observe the breath until it becomes very subtle and disappears. Meditators are instructed to remain in this void/emptiness or dark space for as long as possible keeping all sense impingements at bay in the periphery. Meditators are also encouraged to observe without attaching to any of the sense desires that distract the mind (choice-less awareness).
- When mindfulness is mature, methods of restraining feeling, perception, and constructed thoughts are introduced.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

- The gradual Non-reaction path is used to restrain feeling. Then the Not-self path with appropriate attention/wise reflection and the process of cause and effect; how feeling arises and leads to pleasant, un-pleasant and neutral feelings are used to disclaim the concept of self and manage feeling. The root cause is identified and disclaimed understanding and right view as impermanent, suffering and not-self.
- Restraint and management of perception and constructed thoughts/fabrications are introduced.
- Buddha introduces the training method of seeing as if one is blind, hearing as if one is deaf; sensing (smelling, tasting, and feeling tactile sensations) as if one is dead. The meditator, to the best of his ability, follows and explores this teaching.

The Experience of the Arahant

It is a challenge for a person who is not an *Arahant* to write about or to try and understand the mind of an *Arahant*. The Blessed One and Venerable Maha Kaccāna have given us some indications of the mind of an *Arahant* in this very profound *Madhupiṇḍika sutta*. We will begin by summarizing these teachings.

However, due to the complexity and sensitivity of the topic we will also draw from other suttas of the Buddha and his great Arahants to try and understand the full meaning of this teaching.

The Blessed One describes the nature of the mind of an Arahant when he answered Daṇḍapāṇi's question as follows:

*"The sort of doctrine friend, where one does not keep quarreling with anyone in the cosmos.
Its Devas, Brahmas or Maras;
Its contemplatives or brahmins;
Its royalty or common folks".*

*"The doctrine, where perception (of self) does not overpower and consume the brahmin -
The brahmin who remains disassociated from sensuality,
Free from doubt, His uncertainty cut away,
Devoid of craving for becoming and non-becoming
Such is what I proclaim, such is my doctrine"*

We can now summarize this profound teaching as follows. A Fully Awakened Being (*Arahant*) does not quarrel with anyone in the cosmos as he has transcended fabrications and mental proliferations born of and corrupted by fabrications, perceptions and concepts. He also does not let the perception of self, overpower his mind as he has experienced the truth

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

of not-self fully. The *Arahant* also disassociates from sensuality, is free from doubt (in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) and is devoid of all craving. The Blessed One then expands on this teaching to his monks by saying:

Monk with regard to the cause whereby perceptions and remembering (ideas/concepts) born of mental proliferations overcome a person;

If nothing is found there (in ideas/concepts) to delight in, welcome and hold onto,
Then this is the end to the underlying tendency to greed/lust (lobha);
Anger/hatred (dosa), and the underlying tendency to false views (moha).
The underlying tendency to doubt (vicikicca), the underlying tendency to conceit (māna),
The underlying tendency to desire for being (bava taṇhā), and
The underlying tendency to ignorance (avijjā).

This is also the end of taking up rods and bladed weapons, and the end of arguments, quarrels, disputes, accusations, divisive, malicious speech, and false speech. This is where the evil, unskillful actions and speech cease without remainder.

To summarize, a Fully Awakened Being (*Arahant*) does not delight in, welcome, or hold onto ideas and concepts because he is always in the present moment. When he is seeing, he is seeing, when he is hearing he is hearing,....when he is cognizing he is cognizing. As the *Arahant* is totally devoid of craving, he has totally eliminated all latent tendencies (*anusaya dhamma*) towards greed/lust, anger/hatred and delusion/false views. The *Arahant* has also totally eliminated the latent tendencies towards, doubt, conceit, becoming in all realms, and ignorance. In short he has transcended (unraveled and unbound) the ten fetters or bindings (*saṃyojana*). The *Arahants* mind is free from all taints and defilements and his consciousness is un-manifested (*anidassana viññāṇa*) and is not-established ever again *appatiṭṭhita viññāṇa* after *Parinibbāna*.

This is also the ending of all malicious thoughts, speech and actions.

