

Path To Enlightenment



Venerable Walalgoda Chandarathana Thero's
Meditation Retreat
Translated By Venerable Badulle Suryarathana Thero

Path to Enlightenment

(Translation of Budun Wadāla Sowan Maga)

Venerable Walalgoda Chandarathana Thero's

Meditation Retreat

English Translation by

Venerable Badulle Suryarathana Thero

Published by

Isipathana Meditation centre

Ranhangala, Waskaduwa, Sri Lanka

Tel: +94-34-2231346

Buddhist year 2561

2017

First Edition -2017

All Right Reserved

Quoting, re-printing, transmission on website, production of compact discs or publicity in any form of technical devices without prior written permission of the Isipathana meditation centre are completely prohibited.

Tel: +94-34-2231346

Mob: +94-77-4306437

E-mail: suryaratana.isipatanaya@gmail.com

Web: www.niwandora.com

Path to Enlightenment

©Isipathana Meditation Centre

ISBN: 978-955-38466-0-0

Printing By:

Dandagamuwa Printers

No. 195, Pannala Road, Kuliyaipitiya, Sri Lanka

+94-37-2283371 / +94-71-8454912

Preface

This is a translation of the book “Budun Wadāla Sowana Maga”, which is based on the four-day meditation retreats, conducted by the Venerable Walalagoda Chandaratana Thero in the Isipathana Meditation Centers and various other locations in Sri Lanka. It is based on one of the most well-known and popular teachings of the Buddha - The Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Sattipaṭṭaana Sutta*).

Venerable Chandarathana Thero ordained at the age of eleven, gave up robes and returned back to the lay life of a householder at the age of twenty, married, and had 4 children. He re-ordained at the age of 43 with his family members present in the year 2003 after experiencing the Truth and Reality of the meditation practice.

He has been instrumental in building more than forty Isipathana Meditation Centers in Sri Lanka and more than 100 monks and nuns are practicing meditation under his guidance. I am one of the senior students of the Thero and had the opportunity to translate his discourse to the English Language.

This book will introduce the meditator to various meditation practices required for the purification of the mind and the overcoming of sorrow, lamentation, pain and distress. It is for the guidance of serious practitioners who are seeking the right method, and working towards the realization of Unbinding (*Nibbāna*). This book can also be used as a handout for the methodology of guided meditation. The expected results of Meditation cannot be accomplished by just having the book knowledge gained by reading this book. You need to participate in a retreat and experience these guided meditations before you begin your individual practice.

May all Beings be Well and Happy!

Venerable Badulle Suryarathana Thero
December 15th 2017

Translator's Note

This book is a result of the requests made by the Sri Lankan devotees in the United States of America and Australia. I was conducting retreats in Sinhala medium in the West, similar to the meditation retreats that were conducted at the Isipathana Monasteries in Sri Lanka. The devotees requested a similar retreat in English medium for their children and Western friends who are not fluent in the Sinhala language.

The first draft of this book was prepared by my Father and Mother after they attended the 4-day retreat at the Polwattha Temple in Badulla, Sri Lanka. I am very grateful to my parents for their devotion and effort in preparing the first draft. Also I must thank the devotees who read and made suggestions to improve the book.

I met the devotee, Mrs. Radhika Abeysekera, at one of my retreats at the Pa-Auk Tawya Vipassana Dhura Hermitage in Sebastopol, California, USA. She and her husband, Mr. Sarath Abeysekera contributed much time and effort to finalize the book and prepare it for publication.

Mrs. Abeysekera had several conversations with me about some of the topics and material to smooth the flow and improve the understanding of Dhamma presented in the book. She also transformed the material from a retreat format to a book format. In certain instances Pāli words were included with the English translation to ensure ease of understanding. Many hours of phone conversations were carried out to ensure the quality of the material

and ease of understanding of the reader. I greatly appreciate her dedication to this volunteer service.

Finally I must thank the staff of the Dandagamuwa Printers, Kuliyaipitiya press for the page setting and the quality printing.

This book contains the Pure Dhamma of the Lord Buddha in a simple, direct and clear manner. It will be of great assistance to any person interested in the purification of their vision (dīṭṭhi) and mind (citta). Therefore, all the contributors to this Dhamma book will acquire great merit for their assistance.

The Buddha said that the gift of Dhamma is the greatest and most meritorious gift “ **Sabbadānam Dhammadānam Jināthi**”. By the merit of this Gift of Truth, may all who have contributed to the writing of this book and all who read this book, aspire for the realization of enlightenment and work towards the elimination of suffering.

Venerable Badulle Suryarathana Thero,
Isipathana Meditation centre,
Ranhungala, Waskaduwa, Kaluthara-North
Sri Lanka

Spiritual Urgency

Philosophers, scientists, mathematicians, and psychologists have long recognized impermanence, but have not made use of this knowledge, in the manner that the Buddha did.

The nature of the Dhamma

“Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas appear or do not appear, there is this established element of Dhamma, this fixed law of Dhamma. All that is conditioned is impermanent. To this a Tathāgata fully awakens and fully understands. So awakened and thus understanding, he announces, points out, declares, establishes, expounds, explains, classifies and clarifies it: all that is conditioned is impermanent.”

“Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas appear or do not appear, there is this established condition of Dhamma, this fixed law of Dhamma. All that is conditioned is unsatisfactory. To this a Tathāgata fully awakens and fully understands. So awakened and thus understanding, he announces, points out, declares, establishes, expounds, explains, and clarifies it: all that is conditioned is unsatisfactory.”

“Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas appear or do not appear, there is this established condition of Dhamma, this fixed law of Dhamma. All Dhammas are without self. To this a Tathāgata fully awakens and fully understands. So awakened and understanding, he announces, points out, declares, establishes, expounds, explains, and clarifies it: all Dhammas are without self.”¹

All the senses and their respective objects—past, present, future, internal, external, subtle, gross, low, high, far, near—all of them are impermanent and everyone can, to some extent, understand

impermanence. But deep down in our subconscious mind, a strong sense of permanence lurks. We keep patching up our broken teeth, moisturizing our dry, wrinkled skin, polishing our brittle nails, dyeing our gray hair, exercising our hunched backs, fixing our weak eyes and impaired hearing, and trying to cure many types of illness, and many other things brought about by the impermanence of our fragile bodies.

Our moods, feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and memories all go through many changes in every moment as well. We take medicine, see mental health specialists, and do many other things, including meditation, to correct our minds. All the while, as we constantly do all of these things, impermanence is still methodically working at destroying everything inside of our bodies and our minds. While all of our organs, cells, our entire nervous system, the quality of our blood, our lungs capacity to absorb oxygen, and even our bone structures are going through these very rapid and unmistakable changes, and, no matter how much we patch up on the surface and beneath our skin, impermanence is working its course very consistently. Nothing on earth - no magic, no technology, not even science – can stop this change. It keeps on burning everything systematically. Impermanence consumes everything, without exception.

Seeing impermanence is the key that opens our mind to see suffering and non-self. The moment we understand this very clearly, we realize that things change without leaving a trace behind to find the path that impermanence has taken. This awareness evaporates the desire for anything permanent. It also evaporates hatred or resentment from our mind. Then naturally, this clean mind becomes fully aware of not having any immovable mover, which is sometimes called “self” or “soul”. This element of Dhamma, this intrinsic nature of all conditioned things, this law of Dhamma is known in Buddhism as emptiness of self. Seeing impermanence with wisdom is the key to nonattachment, cessation and the abandonment of craving.