Venerable Maha Kaccāna's Teachings

Venerable Maha Kaccāna then adds the following details to the Blessed One's teaching:

- The process of cause and effect that leads to mental proliferation and quarrels or how quarrels arise.
- The identifiable and recognizable points in the process where the links in the chain can be restrained and managed
- The resulting state of mind of a Fully Awakened Being

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Venerable Mahā Kaccāna introduced the nature of the mind of the Fully Awakened Being by saying:

“When there is no eye, form and eye consciousness it is impossible to point out the manifestation of contact. When there is no manifestation of contact it is impossible to point out the manifestation of feeling, when there is no manifestation of feeling it is impossible to point out the manifestation of perception. When there is no manifestation of perception it is impossible to point out the manifestation of thinking (constructed thoughts). When there is no manifestation of thinking it is impossible to point out the manifestation of perception and fabrications born of proliferations”

The Blessed One has introduced the training method of seeing as if one is blind, hearing as if one is deaf; sensing (smelling, tasting, and feeling tactile sensations) as if one is dead. The meditator to the best of his ability follows and explores this teaching. An *Arahant* experiences it.

This experience is unique to an *Arahant*. When there is no contact there is no world. In the Samyutta Nikāya the Blessed one teaches Samiddhi by saying that whenever there is no eye, no visible forms and no eye consciousness there is nothing perceivable with the eye consciousness. Therefore, there is neither a world nor a concept of a world. He then extends the same teaching to the other sense organs⁹. The link in cause and effect is broken. The *Arahant* can switch between conventional truth and absolute truth and ‘see’ things as they are.

Additional References from the Sutta Pitaka

In the Saraniya Vagga of the Anguttara Nikāya the Venerable Maha Sariputta enumerates six types of activities which if habitually indulged, would seriously hinder the progress of a monk. Though the instructions were given to the monks it is an enlightening instruction that can be extremely beneficial to lay devotees for it highlights the dangers of the householder’s life.

“A monk who finds delight in worldly activity, is delighted in worldly activity (talks about it with others), gets engrossed in the delight of worldly activity; so too of worldly talk, sleep, company, companionship and prolific conceptualization –

Then, this monk, finding delight in each (of the above), he is delighted with each and gets engrossed in the delight of each (should be aware that) the more he so fashions his life, the

⁹ Concepts and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought – Bhikkhu K. Ñāṇananda

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

more he fashions it to a woeful death, a woeful fate, and of this monk it is said that: he is greatly delighted in selfhood; he has not got rid of selfhood for the utter ending of all ill”.

In the Sakkapañha sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya the Blessed One confirms and validates the above instructions by saying:

“The fool, who indulges and delights in prolific conceptualization, is far removed from *Nibbāna* – the incomparable freedom from bondage”.

“He who has given up such conceptualization, and delights in the path of non-proliferation, attains *Nibbāna* - the incomparable freedom from bondage”.

These defilements of craving, conceit and view (*taṇhā, māna, diṭṭhi*) that result in mental proliferations are said to distance the monk from *Nibbāna* and the aim of spiritual endeavors lie in non-proliferation (*nippapañca*). In the Sakkapañha sutta the process of cause and effect and the arising of *papañca* are more detail and illuminating. It starts with envy and stubborn/selfishness as cause -> resulting in (the segregation of) dear and not dear, -> resulting in desire -> which results in applied thought -> and mental proliferation born of and corrupted by perception and concepts.

The relationships between applied thought (*vitakka*) and perception, fabricated thought, and mental proliferation is noteworthy. This is a result of the circular process, loop or feeding to and from *papañca* that takes place. *vitakka*, -> *vicāra*, -> *sañña*, -> *saṅkhā* -> *papañca* is looped back by *papañca*. This loop of (*papañcasaññasāṅkhā*), leads to fabrications and corrupted and defiled *sañña* and *saṅkhāra* being stored in memory as sense data resulting in false or defiled identification when sense impingements occurs in the five sense doors. The example of the novice monk and the story of the tiger and the three sons may help to make this clear.

It is also seen that the tendency towards proliferation of concepts manifests through craving, conceit and views. Stubborn selfishness is also equated with conceit and arrogance. Whilst craving and conceit are straightforward and do not require much explanation, much confusion lies with the term views (*diṭṭhi*).

Some scholars relate *diṭṭhi* to right view *sammā diṭṭhi* as per the Brahmajala sutta and include sixty two types of false views when only the views that lead to self are addressed in the Madhupiṇḍika sutta. Confusion also exists, regarding the two types of self-view addressed in the Madhupiṇḍika sutta even after there is identification by both Venerable Sariputta and Maha Kaccāna. Both self-views, the one resulting from (belief in a permanent or eternal self (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) and self-image resulting from conceit (*māna->papañca->diṭṭhi*) are included in views (*diṭṭhi*) when the terms *taṇhā, māna, diṭṭhi* are used together as the root defilements.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

A stream enterer *Sotāpanna* unbinds three of the bindings (*saṃyojana*) including *sakkāya diṭṭhi* the false view of a permanent or eternal self or consciousness. The Madhupiṇḍika sutta addresses the arising of *sañña*, *saṅkhā*, *papañca* which strengthens or endorses the view of an eternal self and the self-image. One can now clearly see the danger and destruction to spiritual growth resulting from mental proliferation (*papañca*) born of perception and concepts and the resulting loop back of *papañcasaññasāṅkhā* as it hinders and delays one's attainment of spiritual growth.

The danger of the false, destructive view of a permanent or eternal self is addressed in detail by the Blessed One in the Mahā Taṇhāsankaya sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya. This sutta is based on the false view of an eternal or permanent consciousness held by the monk Sāti and the destructive, dangers of such views to spiritual progress. The Madhupiṇḍika sutta is a great endorsement and follow-up sutta for the Mahā Taṇhāsankaya sutta for it addresses how the view of self and self-image is promoted and endorsed by mental proliferations, how it arises, and how to resist or restrain them.

However, even the spiritual progress of the Noble Ones who have attained *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmi* and *Anāgāmi* can be hindered by mental proliferations. The last three bindings (*saṃyojana*) are strengthened and endorsed by mental proliferations. Only an *Arahant* has completely discarded craving, conceit and the self-image view (*taṇhā*, *māna* and *māna papañca diṭṭhi*). The last three bindings which include ignorance and conceit are discarded only by an *Arahant*¹⁰. Therefore only an *Arahant* is completely free of *papañca*.

The conceit or false view (*māna papañca diṭṭhi*) of self-image is the ego centric views that one protects and promotes based on conceit such as the self- image based on one's status, one's accomplishments, talents, birth right, position, power, wealth, social status,...etc. Basically defilements that arise to protect and enhance one's self-image based on craving and conceit. One may refer to this false view as *māna papañca diṭṭhi* or run away thoughts that promote, protects, preserve, or enhances ones self-image. The following stories will illustrate this clearly.

1. The story of Lady Visakā, the Blessed One's foremost female benefactor is a good example of self-image view that remains after realization of Stream Enterer. Visakā realized *Sotāpanna* at the tender age of seven years. She was a well-respected, wealthy, noble lady and built the Pubbārama Monastery in Sāvathi for the Blessed One and his monks. She was also a great benefactor and gave the early morning alms to the Buddha and His resident monks and assisted them when they were sick with medicines and caring.

¹⁰ The Ten Fetters or Bindings (*saṃyojana*) are: – 1. Doubt or uncertainty, especially in the Buddha's Awakening, and (nine) supra mundane consciousness. 2. Attachment to rights and rituals. 3. The belief in a self, or soul. 4.& 5 sensual desire and ill-will. 6 & 7 Passion/ Lust for re-becoming in a fine material realm of form and Passion/Lust for re-becoming in a realm of no-form. 8, 9 &10. Conceit, Restlessness, and Ignorance.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

On one occasion Lady Visakā was distraught and angry as she was charged unfair border taxes on some merchandise that she had ordered from another kingdom. She had pleaded her case with the king but he had refused to remedy the situation. Distraught with the indignity of the unfair practice on a person of her status, she took her complaint to the Blessed One. The Buddha immediately soothed her anger and out of control proliferating thoughts by reminding her of how strong were the bonds of *tanha, mana, diṭṭhi*. Whatever the amount of the taxes charged, it was insignificant when compared to her wealth. She was angry and distraught as she felt that the border guards had been unfair in charging a person of her status and position.

2. Anuruddha was one of Prince Siddhattha's cousins. His father, who was named Amitodana, was a younger brother of King Suddhodana. Anuruddha was brought up in immense luxury. His mother, who adored him, ensured that all his wishes were fulfilled. When Sākyan princes began giving up their royal lineage to follow the Blessed One, Anuruddha joined them.

Before long, Venerable Anuruddha developed the divine eye or the ability to see beyond the range of the physical eye. He could survey one thousand world systems. He also had the ability to see into the past births of others and to see their place of rebirth after death.