After discovering impermanence, the Buddha went a few steps further and saw the connection between impermanence, suffering, selflessness

and the elimination of suffering. He did not try to stop impermanence by attaining enlightenment. He knew that any attempt to stop impermanence is a futile, waste of time and energy. He realized that impermanence has a very direct relationship with suffering. It is the clinging to impermanent things that causes suffering. By not clinging to impermanent things, that suffering can finally be brought to an end. The Buddha points out in the Mahāsuññata Sutta that suffering arises from the attachment to impermanent things.

“I do not see even a single kind of form, Ānanda, from the change and alteration of which there would not arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair in one who lusts for it and takes delight in it.”²

Suffering arises from the attachment to impermanent form. The same goes for the attachment to impermanent feeling, impermanent perception, impermanent volitional formations, and impermanent consciousness. By eliminating craving for impermanent things, we can attain full enlightenment and end suffering. This happens not because we make any impermanent thing permanent. This happens only when we give up our craving for and our thought of attachment to impermanent things. Impermanent things continue to be impermanent, whether we attain enlightenment or not. We do not and cannot stop impermanent nature that exists whether the Buddhas come into existence or not. If impermanence itself caused suffering then even enlightened individuals like Buddha would continue to suffer because they were not able to stop impermanence from being impermanent. They can stop suffering by not being attached to impermanent things. But they cannot make impermanent objects permanent.

Seeing thus, the impermanence, suffering and selflessness of all conditioned things, one becomes disenchanted with everything. Disenchantment leads to dispassion towards everything. With a dispassionate mind, one sees the cessation of everything. With this insight or wisdom, one lets go of attachment. This is how one becomes insightful into reality. Being dispassionate, he becomes liberated from

suffering. Being liberated from suffering, he knows that he is liberated, ended birth, lived the noble life, and has done what was to be done, with nothing more to be done. This means that attaining full liberation from suffering begins with the perfect awareness of impermanence. The holy life here is the life lived in accordance with the Noble Eightfold Path.

Here we must remember that disenchantment does not mean anything negative. It is the most positive and mature attitude of someone who has grown into spiritual adulthood. The Buddha has given a very meaningful simile of children playing with sand castles on a beach. While making the sand castles and playing with them, children imagine they are real castles. After awhile, they grow tired of playing with their castles. Then they break them and scatter them here and there. Adults watching them playing with the sand castles are amused, reflecting on the nature of the children's minds. Neither the adults nor children are disgusted or disappointed with the sand castles. They simply let the castles go and be disintegrated.

Similarly, we see that attachment to impermanent objects (forms, feelings, perceptions, thoughts and consciousness) causes suffering to arise. While we are enjoying pleasure, all the objects that give us pleasure change without giving us any warning or prior notice. Then suffering arises. Suppose you are enjoying a very delicious food or drink. Then somebody abruptly snatches it away from you. In the same way, while nourishing the thought of attachment to sensory objects impermanence snatches them away without giving us any advanced notice. As we live at the consent of impermanence, we constantly suffer.

Disenchantment leads to spiritual urgency. Seeing the nature of the Dhamma, awareness arises in us that we are losing everything we have—time, energy, strength, dexterity, agility, health—every second. We lose time by seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years. We have no reason to be proud of living long. Living long simply means losing years, not gaining one fraction of a second and making us weaker and weaker until we become decrepit. This is the nature—the Dhamma that the Buddha spoke about in the Dhammaniyāma Sutta.

Seeing this very nature of Dhamma, urgency arises in us to accelerate our spiritual practice like meditation. This is known as *Dhammasavega*, in Pāli. “*Sam*” means collectively or altogether. “*Vega*” in Pali means high speed ³

Only those who don’t see this truth, this Dhamma, this nature of existence, wait until Metteyya Buddha appears to listen to Four Noble Truths and attain enlightenment. They even say, “By the power of this merit may all our parents, siblings, relatives and friends meet Metteyya Buddha, listen to one sermon on the Four Noble Truths delivered by him in his sweetest voice, and attain full enlightenment in one sitting in one Dhamma hall.”

My question is “What wrong has Gotama Buddha done for these people to ignore and bypass him and aspire to meet Maitreya Buddha and listen to his teaching on Four Noble Truths? Would he teach something different than the Four Noble Truths?”

These people are too sluggish and ignorant of the spiritual urgency. We must accelerate and hurry up to attain at least Stream Entry before our death. We have no time to be complacent. The slower the practice, the lazier we get. We even might lose interest. We don’t know where will we be reborn. There is no guarantee that we will be reborn as human beings with all the senses are in good condition with mental and physical good health. What helps us to speed up?

We must follow the Noble Eight-Fold Path, which is be cultivated “*bhāvetabba*” to be reflected upon, meditated and put into practice. Putting the entire Noble Eightfold Path into practice is the best way to make the Dhamma really meaningful. Practicing the Noble Eightfold Path is the best Kamma, which is our relative, our refuge, our friend, and the origin of our life. We must become born from this noble kamma. As we are all subject to our own kamma, let us make this noble kamma our parents.

Buddha advised us who, sometime, are infatuated with good health, youthfulness, longevity, wealth, reputation, education and

numerous achievements, to arouse our spiritual urgency by paying total, undivided attention to the very nature of our life.

We find nothing to trade or exchange with impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness. No matter how much we wish impermanence to be permanent, unsatisfactoriness to be satisfactory, or selflessness to be self, we can find no counterparts for them. Whether we love or hate them, we must accept them. So, the noble disciples of the Buddha reflect on the nature of old age, sickness, separation from loved ones, death, and kamma and realize that they are all natural occurrences.

The nature of impermanence is called Dhamma. Impermanence happens without any interference, to all existing things, including us. We are victims of this automatic impermanence, which simply happens on its own.

Not realizing this nature of impermanence, we wish to cling to impermanent things. Even though we don't want to cling to anything, our unliberated minds have a wish to cling to anything pleasant and reject anything unpleasant. This clinging nature causes becoming and birth. Clinging is a mere wish, a thought. In reality, because of the very nature of impermanence, we cannot cling to anything. An attempt to cling to anything is like trying to balance a mustard seed on the tip of a moving needle.

Buddha asks us to reflect, "I'm subject to birth. I am not gone beyond birth. I am subject to decay and death and not gone beyond decay and death." When causes and conditions are there, birth, decay and death naturally take place. Noble disciples reflect very mindfully on how birth takes place. They don't reflect, "How I take birth." Unenlightened persons think, "How I take birth." They say, "This is my birth." It is not "My birth" because the so called "I" did not plan it. Because of desire and ignorance, we commit Kamma. The combination of these three makes rebirth possible. It just happens to "me."

Our spiritual urgency arises seeing eight kinds of occurrence such as birth, growth, sickness, death, birth in woeful states, suffering from past actions, suffering in the future as the results of past and present

actions, and searching for food in the present life. The Buddha, our best physician or best surgeon, has prescribed these items for us to use as subjects of our daily reflections, to overcome various kinds infatuations that make us ignorant and neglect our spiritual practice.

Buddha's advice to us is to strive very hard right now to realize the truth without postponing for tomorrow what we are supposed to do today. What is our duty? That is the duty of even animals. Our duty must be something greater than eating, drinking and enjoying pleasure. Nobody knows whether we will live one more day. We have not made an agreement with Māra, with death. We have not made any agreement with Māra that death should wait until we finish our job. Māra can snatch us at any moment and end our life. That the function of impermanence. We must reflect on this truth every single moment, not just once or twice a year.

But even reflecting on our death is not enough. We must be prepared for our death. How can we prepare for it? Writing our will? Settling our business? Selling all our shares? Lying on the highway?