Despite this achievement, Venerable Anuruddha had difficulties in reaching *Arahantship*. One day, Venerable Anuruddha visited Venerable Sāriputta and said, "Brother Sāriputta, with the divine eye I am able to perceive a thousand-fold world systems. My energy is strong, my mindfulness is alert and unconfused, and my body is collected and unified. Yet my mind is not freed without clinging from the defiling taints".

Venerable Sāriputta replied, "When you think, Brother Anuruddha, that with your divine eye you can see a thousand-fold world systems, that is self-conceit. When you think of your strenuous energy, your alert mindfulness, your calm body and your concentrated mind, that is agitation (restlessness). When you think your mind is still not liberated from taints that is desire in you (craving). Discard these three bindings. Do not pay attention to them. Instead, direct the mind towards the deathless." Venerable Anuruddha went back into solitude and directed his mind in earnest to remove these (last three bindings) obstructions. Before long Venerable Anuruddha realised Full Awakening.

3. When the monks heard of the Buddha's passing away all who had not attained *Arahantship* started to lament and cry. But there was one monk named Subhadda who addressed the other monks and said, "Enough, friends. Do not grieve, do not lament. We are well rid of the Great Ascetic. We have been in trouble by His telling us this

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

is good, this is not good. Now we can do what we like and we do not have to do what we do not like.”

The text does not indicate Venerable Mahā Kāssapa’s (who was present when Subhadda made this statement), response to these cruel words. Venerable Mahā Kāssapa may have remained silent so as not to cause discord among the monks. Instead, he consoled the grieving by reminding them of the truth of impermanence that the Buddha had taught. Venerable Mahā Kāssapa, however, noted this incident for he cited it when he gathered the Arahants for the First Sangha Council¹¹.

When Venerable Mahā Kāssapa proposed the First Sangha Council for the systematic codification and preservation of the Buddha Dhamma, Venerable Ananda was the most important and essential participant. Venerable Mahā Kāssapa decided that 500 great *Arahants* would gather in Rajagaha and under the patronage of King Ajātasattu, recite and codify all of the 84,000 discourses dispensed by the Blessed One and his great disciples. As the Blessed One had recognized him as the guardian of the Buddha Dhamma, Venerable Ananda who had heard and knew all of the discourses was to lead the chanting and codification of the Sutta Pitaka. However, because of his attachment to the Blessed One and his very busy schedule as the Blessed One’s personal attendant, Venerable Ananda, was only a Stream Enterer (*Sotāpanna*).

Venerable Maha Kassapa and Venerable Anuruddha informed Ananda of the First Sangha Council planned for the next day and instructed Ananda to practice diligently and realize Full Awakening as he was essential to the success of the First Sangha Council.

This resulted in enormous pressure on Venerable Ananda. He was the cousin of the Buddha, the Guardian of the Buddha Dhamma and renowned for his retentive memory. The Venerable Mahā Kāssapa himself had requested his participation for the success of the Sangha Council. Venerable Ananda practiced the whole night with great effort and diligence. But realizations eluded the dedicated Venerable Ananda. Finally at dawn, exhausted, he decided to let go of the enormous responsibility that clouded his mind, and rest. Just as he was about to lie down Ananda realized Full Awakening.

This is how deceitful dhamma can cloud one’s mind and delay spiritual progress. Seemingly beneficial thoughts, his responsibility as the guardian of the Buddha Dhamma, and preservation of his image led to great effort and desire to succeed in fulfilling his obligations. Full Awakening was realized only when he let go of these obstructions.

⁹. The first systematic reciting of all of the Buddha’s teaching by Arahants.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Therefore, as only an *Arahant* is free of *tanha*, *mana*, *diṭṭhi* - the root cause of mental proliferation - only an *Arahant* will be completely free of *papañca*. A Noble disciple who has realized *Sotāpanna*, an Aryan disciple of the Buddha, will have the capacity to restrain *papañca* to ensure that there will be no re-becoming in the four unhappy planes. Run away thoughts resulting from craving, conceit and false views may arise in the mind of a *Sotāpanna* but they will not lead to serious defiling words or actions that will result in rage and the use of bladed or other destructive weapons and or uncontrollable lust that will result in abuse or rape.

Noble disciples who have realized *Sakadāgāmi* and *Anāgāmi* having discarded the 4th, 5th and 6th, 7th bindings respectively will have a stronger capacity to resist and restrain *papañcasaññasāṅkhā*. Not only have they greatly reduced and subdued craving but their ability to realize and rest in the higher Mental Absorptions (*Jhānas*) reduces the arising of *papañcasaññasāṅkhā* as *vitakka* and *vicāra* are no longer present in the higher Mental Absorptions¹².