No, these are foolish ways of preparing for death. Seeing impermanence wisely, we must make the best use of each passing moment. Practice mindfulness, make friends with yourself and protect yourself. How can you protect yourself? Going to a cave? Hiding behind a tree or inside of a house? Going to a temple and putting on monastic garb? Having many bodyguards? Insuring every hair of our body and head?

No, none of these things protect us. We must restrain our senses from harming any living being, we must abstain from stealing, abusing our senses, telling lies, slanderous talks, harsh speech, and gossip, and harboring hatred so that we will not suffer from a guilty conscience. We must abstain from all this so that in every passing moment we can live happily. We must cultivate thoughts of friendliness, compassion, appreciative joy, equanimity, and generosity to experience peace and happiness in every passing moment. We must keep our mind clean and pure in order to live every passing moment meaningfully. We must

meditate in every possible passing moment in order to live a happy life and prepare to die at any moment. Then we will be able to die peacefully, without confusion. Dying with a clean and peaceful mind is the best way to die. This is how we prepare ourselves for death.

Despite the modern thriving technological advancement, Buddhism also is gaining ground every nook and corner of the world. Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist moral and ethics, above all Buddhist meditation, particularly Vipassana meditation is gaining more and more popularity. Modern scientist, psychologists, psychotherapists and psychoanalysts are doing more and more research to find and understand the secret of this success of Buddhist practice. As it is spreading all over the world without any economic, political and academic support, more and more people are becoming more curious than ever before about the secret of peaceful teachings of the supremely enlightened Buddha in this restless sensual pleasure oriented world.

If the message is clear and its benefits are immediately effective and powerful people naturally follow it willingly even without powerful orators, big organizing machines, powerful propaganda machine, or without enormous amount of time, energy and capital. Buddha's message delivers what the time calls for. This is the most important time in human history when the Dhamma is absolutely necessary to balance the life of people who are living in very chaotic time. The message of the Buddha brings them solace and comfort now more than ever before.

Venerable Badulle Suryarathana has studied meditation under very eminent teachers and from method found in numerous Pāli texts. His indispensable book on Vipassana meditation has come at right time, when meditation has long been in discussion and practice. His presentation in this book makes an important contribution to understanding the theory and practice of meditation, karma and rebirth in the Buddha's teaching. His discussion of the subject is bound to draw the attention of people interested in meditation as well as those who are already practicing meditation. Even though there are several books on this subject, the discussion he presents in his book offers invaluable

information for wider range of population keen in practicing meditation. The world needs well-educated, well-trained and well-disciplined monks and nuns to impart this marvelous teaching of the Buddha. The Buddha's message is clear and loud. The world is waiting for selfless Buddhist missionaries like Ven. Suryaratana willing to serve the millions of enthusiastic people hungry for Buddha Dhamma.

*Bhante Henepola Gunaratana
Forest Meditation Monastery,
Bhavana Society,
West Virginia, USA,*

¹ (AN. 1. 286).

² (MN. #122).

³ *Samvega*

Foreword - 01

I am delighted to provide a foreword to this marvelous book, *Path to Enlightenment*. The book explains the precious teachings of the Lord Buddha, who showed us the path of liberation from the prison of birth and death, in a way that is clear, straightforward, and comprehensible. In these modern times, when we are faced with more distractions and diversions than ever, it is difficult to develop and maintain a meditation practice. Even when students are willing to learn the path of the Enlightened Ones, it is often difficult for them to find comprehensive instruction in the techniques that will provide the most benefit to them. The teachings presented in this book provide exactly that: clear instruction in the forms of meditation that the Buddha taught for the benefit of all.

I am also delighted that this book has been written by such a worthy Buddhist monk, my great spiritual friend, the Venerable Badulle Suryarathana Thero. Ven. Suryarathana has taught meditation and given profound Dhamma teachings to the Sri Lanka Buddhist community, both in his native Sri Lanka and around the world, for many years. I was fortunate enough to recently host him at my temple in the Washington, DC area, and the community rejoiced in the skillful way he taught them complex Buddhist concepts. In addition, he also has taught the Dhamma in English, to the broader community of Asian and non-Asian American Buddhists, exemplifying the quality praised by the Buddha of being a teacher “without a closed fist.” This book, in which Ven. Suryarathana presents the Buddha’s teachings in

English, is important to sharing the insights of the Buddhist path beyond Asia and allowing all people to enjoy the cooling refreshment of the Buddha-Dhamma.

I rejoice in the merit that Ven. Suryarathana has accrued from giving this most precious gift, the gift of Dhamma! May the Triple Gem bless him and may he be well, happy, and peaceful.

Ven. Katugastota Uparatana Nayaka Thero

Chief Judiciary Monk of North America

President and Chief Incumbent, Maryland Buddhist Vihara, Wheaton, MD, USA

Buddhist Chaplain, American University, Washington, DC

President, International Buddhist Committee of Washington, DC

Vice Chairman, International Buddhist Association of America

Foreword - 02

Today we find so many different interpretations and personal views regarding Dhamma and Vinaya. We also encounter various problematic claims on realization of the Dhamma. In such a period, what we should do is to bring out the direct teachings of the Buddha and follow those teachings. When we go beyond the word of the Buddha, it is unavoidable to get into such problems and controversies.

We should share the Dhamma with others only after we ourselves experienced it. However, what we see today is various interpretations without an experiential knowledge. Such an approach puts both the preacher and the listener into trouble. We become directionless. Therefore, the proper method is to first practice the Dhamma to one's best ability and experience the taste of it for oneself. Afterwards, we should share it with others.

Listeners pay attention not only to what the preacher says but also to the conduct of the preacher. If both the preaching and conduct matches, then preacher's effort will be fruitful. If one makes effort to share one's own peace and satisfaction gained through the Dhamma with others, then there will be no misinterpretation of Dhamma.

It is important to be very careful on the accuracy of our statements since the lack of such a care can harm the teachings of the Buddha. Today some preachers misinterpret the Buddhist doctrine of the Three Universal Characteristics. Such a misinterpretation occurs when we do not have a good grasp of the nature and the aim of the Dhamma. The truth of the Dhamma is evident in ordinary daily occurrences and activities in the present

world. We should guide the society to realize this truth. As representatives of such a sublime Dhamma, we should have a strong discipline and a good personality shaped by the Dhamma when we deliver it.

The effort of venerable Badulle Suryaratana to disseminate the Dhamma in English is commendable. I admire his effort as a young monk to undertake such a weighty task. I wish him all the best. You will be successful when you make your goal compatible with the goal of the Dhamma.

May the blessings of Noble Triple Gem be with you !

Venerable Attangane Rathanapala Nayaka Thero,

Professor, Chief Incumbent Thabutthegama Samadi Buddhist Centre, Secretary of Judiciary, Sri Lanka Ramagnna Lineage.

CHAPTER	TOPIC	PAGE
Introduction.....		24
Chapter 1 – The Principle Mission of the Lord Buddha.....		26
	The Suffering of Birth.....	27
	The Suffering of Old Age.....	28
	The Suffering of Sickness.....	29
	The Suffering of Death.....	29
	The 31 Realms or Planes of Existence.....	32
Chapter 2 – What is Nibbāna?.....		34
	What is Birth?.....	35
	The Six Sense Organs/Bases.....	36
Chapter 3 – Technique for Abandoning Re-becoming.....		38
	Kamma.....	38
	Habit as Kamma.....	38
	The Buddha’s First Words after Enlightenment.....	40
	The Five Natural Laws or Orders.....	41
	Kamma Based on Skill.....	42
	Reproductive Kamma.....	44

CHAPTER	TOPIC	PAGE
	The Noble Ones.....	46
	Methodology for Abandoning Re-becoming.....	47
Chapter 4 – The Real State of the World.....		49
	Examining the World	49
	The Body - Just a Heap of Earth.....	51
	Developing the Noble Eightfold Path.....	53
Chapter 5 – Eliminating the Hindrances.....		55
	Concentrating on Breathing Awareness.....	58
Chapter 6– Guided Meditation for Breathing Awareness		61
Chapter 7– Developing the Jhāna.....		65
	Activities that Weaken Mindfulness.....	65
	Guided Meditation up to the Fourth Jhāna.....	66
	Some Problems One May Face.....	71
	The Importance of Good Dhamma Teacher.....	73
Chapter 8 – Insight Meditation –Meditation on the 32 Parts of the Body.....		74

CHAPTER	TOPIC	PAGE
	Getting to Know the Body through Investigation.....	75
	The Components of the Body.....	76
Chapter 9– The Eight Pure, Primary Properties		
(Suddastaka)		84
	Conventional Truth and Absolute Truth.....	84
	Identification of the Four Great Elements.....	86
	Identification of Objects that cannot be Touched.....	89
	The Three Characteristics of the Eight Pure, Primary Properties.....	90
	The Body– A Sack of Skin Filled with Sludge.....	95
Chapter 10 – Guided Meditation on the Impurities of the		
Body		99
	Teaching the Truth to Others.....	109
Chapter 11 – Guided Meditation on Compassion and		
Loving Kindness		111

CHAPTER	TOPIC	PAGE
Chapter 12 – Guided Meditation on the Mind.....		114
	Consciousness.....	117
Chapter 13– The Constitution of Consciousness.....		123
	The Mind as Nāma and Form.....	127
Chapter 14 – The Philosophy of Cause and Effort.....		130
	Difference between the Formation of Nāma and Form and the Five Aggregates.....	134
	The Fabricating of the Mind.....	135
	Five Aggregates.....	137
	Formation of the Five Aggregates when Sensing Occurs.....	139
	Formation of the Five Aggregates with Thinking, Verbalizing and Doing.....	140
	Ten Fetters.....	143
	Meditations on the Formation of the Five Aggregates	144
	Arising and Passing Away of the five Aggregates when Breathing	145
	Meditations that you have to Practice Frequently.....	146
	Conclusion.....	149
	Glossary of Pāli Terms.....	151

Introduction

“*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa*”

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

We will begin this retreat by observing the eight precepts for lay disciples known as the *Ajivaatthangasila*:

1. ***Pānātipātā veramani sikkā padam samādiyāmi*** - I undertake the training rule to refrain from killing living beings.
2. ***Adinnādāna veramani sikkā padam samādiyāmi*** - I undertake the training rule to refrain from taking what is not given.
3. ***Kāmesu micchācara veramani sikkā padam samādiyāmi***
I undertake the training rule to refrain from all sexual misconduct.
4. ***Musāvādā veramani sikkā padam samādiyāmi*** – I undertake the training rule to refrain from all false speech.
5. ***Pisunāvācā veramani sikkā padam samādiyāmi***” – I undertake the training rule to refrain from malicious speech.
6. ***Parusāvāchā veramani sikkā padam samādiyāmi***” – I undertake the training rule to refrain from harsh unkind speech.
7. ***Sampappalāpā veramani sikkā padam samādiyāmi*** - I undertake the training rule to refrain from useless speech including gossip.
8. ***Miccā ajeewā veramani sikkā padam samādiyāmi*** - I undertake the training rule to refrain from leading a wrong livelihood.

Let us invite the Gods (*Devas*) and all beings to gather and listen to the sacred words of the Lord Buddha (*Dhamma*). This is the appropriate time to invite the Gods with right view (*Samma Diṭṭhi Devas*).

Samantā cakkavalesu Atra-gaccantu devatā

Saddammam Munirajassa Sunantu sagga mokka dan.

Dhammas savana kalo ayanbadanta !

Dhammas savana kalo ayanbadanta !

Dhammas savana kalo ayanbadanta !

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa !

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa !

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa !

Dīghā jāgarato ratti ~ dīghaṃ santassa yojanaṃ

Dīgho bālānaṃ saṃsāro ~saddhammaṃ avijānataṃ.

“Long is the night to the sleepless; long is the league to the weary. Long is worldly existence to fools who know not the Sublime Truth.”

This retreat will be conducted based on the teachings of the Lord Buddha. If the Lord Buddha’s instructions are followed, then anyone could realize spiritual awakening (enlightenment) during this life. We will begin by identifying the principal mission of the Buddha.



Chapter 1

The Principal Mission of the Lord Buddha

All of the world religions are concerned about the harmony and wellbeing of humans in the present life. Most of the religions are based on belief in God and at least one re-birth. Some do not believe in God as a creator and some do not believe in re-birth. The Lord Buddha was concerned about two main realities of human existence. They are the comfortable, happy, harmonious present life and the life after death (re-birth). The Lord Buddha was concerned with re-birth which he referred to as re-becoming because of the resulting suffering. Therefore, he investigated and realised how re-becoming takes place and how to cease its occurrence (end re-becoming).

Even if there wasn't a Buddha, people in the world could still have lived a reasonably comfortable life in peace and harmony. But there would not have been a way to escape from the suffering of birth and the suffering resulting from birth. As such, the Buddha's principal mission was teaching the path that would completely eliminate the suffering of birth and the suffering resulting from birth.

Many religious teachers or any other teacher would be able to teach you how to do things based on what they know or what they could do. But no one other than a Buddha is able to teach you on how to eliminate suffering entirely. The Buddha arises in the world so as to reveal the Path to eliminate re-becoming and the suffering resulting from re-becoming. What are these sufferings that the Buddha disclosed? We need to identify and clarify what he meant by the term *dukkha* (stress or suffering) and categories it based on what is in the past, present and the future.

The Suffering of Birth

The first stage of birth of a human being is in a mother's womb. It is a very unpleasant, dark, fearful, miserable place filled with amniotic fluid with a fetid smell. The womb is surrounded by the stomach, which is filled with blended food that looks like vomit, small and large intestines carrying partially digested food, and the colon, which is filled with excrement. This stage of the life of a fetus is like that of worms in a huge sludge tank. The fetus grows in the womb for nine months or so, waiting to be born while experiencing a lot of painful feelings due to unpredictable movements and sudden actions of the mother.

When the mother eats or drinks something hot, spicy, or when she over eats the stomach gets heated and stretched. When this happens it is not just the mother that gets heart burn and feels discomfort. The fetus in the womb is also affected and feels as if it is living in a constricting, heated oven. When cold things are partaken the same thing happens, the fetus feels like it is living in a refrigerator. When the mother walks briskly or runs her entire body shakes and it affects the baby inside the womb. When the mother dresses in tight clothes or ties a belt it restricts the baby's movements. Therefore, the activities of a pregnant mother can cause discomfort and pain to the baby inside the womb.

If the mother gets sick she may need to take medicine which could be harmful to the baby. Some mother's take drugs, or smoke endangering the life and health of the fetus. Some have falls or experience trauma or physical and mental abuse that can affect the health and welfare of the fetus. If and when the baby has safely grown in the womb, after the gestation period, the baby faces the trauma of birth. Squeezed and compressed by strong muscles or with the help of forceps the baby comes to the world crying and gasping for air. We cannot remember the distress of birth but can visualize the trauma for it is compared to getting an elephant through a key hole. This is the suffering of birth.

The Suffering of Old Age

The Body starts to age at birth. From the time you are born your body is decaying and you are getting closer to your death. You may not notice it when you are young but as you age the decaying of the body is apparent. When you are old, you can no longer deny the fact that you are forgetful and that you cannot do the things you did in the past.