Therefore, we see that an uninstructed average person succumbs to mental proliferations. The disciple training on the Aryan Path resists (to varying degrees) mental proliferation and the *Tathāgata* and the *Arahants* transcend mental proliferation.

In the *Mulapariyāya Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Blessed One introduced four types of persons¹³.

1. The uninstructed average person taking no instruction from the Noble Ones, unskilled in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, untrained in the Dhamma succumbs to proliferation.
2. The monk who is in training, not Fully Awakened but lives striving for the incomparable security from binding (*samyojana*), resists and restrains proliferations.
3. The monk who is Fully Awakened, free from defilements, who has done what needs to be done, attained the goal, an embodiment of perfection in purity and knowledge transcends mental proliferation.
4. The *Thatāgatha* – The Fully Awakened One, The Self-Awakened One..... is also known as The One who Transcends Mental Proliferation.

¹² Verbal fabrications (*vitakka vicāra*) are stilled on attaining the second Jhana, bodily fabrications are stilled on attaining the fourth Jhana and mental fabrications are stilled on attaining the cessation of perceptions and feelings - *Culavedalla Sutta*; Bhikkhu Thanissaro, Metta Forest Monastery, California, USA

¹³ Concepts and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought – Bhikkhu K. Ñāṇananda

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

The experience of Nibbāna then, could be defined as non-prolific or *nippapañca*. The mind of an Arahant would then be equivalent to the cessation, elimination or ending of conceptual proliferation.

The following suttas further clarify the nature of the mind of an *Arahant*.

Dhammapada verse 279 states that

*When one sees with insight
That all phenomena are not-self
One transcends suffering
This is the Path to Purity*

Sutta Nipāta 812 states that

*Even as the drop of water on a lotus-leaf, does not smear it
Or as water does not smear the lotus flower
Detached is the sage who does not cling
To what he has seen, heard, felt or cognized*

It is a challenge to describe even the experience of a *Sotāpanna* let alone the experience of an Arahant because the experiences of the Four Stages of Awakening transcend the experiences of the six sense faculties. All that we know of has been experienced via the five sense organs and has been cognized by the sixth sense organ - the faculty of the mind. The six sense organs that are capable of seeing hearing, smelling tasting touching and cognizing are completely negated but yet 'one' is acutely aware when one experiences each of the Four Stages of Awakening. The consciousness is un-manifested throughout the duration of the experience but 'one' is aware. Therefore, the experience of *Samādhi* in the four stages of Awakening is unique and incomparable to that of the mental absorptions (*Jhāna*).

The experience of the Noble One who has realized *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmī* or *Anāgāmī* though significant is only a partial unbinding. Three fetter or bindings (conceit, restlessness, and ignorance) are still left. Fabrications (*saṅkhāra*) and retention of sense data will still take place and are restored after the duration of the experience of Awakening. The consciousness at the time/duration of the Awakening experience is known as the un-manifested consciousness (*Anidassana viññāṇa*). However, the three remaining bindings will continue to process sense data with delusional false views. Only the Blessed One and the *Arahants* are free from these taints.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Also, the minds of the Tathāgata and Arahants' are said to be untraceable. It cannot be traced by the celestial beings (Devas and Brahmas) of the cosmos. Neither can one trace the nutriment that the consciousness feeds on. This is because there is no longer any ignorance leading to fabrications and mental proliferations. The unbinding by the Arahant is final and complete, and with the realization of Full Awakening, fabrications (*saṅkhāra*), mental proliferation (*papañca*) and the loop back of *papañcasaññasāṅkhā* are completely eliminated.

The Cula Vedalla sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya is an illuminating and profound discussion between Venerable Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā an *Arahant* and Upāsaka Visākha, (her former husband), a non-returner (*Anāgāmī*). The Blessed One recognized Venerable Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā as the foremost Dhamma teacher among His female disciples.

This abridged selection taken from the question and answer discussion of the Cula Vedalla sutta, illustrates the concept of self-identification, the nature of the person prone to self-identification view, method/stages of practice, and final release.

Self Identification

Upāsaka Visākha – Lady, what is self-identification as described by the Blessed One?

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – Friend Visāka, the five aggregates of clinging (*pañca upādānakkhandhā*); form, feeling, perception, fabrication and consciousness each accompanied with clinging are what the Blessed One describes as self-identification.