You are losing fat, muscle and cells that won't grow again. You are left with swollen sinews, shrunken, wrinkled and discoloured skin, gray hair and loss of teeth. There is decrease in strength and inability to cope with your daily activities and work. This together with loss of hearing and sight makes you frustrated and angry.

Due to old age and your body's loss of sensitivity and control, unpleasant odors arise from your body. People no longer wish to be around you and they do not wish to be close to you. As our body decays we begin to lose emotional control. We get increasingly frustrated and angry because we can no longer live an active life style as before. Everything takes longer and we tend to forget things. We are no longer independent and we cannot take care of ourselves. We need to depend on an attendant or nurses-aid. If there is no one to help, the situation becomes even worse.

From the birth to death you are aging or atrophying. You are continuously getting old due to the degeneration of cells and bones. Old age has crept upon you slowly without your knowledge. You have grown, matured and aged. With age your abilities and capabilities have faded. As an example a ten year old may not be able to get into a baby's cot or onto his mother's lap to sleep. You are no longer able to perform some tasks you did as a teenager when you are 40 years old. Likewise you can notice a decline in your abilities at 70 to perform tasks you did at 40. You are becoming quite dysfunctional and might feel worthless. You do not want to accept this aging and loss of functionality. This is the suffering of old age.

The Suffering of Sickness

Sicknesses can arise at any age. This body is a centre or a hotbed for disease. The diseases that human beings succumb to are numerous. We have diseases of the eye, ear, skin heart, lung, blood etc. In fact, all the body parts are carrying a disease of some shape, way, or form, from your birth to death. When you are afflicted with a disease or a malady and it shows it's symptoms we say that he/she is sick. Otherwise, when there are no visible or outward symptoms such as pain, we say that he/she is healthy. However, the lack of symptoms, when we say that he/she is healthy doesn't necessarily mean that the person is free from disease.

All of you have experienced the discomfort of sickness. You know what happens when you get sick. You may not be able to take care of yourself or perform your daily activities or work effectively. At times you feel frustrated, angry and/or sad when you lose your independence and need to be taken care of by others. The pain and fear of serious diseases or terminal disease is known and seen. You have experienced this so there is no need to explain or belabor the suffering of sickness which is inevitable to all, irrespective of their station of birth, gender or age. This is the suffering of sickness.

The Suffering of Death

This feeling of death will not arise until your death. You may have experienced this suffering in your past life but you cannot remember. Therefore, we need to imagine the stress and suffering of death by looking at the feelings that arise when things cease to exist or when death occurs.

Basically, you know that at death you depart from all your family members and leave behind what you have gained as material

wealth. You know what you would feel if you were separated from those you love and your wealth. The moment of death is a very sad moment. It is a very fearful moment and you may even get frustrated and angry about this situation that you cannot control.

Let us take an example. If you lose \$100 you may become sad. If you lose more, say, \$100,000 what would happen? You will be very sad, more so than if you had lost just \$100. Now imagine how you will feel if you suddenly lose all your material wealth and all your loved ones.

Death or departure from this world is inevitable. Imagine what you will feel if you are not prepared and have to face a sudden death. You will feel very sad. You may even be a little scared and afraid of the unknown. You want to live and cling to your wealth and enjoy the materialistic things and comforts. You want to be in the company of your friends and loved ones longer. That is what happens at death. All living beings fear and dislike death; only “*Arahants*”, fully Awakened Persons, do not fear death.

Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, sickness is suffering and death is suffering. Dissociation from the loved and pleasant is suffering, association with the unloved and unpleasant is suffering and not getting what you want is suffering. I can cite a lot of situations in your life where you may have encountered suffering. Let us take some examples. Your belongings were stolen, your loved ones passed away, you had to face unexpected calamities such as floods, earth quakes or fires.

Let us take a few more examples. Struggling to find a job, striving to find food to survive, earning to build a place to live, having children and raising them, cooking food, washing dishes, washing your own clothes,... etc. are all stressful and suffering. If you are single and living with your parents your burden may be less. However, if you are married and have children and are living with

or taking care of your parents your burden or suffering is going to be very heavy.

I am not going to explain much more on this topic of suffering. You have to clearly understand that no one can escape from this stress or suffering after they are born. All this happens as a result of birth. This is not only true for the human beings but for each and every being in this world, even though their suffering is not visible to us. This suffering is occurring continuously throughout one's life.

This suffering is more when we consider the animal kingdom. They are constantly in fear for their life and constantly searching for food for their survival. They are at the mercy of the elements and affected by rain, drought, cold and heat for they often have no shelter. Those born in the unhappy realms such as the hell realms or spirit realms as ghosts and demons (*prethas* or *asuras*) have even greater suffering.

Even gods (*devas*) and Brahmas living in their respective realms or planes of existence experience suffering. The Lord Buddha's teaching shows us that there are no beings in the entire universe that are immune to suffering. The level of suffering may vary from person to person, humans to animals, Gods to Brahmas but no one can escape from suffering whether you are in a cave, ocean, air, glen or glade.

According to the teachings of the Buddha there are 31 different realms or planes where birth can take place. When death occurs, re-becoming takes place in one of these realms based upon one's intentional skilful or unskilful actions. Suffering exists in each and every one of these realms of birth. The intensity of suffering may differ, but the suffering exists. Only an Awakened Being eliminates the causes for re-becoming and ends birth, old age, sickness and death. Only an Awakened Being eliminates the suffering of birth and the suffering resulting from birth.

31 Realms or Planes of Existence

Name of Realm & Type of Beings	Number of Realms & Description
Brahmas without form (<i>Arūpāvacara Brahmas</i>)	04-Practicing <i>Jhānic</i> meditation in this present life leads to re-becoming as formless entities in this realm.
Brahmas with form (<i>Rūpāvacara Brahmas</i>)	16-Practicing <i>Jhānic</i> meditation in this present life leads to re-becoming with subtle forms in this realm.
Gods (<i>Devas</i>) Deva Realms	06-Practicing skillful habits in this present life will lead to re-be coming in this realm.
Human beings	01 - Practicing skillful habits in this present life will lead to re-be coming in this realm.
Animals	01 - Practicing unskillful habits in this present life will lead to re-becoming in this realm.
Ghosts (<i>Pretha Realm</i>)	01 - Practicing unskillful habits in this present life will lead to re-becoming in this realm with 5 sub-states.
Demons (<i>Asura Realms</i>)	01 - Practicing unskillful habits in this present life will lead to re-becoming in this realm with 16 sub-states.
Beings of Hell (<i>Niraya</i>)	01 - Practicing unskillful habits in this present life will lead to re-becoming in this realm with 136 sub-states.

The Lord Buddha realised a Path to end birth or re-becoming. There is a way to achieve the state of non-suffering. The Lord Buddha called this state “*Nibbāna*”. The only way to reach this state of non-suffering or “*Nibbāna*” is to follow the Path that the Blessed One realized and taught. No one (other than a Buddha) can ever realize this Enlightenment or Spiritual Awakening without following the Path taught by a Buddha.



Chapter 2

What is *Nibbāna*?

Unbinding or *Nibbāna* is a supra-mundane state of mind and therefore a challenge to understand with a mundane state of mind. Before we tell you what *Nibbāna* is, we have to tell you what it is not. This is because there are some misconceptions regarding *Nibbāna* which need to be corrected. *Nibbāna* is not a place or location. You need to understand that all suffering occurs as a result of birth. Therefore, if there is no, birth then there is no suffering. That is what we have to understand about *Nibbāna* because it does not physically exist. It is entirely a mental state that is dependent on the ability of one's mind.

The teachings of the Buddha – the *Dhamma* - are based on cause and effect. We will have to understand *Nibbāna* based on the application of cause and effect. If the cause of suffering is birth, then the elimination of birth should end suffering. That is what we have to accomplish to realize *Nibbāna*. The Lord Buddha found that the cause of this suffering was birth. He also realised or discovered the path to stop birth or re-becoming. *Nibbāna* is a mind released from re-becoming.

The Buddha saw an endless cycle of beings born into various realms or planes of existence. He saw beings born in a certain realm, living in that realm and passing away to be reborn in another realm. This cycle of re-becoming continued perpetually without end. We call this cycle of birth, living, death and re-birth or re-becoming “*samsāra*”.

The Buddha found the way to stop this process, this cycle of birth, death and re-becoming. We will consider the three visible

components of *samsāra*, -birth, living and death for better understanding. These are the three things happening in *samsāra* in the present life. When one is born, as any being in any realm, they cannot avoid the living and the death. So we need to realize that the only stage we are able to stop is the re-becoming or re-birth. Therefore we need to investigate what needs to be done and how it needs to be done to realize this state of mind—*Nibbāna*, in the present life. Simply speaking, *Nibbāna* is the state of mind required for the ending or stopping or abandoning of re-becoming.

What is birth?

Since our goal is the abandoning of birth or re-becoming, it is clear now that we need to have a comprehensive understanding of what the Buddha defined as birth. One also has to know what He meant by the ending of birth.

We will use simple, colloquial language at this point in time for ease of understanding. As per the teachings of the Buddha we can say that birth is the coming together of two components. A tangible component called body (form or *rūpa* as per the Buddha) and an intangible component called life (mind or *citta* as per the Buddha). Body or form may vary based on the realm of existence as discussed in Chapter one. When a body comes into being the component that we call ‘life’ (mind) gets ‘attached’ to it and then we refer to it as a living being.

When body (form) gets attached with life (mind) we call it birth, when these two components (body & life) are together we call it a living being, when these two separate, then we say that the living being has died or ‘passed away’. The physical body on its own does not have life. You will see this clearly when you amputate or remove an organ of the body. There is no life in the part that was separated or removed.

From the moment of birth the body decays continuously until it can no longer sustain life. Life (mind) then passes away and gets drawn to, or enters into another body. We call this re-becoming. There is no physical component travelling from birth to birth or being reborn. It is only the life (mind), the intangible component that transmigrates. We have introduced you to the process in conventional and colloquial language of body and life for ease of understanding. We now need to study, this body and life phenomenon in detail, using the language used by the Buddha - form (*rūpa*) and mind (*citta*) to have a better understanding of its nature and properties and to stop, eliminate or abandon re-becoming.

The Buddha said that the appearance of the aggregates (*skandas*) and the sense bases (*āyatana*) is the arising of the birth of a living being. Where ever there is *āyatana* there is *skanda* as contact with external objects results in the formation of *skandas*. We will begin by identifying the six sense bases and their functions. We will, discuss the *skandas* later.

The Six Sense Organs/Bases (*Āyatana*)

The living beings in these various realms may have up to a maximum of six sense organs or sense bases. Some beings in the 31 realms described in the previous chapters may not have all the six sense organs. As the human realm has all six sense organs, we will examine all six of them. The six organs or bases, their functions and outcomes are:

1. Eye – to gather images and colour from outside (Seeing)
2. Ear– to gather sound from outside (Hearing)
3. Nose – to gather odor from outside (Smelling)
4. Tongue - to gather flavour from outside (Tasting)

5. Body – to gather tactile sensations from outside (Feeling of the body)
6. Brain – to gather thoughts from outside (Remembering)

At this point, you need to understand how the brain gathers thoughts from the outside. When each of the five sensing organs (other than brain) is functioning, it creates a thought within the respective organ. This thought then becomes the outside or external thought for the brain. These thoughts are referred to as *cittaja rūpa* in Pāli. It is referred to as external thought as it is external to the brain just as sound is external to the ear and odor is external to the nose. This thought then recalls similar or relevant material from the brain resulting in remembering. In addition to remembering the brain has the special ability to construct thoughts within the brain. These thoughts or actions of the brain are referred to as thinking.

In a living being, these six sense organs act as processors and they gather information from outside and produce six senses referred to as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, body feeling and remembering. When any of these senses arises there are three main actions produced by the mind. They are the action of thinking (thoughts), verbalising (words) and doing (deeds).

If and only if any of these three abilities are present do we accept that the being is alive. If we consider any being in any of the 31 realms of existence these are the only actions which any one of them can perform for their entire life regardless if one is human, an animal, a ghost, a demon, a god, or a Brahma. If all of these actions are not present, then we consider that the being is dead. We live our entire life to conduct or perform these three actions.



Chapter 3

Technique for the Abandoning of Re-becoming

Kamma (action)

The Pāli word *kamma* literally means action. Any intentional action whether mental, verbal or physical is regarded as *kamma*. It includes all that is covered under the phrase ‘thought, word and deed’.

When you die, the effect of the skillful and/or unskillful actions (*kusala* and/or *akusala kamma*) you have done in this life carry over or transfer to another body because of the intention to do so. The Buddha referred to these as “*Kamma* (action) *Cetana* (intention) *Saṅkhāra* (fabrications) or *Acinna* (habits)”. *Kamma* results in re-becoming. There’re three ways of performing *kamma*.

The three ways of performing *kamma* are:

1. Thinking – *Mano kamma, or Cittasaṅkhāra*
2. Verbalizing – *Vacchi kamma or Vacchi saṅkhāra*
3. Doing – *Kāya kamma or Kāyasaṅkhāra*

Habit as Kamma

Many are aware that the effects of intentional skillful and unskillful actions by thought, word and deed may influence and carry over to one’s next birth. Few realize that habits too may carry over to

one's next birth. *Kamma* that has passed over from one birth to another can also be a result of the past mental, verbal or physical habits of the living being. The following example will illustrate this important occurrence.

Once when the Lord Buddha was teaching the *Dhamma* at the monastery, Venerable Ananda Thero noticed that four persons attending were not listening to the *Dhamma*. One of the devotees was sleeping, one was shaking a branch of a nearby tree, one was looking at the sky and one was scratching the ground. Perplexed by their conduct, Venerable Ananda Thero asked the Lord Buddha as to the reason for their strange behaviour. The Blessed One informed Ananda Thero that they were acting like this because their previous life's habits carried into this present life.

As per the Lord Buddha's clarification the one who was sleeping was a reptile in the past life, the one who was shaking the branches was a monkey in the past life, the one who was looking at the sky was an astrologist in the past life and the one who was scratching the ground was a worm in the soil in his past life. If someone has built a strong habit in this life they may carry it into the next life. The habits need not necessarily be skilful or unskilful actions. The Buddha said that habits were kamma because they may pass over from one birth to another.

Young children with exceptional abilities such as Mozart who composed his first sonata at the age of four and his first opera at the age of seven may have been carrying over past habits. Similarly political philosopher Jeremy Bentham who could read and write Latin and Greek at the age of four may have carried over his past habits and abilities.

Similarly, persons who have strong habits resulting from defilements such as desire, greed, lust anger and hatred may carry over these tendencies as effects of *kamma* if they do not restrain their sense organs.

Any one of these three actions (*citta saṅkhāra*, *vacci saṅkhāra* or *kāya saṅkhāra*) can arise only when one of the six sense organs is in operation. All through life we generate these three actions that result in re-becoming. If anyone has the ability to stop the arising of these three actions when the sensing is in effect, then he may have the ability to do so at the moment of death. If so he/she will not be generating any *kamma* for re-becoming to take place. Such a person is known as an Awakened Being (*Arahant*). This is the technique required to abandon re-becoming. This profound teaching is included in the Buddha's first words after enlightenment.