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady, if that is the case, how does self-identification view come about?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visāka, when a uninstructed run of the mill person, has no regard for Noble Ones and is not well-versed and disciplined in their Dhamma, has no regard for people of integrity and is not well versed and disciplined in their Dhamma – then they assume form or the body to be self, or feeling to be self, or perception to be self, or fabrications to be self or consciousness to be self. This is how self-identification view comes to be.”

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady, if that is the case how does self-identification view not come about?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visāka, when a well instructed disciple of the Noble Ones, has regard for the Noble Ones and is well versed and disciplined in their Dhamma, has

regard for people of integrity and is well versed and disciplined in their Dhamma – then they do not assume form or the body to be self, or feeling to be self, or perception to be self, or fabrications to be self or consciousness to be self. This is how self-identification view does not come to be.”

Concentration

Upāsaka Visākha – “lady, from the Noble Eightfold Path as discussed before, what is concentration, what qualities are its theme, its requisites and its development.”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, singleness of mind or one-pointedness of mind is concentration, the Four Establishments of Mindfulness is its theme, right effort is its requisite, and cultivation, development and pursuit of its qualities is its development.”

Fabrications (Saṅkhāra)

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady, what are the fabrications?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, bodily fabrications - in-and-out breath, verbal fabrications - applied or directed thought that identifies and sustained evaluation thought, and mental fabrications - perception and feeling. “

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady why are they described thus by the Blessed One?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, in-and-out breath are bodily fabrications as they are tied up with the body, directed/applied thought that identifies and sustained evaluation thought are verbal fabrications as they lead to speech and perception and feeling are mental fabrications as they are tied up with the mind.”

Feelings (*Vedana*)

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady, how many kinds of feeling are there?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, there are three kinds of feeling: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.”

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady, what is pleasant feeling? What is painful feeling? What is neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, whatever is experienced physically or mentally as pleasant and gratifying, is pleasant feeling. Whatever is experienced physically or mentally as painful and hurtful, is painful feeling. Whatever is experienced physically or mentally as neither hurting nor gratifying, is neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.”

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady, in what way is pleasant feeling, painful feeling and neither-pleasant – nor-painful feeling; pleasant, and in what way are they painful?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, pleasant feeling is pleasant in remaining, & painful in changing. Painful feeling is painful in remaining and pleasant in changing. Neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling is pleasant in occurring together with knowledge, and painful in occurring without knowledge.”

Underlying Tendencies

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady, what underlying tendency underlies pleasant feeling? What underlying tendency underlies painful feeling? What underlying tendency underlies neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, the underlying tendency to passion/lust underlies pleasant feeling. The underlying tendency to aversion underlies painful feeling. The underlying tendency to ignorance underlies neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.”

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady, what is to be abandoned with regard to pleasant feeling? What is to be abandoned with regard to painful feeling? What is to be abandoned with regard to neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, the underlying tendency to passion/lust is to be abandoned with regard to pleasant feeling. Underlying tendency to aversion is to be abandoned with regard to painful feeling. The underlying tendency to ignorance is to be abandoned with regard to neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.”

Upāsaka Visākha – “Lady, is underlying tendency to passion/lust to be abandoned with regard to all pleasant feeling? Is underlying tendency to aversion to be abandoned with regard

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

to all painful feeling? Is the underlying tendency to ignorance to be abandoned with regard to all neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, No. There is the case where a monk, secluded from sensuality and secluded from unskillful qualities - enters and remains in the first Jhāna: rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by applied thought and evaluation. With that he abandons passion. No underlying tendency to passion or lust gets obsessed there. There is the case where a monk considers, “O when will I enter and remain in the dimension that the Noble Ones now enter and remain in?” - and as he thus nurtures this yearning for the supreme liberations, there arises within him sorrow based on that yearning. With that he abandons aversion. No underlying tendency to aversion gets obsessed there. There is the case where a monk, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, as with the earlier disappearance of elation and distress - enters and remains in the fourth Jhāna: purity of equanimity and mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. With that he abandons ignorance. No underlying tendencies of ignorance get obsessed there.”

Path to Unbinding (*Nibbāna*)

Upāsaka Visākha – ‘Lady, what lies on the other side of pleasant, painful and neither-pleasant-nor- painful feeling?’”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, passion, aversion and ignorance lies on the other side of pleasant, painful and neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling.”