The Buddha's First Words after Enlightenment

<p><i>“Anekajatisaṃsaram, Sandavissaṃ anibisaṃ Gahakaram gavesanto. Dukka jati punappunam Gahakaraka diṭṭosiPuna geham na kahasi Sabba te pahasuka bhagga Gahakotaṃ visankītaṃ Visankaragatam cittam Tanhanam Kāyamajjaga”</i></p>	<p>“Thro’ many a birth in existence wandered I, Seeking but not finding, The builder of this house¹. Sorrowful is repeated birth. O house builder² thou art seen. Thou shall build no house again. All thy rafters³ are broken. Thy ridge-pole⁴ is shattered. Mind attains the unconditioned⁵. Achieved is the end of craving.”</p>
--	--

1. **House** – Mind/Body (*nāma/rūpa*)
2. **House builder** – Cause for rebirth – craving and desire (*tanha*)
3. **Rafters** – Defilements (*kelesa*)

4. Ridge-pole – Ignorance (*avijjā*)

5. Unconditioned – *Nibbāna* – Enlightenment or Awakening.

This peon of joy, the Lord Buddha's first words after enlightenment, summarises what we have to do, why we have to do it and how we have to do it. The Buddha begins with "what we have to do" by stating his principle mission. He begins by acknowledging that he has wandered through many births seeking the builder of this house - mind/body (*nāma/rūpa*) because birth is suffering (the why). He then informs the world that he has seen the builder of this house (desire and craving) and accomplished his mission, - the ending of re-becoming.

He then goes on to explain how he achieved the unconditioned. He has eliminated all the defilements (broken the rafters), shattered ignorance (the ridgepole that bears the weight of the house) and realised the unconditioned state of *Nibbāna* (no more *citta saṅkhāra*, *vaci saṅkhāra* and *kāya saṅkhāra*) by achieving the end of desire and craving.

The Five Natural Laws or Orders (*Niyāma*)

Most of you are aware that *kamma* can take effect in the present birth. You are also aware that the effects of *kamma* results in re-becoming and that it can carry through to one's future births. However, everything that happens to a living being is not due to kamma. According to the Buddha there are five orders or *Niyāma* which operate in the physical and mental sphere. They are:

"*Utu Niyāma*" – Physical Inorganic Order - Seasonal characteristics of the atmosphere and weather, such as rain, wind, temperature, humidity etc. Also includes their effects e.g. Drought, floods, typhoons, tsunamis... etc.

“Bija Niyāma” – Physical Organic Order - Biological characteristics of the living beings and plants such as the taste of sweetness from sugar cane, rice produced from rice seed, hereditary diseases and characteristics inherited from parents...etc.

“Dhamma Niyāma” – Order of the Norm - The Absolute Truth about the makeup of the entire world including particles such as electrons and the law of gravity.

“Citta Niyāma” – Order of the Mind - The Absolute Truth of the workings of the mind and its powers.

“Kamma Niyāma” – Order of action and result - This is the **kamma** that we refer to as the three main actions of(thinking, verbalizing and doing) performed by living beings.

Kamma Based on Skill

From these five natural laws only **kamma** can be changed. **Kamma** can only be changed by you, the one who performed this action. The other four orders cannot be changed as they are absolutes. These five laws or truths have been identified by the Lord Buddha with his spiritually developed mind. Now we need to understand what we refer to as **kamma** and what needs to be done to stop these **kamma**. There are three types of **kamma** based on skill and the effect on re-becoming.

They are:

1. (**Akusala kamma**) unskilful actions
2. (**Kusala kamma**) skilful actions
3. (**Punya kamma**) good actions

1. ***Akusala kamma*** - If your actions in this life are mostly unskillful, then after death you may be reborn in one of the four unhappy realms – the animal realm, ghost realm, demon realm or hell realm. Unskillful actions are those that generally result in suffering, pain and mental anguish to others and yourself. The root cause for unskillful actions is a mind with defilements known as desire/greed/lust, anger/hate, and delusion (***loba, dosa and moha***).

Unskillful actions lead to re-becoming and tend to promote re-becoming and the cycle of ***samsara***. Examples of ***akusala kamma*** that may result in unhappy births and prolong ***samsara*** are killing of living beings, harsh and divisive language, and sexual misconduct (with minors, those committed to others, celibate monastics and rape or forced sexual activities).

Akusala kamma can also include actions which are not unskillful. However, these actions are also a result of desire/greed/anger/hatred and delusion (not knowing of the true nature of the world). These actions lead to re-becoming and tend to promote re-becoming and the cycle of ***samsara***. They do not, however, result in rebirth in the unhappy planes of existence.

Examples of ***akusala kamma*** that do not result in unhappy birth but prolong ***samsara*** are actions that promote desire, greed, lust, anger and hatred even if they are not immoral and unskillful. Examples include reading books, watching TV programs and playing video games that promote lust and anger/hatred. These should be restrained or avoided by those working towards the four stages of ***Nibbāna***.

2. ***Kusala kamma***- If you are able to perform any skillful actions in this life, then you may not be reborn (you are an ***Arahant*** or an Awakened Being) or you may be reborn in a human, Deva or Brahma realm. Skillful actions are actions that generally result in happiness, joy and peace of mind to others

and yourself. The root cause for skillful actions is the absence of defilements known as *loba, dosa and moha*. (desire/greed/lust, anger/hate and delusion). Such a mind is said to be with thoughts of renunciation, goodwill harmless, and wisdom/knowledge *aloba, adosa and amoha*. These actions lead to the abandoning of re-becoming and promote the ending of re-becoming, e.g., skillful deeds such as generosity for the purpose of letting go of greed and desire. Meditation such as Breathing Awareness Meditation can be used to subdue the hindrances of desire, anger ... etc.

3. *Punya kamma*– if your actions in this life were mostly good but not skilful, then after death you may be re-born in a good life as a human being, Deva or Brahma when you pass away. Good actions are actions that generally result in happiness, joy and peace of mind to others and yourself. However, *punya kamma* leads to re-becoming and tends to promote re-becoming. Examples of *punya kamma* are good deeds with self-interest such as generosity with expectation of birth in a heavenly realm or fame and recognition. As such they are not skillful actions.

In summary, we should perform skilful actions (*kusala kamma*) that lead to the abandoning of re-becoming and promote the ending of re-becoming. These are actions that have renunciation, goodwill/harmless and wisdom/knowledge as their root.

We should eliminate all unskillful actions (*akusala kamma*) and good actions (*punya kamma*) that are accompanied by self-interest, desire and ignorance. These are all actions that have desire/greed/lust, anger/rage and delusion as their root.

Reproductive Kamma (*Janaka Kamma*)

The action (*kamma*) that comes to mind at the moment of death is very important because it is the one that fashions the rebirth

consciousness (*patisandhi viññāna*). If a person has done one of the five grave action such as killing of the mother or father, killing of an *Arahanth*, shedding the blood of the Buddha, or causing disharmony in the Saṅgha, then this action will come to mind at the moment of death and will take the place of the reproductive kamma. The effect of these heinous crimes will be re-becoming in the hell realms. Similarly those that have attained the mental absorptions (*Jhāna*) and dwell in them for long periods of time will result in this mental state or action coming into mind at the moment of death resulting in birth in the Brahma realms.

The next strongest action is known as death proximate or *āsanna kamma*. These are resilient skillful and unskillful actions that one has done close to the time of death. They over power the habitual actions and take the place of the reproductive action.