Upāsaka Visākha – “lady what lies on the other side of ignorance?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, clear knowing lies on the other side of ignorance.”

Upāsaka Visākha – “lady what lies on the other side of clear knowing?”

Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – Release lies on the other side of clear knowing.

Upāsaka Visākha – “lady what lies on the other side of release (*vimutti*)?”

“Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā – “Friend Visākha, Unbinding (*Nibbāna*) lies on the other side of release¹⁴.”

¹⁴ Select translations from the Cula Vedalla sutta by Bhikkhu Bodhi and Bhikkhu Thanissaro

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Then Visākha the lay follower, delighting and rejoicing in what Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā had said, bowed down to her and, keeping her to his right, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he told the Blessed One the full extent of the conversation he had with Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā. When this was said, the Blessed One said to him, “The Bhikkuni Dhammadinnā is wise, a lady of great discernment. If you had asked me those things, I would have answered you in the same way she did. That is the meaning of those questions. That is how you should remember it.”

The final quotations aptly recognize the nature of the *Tathāgata*, the pinnacle of wisdom who comprehended and ‘saw’ the corruption or defilement that occurs to the pure name-form (*nāma rupa*) from the prolific tendency and with boundless kindness and compassion taught its release to the world¹⁵.

“Being detached from all views, He wonders forth in this world (teaching). The Perfect One does not enter into dispute.”

“Even as the white lotus rises above the water unsullied by water or mud, even so the Great Sage who professes peace and is free from craving is unsullied by sense desires and the world.” - Sutta Nipāta 845

“He who has comprehended “name and form” characterized by the prolific tendency which is the root of all ill within, is released from the bondage to the root of all ill and is truly referred to as the ‘Self-Awakened One (Sammā Sambuddha), The Thus Gone One (Tathāgata)’.- Sutta Nipāta 530

We are fortunate. This is an era of a *Sammā Sambuddha*. The pure Buddha Dhamma, though rare, is available in its pristine beauty. Noble One`s who have experienced the Truth are in forest monasteries in both the East and the West and come forth with compassion to share their knowledge and experience. We must remember and follow the Blessed One`s last words.

“Subject to change are all compounded things. Strive mindfully and diligently without delay.” - Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta

¹⁵ Concept and Reality - Bhikkhu K. Ñāṇananda

Madhupiṇḍika sutta



Glossary of Pali Terms

Alobha, Adosa, Amoha	Non-greed, Non-hatred, Non-delusion
Ānapanasati sutta	Discourse on Breathing Awareness
Anatta	Not-self (non-governability, cannot change or control)
Anicca	Impermanence, Changing Nature (arising and passing away swiftly with no remainder)
Anidassana viññāṇa	Un-manifested Consciousness, Consciousness without a base
Anusaya	Latent
Apaṇṇaka Paṭipadā	Non-reactional Path
Appatiṭṭhita Viññāṇa	Not-manifested Consciousness, Consciousness that is not-manifested ever again after <i>Parinibbāna</i>.
Arahant	Enlightened Being
Asampajāna -	Thoughts that are observed and disclaimed as not me, mine or myself
Atammayatā Patipadā	Path taken by not making self/ Not-self making path
Avijjā	Ignorance
Ayoniso Manasikara	Un-Wise Reflection, Inappropriate Attention or Thought
Bava Tanha	Craving for Being, Craving for that which is mine
Bhāvanā	Development of the mind (meditation)
Bhikkhuni	Buddhist Nun
Buddha	Enlightened One, Fully Awakened One, Blessed One
Cattāro Mahā Bhūta	Four Great Elements (properties of matter)
Cattāro Satipatthāna	Four Foundations of Mindfulness

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Ceto Vimutti	Freedom of Mind
Cetana	Volition
Citta	Mind
Cittānupassana	Insight Realised by Examining the Mind and its Objects
Citta Saṅkhāro	A formation of the Mind; Feeling and Perception (Void of Volition/Intention)
Diṭṭhi	View
Diṭṭhinijjhānakkhanti	View Based on Reflection
Dhamma	Truth, The Buddha's Teachings, Phenomena
Dhammarammana	Mind Objects (also known as dhamma in Pali)
Dosa	Anger, Ill-will, Rage, Hatred
Dukka Satya	The Truth of Suffering/Stress, (as per the First Noble Truth).
Dukka	Un-satisfactoriness/Suffering (as per the 3 characteristics of form – <i>anicca, dukka, anatta</i>)
Jhāna	High Stages of Concentration, Absorption
Kalyāna Mitta	Experienced Dhamma Friend who leads you to Unbinding (Nibbāna), True Friend, Noble Friend
Kāma loka	Sensual Realm
Kamma	Action
Karuna	Compassion
Kaya	Body
Kāya Saṅkhāra	Physical or Bodily Fabrications, (delusional deeds), Volitional Formations of the Body, Deeds with kamma potential
Kāya Saṅkhāro	Formations of the Body; In-breath and Out-breath (void of Volition/Intention)
Kāyānupassanā	Mindfulness of the body as body, Insights realised by observing the body as it is.

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Kusala	Skillful
Lobha	Desire, Greed, Lust
Mahā	Great
Māna	Conceit, Pride, Arrogance, Ego
Manāyatana	Faculty of the Mind, Sense Base of the Mind
Mano Saṅkhāra	Mental (Volitional) Fabrications, Mental Volitional Formations
Mano Saṅkhāro	Formations of the Mind; Perception and Feeling (void of Volition/Intention)
Manosañcetanā Ahāro	Mental Volition as Nutriment
Metta	Good-will, Loving Kindness, Friendliness
Moha	Delusion, Darkness
Nāma	Literal Translation - Mentality, Name
Nāma	(comprised of) Perception, Volition, Feeling, Contact and Attention
Nāma-rupa	Name-Form, Mentality-Physicality/Materiality
Nibbāna	Unbinding, Awakening, Enlightenment
Nippapañca	Non-Proliferation
Nirāmisa Suka	Pleasures of the Mind
Pabhassara Citta	Pure Mind
Papañca	Mental Proliferations
Pañcakkhandha	Five Aggregates (form, feeling, perception, fabrication/volitons and consciousness).
Panca Upādana Skhandha	Five Aggregates with Clinging/Grasping
Paññā	Wisdom
Paññā Vimutti	Not-Self Path of Wise Reflection to Realize Freedom
Paticca Samuppāda	Dependent Origination, Dependent Co-Arising

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Patiga	Strong Anger, Rage
Rāga	Strong Desire, Lust, Passion
Rupa	Form (All objects are referred to as form)
Rupa (bahiddhā)	Form - colour/image, sound, odour, flavour and tactile sensations are referred to as external form.
Rupa (ajjatta)	Form - eye, ear, nose, tongue and body are referred to as internal form or physicality
Saddhā	Confidence, Faith
Samādhi	One-Pointedness of Mind, Singleness of Mind
Samatha	Tranquility
Sammā Sambuddha	Self-Awakened without guidance or teacher
Sampajañña	Clear Comprehension
Samsāra	Cycle of birth, existence, death and re-becoming
Samyojana	Bindings, Fetters
Saṅgha	Ordained Disciples of the Buddha
Saṅkhā	Concepts, Ideas,
Saṅkhāra	Fabrications, Constructed thoughts, Volitional Formations (willfully made up, created, untruth, falsehood)
Saṅkhāra Skhandha	The Aggregate of Fabrications/Volition
Saṅkhata Viññāṇa	Manifested/Dualistic Consciousness
Saññā	Perception
Sāsana	Buddha's Dispensation
Sati	Mindfulness
Sati Sampajañña	Mindfulness with Clear Comprehension
Sila	Virtue, Morality

Madhupiṇḍika sutta

Sotāpanna	Stream Enterer (First Stage of Awakening)
Taṇhā	Craving or Strong Desire
Tathāgata	One who has Truly Gone, One who has become Authentic
Uddhacca	Restlessness
Vaci Saṅkhāra	Verbal (Volitional) Fabrications, Verbal Volitional Formations,
Vaci Saṅkhāro	Verbal Formations; Applied Thought (<i>vitakka</i>) and Sustained Thought (<i>vicāra</i>) (void of Volition/Intention)
Vañcanika dhamma	Deceitful dhamma
Vedanā	Feeling (pleasant, unpleasant or neutral)
Vibava Tanha	Craving for Non-Being
Vicāra	Sustained thought, Evaluation
Vicikicca	Doubt
Vimutti	Freedom from Suffering, Liberation
Viññāṇa	Consciousness.
Vipassanā	Insight
Vitakka	Applied Thought, Directed Thought (that identifies)
Vossaggapariṇāmiṃ	Solitude, Freedom, Peace of Mind
Yoniso Manasikāra	Wise Reflection, Radical Reflection, Appropriate Attention