Usually it is a habitual action (*ācinna kamma*) that comes into mind at death. This is an action that one performs habitually with great desire. Cunda the butcher who was living close to the Lord Buddha's monastery earned his living slaughtering pigs. He died squealing like a pig in the throes of death and took re-becoming in an unhappy realm.

Therefore, you should not assume that when you have done bad acts in your life that you are definitely destined to be born in unhappy or bad states of existence. Similarly, you should not assume that when you have done good acts throughout your life that you are definitely destined to be born in a heaven or as a human being in a good station in life. This is generally true but there are some exceptions. The place and condition of re-becoming depends on the action that comes to mind at the moment of death. A strong death proximate action can override one's habitual actions.

Reserve actions (*katatta kamma*) are fall back actions. Not having any grave, death proximate or habitual actions any of the

intentional skillful or unskillful action that one has done will come to mind at death and take the place of the reproductive kamma.

The Noble Ones (*Ārya Puggala*)

Generally the arising of this reproductive kamma is not controllable. The gravity, proximity to death and habitual nature/actions of the living being determines the selection of the reproductive kamma. According to the Buddha's teaching only four kinds of persons are able to control the reproductive action or thought moment (at death).

They are:

1. Persons who have realized/attained stream entry "*Sothāpanna*".
2. Persons who have realized/attained once-returner "*Sakadāgami*".
3. Persons who have realized/attained non-returner "*Anāgami*".
4. Persons who have realized/attained awakening or enlightenment "*Arahanth*".

Those are the four stages of Enlightenment or Spiritual Awakening. An *Arahanth* is a person who has achieved the final stage and he/she has completely eliminated re-birth or re-becoming. The other three persons will be reborn but they will never be reborn in unhappy realms or planes as animals, ghosts, demons or beings in hell.

One who has realized the *Sotāpanna* stage in this life will be reborn seven times at the most or less in the future and he/she will attain enlightenment during this period of time. If one has realized the *Sakadāgami* stage they will only be reborn once in this world and will attain enlightenment during this period of time. Those who realize the *Anāgami* stage will not be returning to this world. They will be re-born in a *Suddavāsa Brahma Realm* where they will attain enlightenment.

Methodology for Abandoning Re-becoming

To be a Noble One we need to eliminate actions that lead to re-becoming. We now know what we have to do to achieve this. We have to eliminate *citta saṅkhāra*, *vaci saṅkhāra* and *Kāya saṅkhāra*. We also know how we do this. As per the Buddha's teachings, first we need to completely eliminate unskilful actions referred to as *akusala kamma*. Most persons practicing the Buddha Dhamma are aware of this and take great effort to refrain from unskilful actions.

We also need to eliminate the good actions referred to as *punya kamma* because they, like the unskilful actions, have desire/greed/lust, and delusion as their root cause. This is because these two types of actions support or promote re-becoming. Instead we need to have the knowledge to eliminate desire/greed/lust so that our good actions (*punya kamma*) will change to skillful actions (*kusala kamma*).

Then with appropriate knowledge we need to perform skilful actions (*kusala kamma*) that lead to the abandoning of re-becoming and *Nibbāna*. These actions have renunciation, good-will/harmlessness and knowledge/wisdom as their root cause.

In the Samma Ditti Sutta the Venerable Sariputta Thero, stressed the importance of Right Knowledge or Right View, of the skilful, good and unskilful actions. You now know the difference. It is the absence of desire and delusion that makes a good action into a skilful action. It is the absence of defilements, which will result in pure thoughts of renunciation, good-will/harmlessness and knowledge that make the difference between *punya kamma* and *kusala kamma*.

Most of us are unable to do skilful actions due to ignorance or lack of knowledge of the Buddha Dhamma. Therefore, with great effort we try to refrain from unskilful actions and perform good actions

as opposed to skillful actions. Most of us do not know the difference between *punya kamma* and *kusala kamma*.

Despite our effort, we also have difficulty refraining from unskillful actions even though we know that they lead to suffering for others and ourselves. So long as the defilement of Desire/greed/lust, anger/hate and delusion (*loba, dosa* and *moha*) are in our mind we will not succeed. This is because we are not knowledgeable or wise enough to understand the Buddha Dhamma including the Absolute Truths about the world. This is a dangerous situation which needs to be addressed without delay.

One day a Brahmin who had been living in seclusion in the forest visited the Buddha and claimed that he was a Noble One as he had kept the precepts (as given in the introduction in page one) without breaking any for a very long time. The Buddha informed the Brahmin that if keeping the precepts without breaking any, in itself, led to Enlightenment or Spiritual Awakening then surely a new born baby would be a Noble One.

The Buddha then informed the Brahmin that he had kept the precepts successfully for a very long time because he had lived in seclusion in the forest with no contact with any outside persons. The Buddha then taught him of the defilements of desire/greed/lust, anger/hate, and delusion (*loba dosa* and *moha*) that were lying dormant in his mind due to the absence of any interaction with any desirable objects and people. One needs to purify the mind by eliminating all defilements and have a mind of renunciation, goodwill/harmlessness, and wisdom/knowledge (*aloba, adosa* and *amoha*) to be a Noble One. This requires knowledge of the true state of the world so that delusion, desire and ill-will, in the mind, would be completely eliminated. Then you will be able to keep the precepts to perfection even in the midst of society and desirable objects and people, without binding (*samyojana*).



Chapter 4

The Real State of the World

The Lord Buddha said that if one immerses oneself in worldly pleasures without understanding the consequences, thinking that they are skilful when in actual fact they are just good, that one will not be able to understand the real state of life and the world. How can we learn about the real state of life and the world?

The Lord Buddha said that just as a goldsmith knows and recognises pure gold, as opposed to fool's gold or gold mixed with other metals, one will have to understand the real make-up of the world and the various realms or planes of life. The goldsmith knows the components, of gold in an ornament. Likewise we should know the real components, constituents or make-up of everything in this world.

Examining the World

The world has many living beings and many things and it is huge. How do we investigate and understand such a world? For ease of understanding, the Lord Buddha has guided us to separate the entire world into two categories before we begin our investigation.

1. Living/animate (humans, animals, insects... etc.) and
2. Non-living or lifeless objects/inanimate
(buildings, vehicles, furniture, ornaments... etc.)

Let us begin with ourselves for it is easy to see and close at hand. When we consider ourselves we can see two distinct components.

They are our body which is tangible and our mind which is not tangible. Together we refer to it as a living being or a human being.

Let us examine the body that is easy to see and tangible unlike the mind. When a person dies we say that he is no longer living, lifeless or that he has passed away. What has happened? What has passed away? Life or the mind (*citta*) is no longer present in the body. If you believe in re-becoming you may use conventional truth and say that the life or the mind has gone to another body as this body can no longer sustain life.

What does a living being need to sustain life? It needs physical nutriment. From birth until it dies living beings consume gross and subtle nutriment for their survival. Living beings consume solid food, water and air to live.

What do we eat in the way of solid food? One may say that we eat plant matter and meat or fish for our survival. If we consider the food chain one will see that the very bottom of the food chain is made up of plant matter such as fruits, leaves, yams, grain and roots. For example grass and hay is fed to the cattle that are used for beef and grains are fed to the chickens that we consume. In the end all the food that we eat is from plant matter.

What are plants made up of? To grow, plants need earth, water, sunlight/heat and air. Therefore, we can surmise that this body that we refer to as 'mine' is ultimately made up of earth, water, heat and air.

What happens to our body when we die? We may be cremated or buried. In the end the body decays and goes back to the earth. The last breath goes back to the air. Any water goes back to the earth and the water table below. And the heat goes back into the atmosphere. After death this body disintegrates and goes back to earth.

In summary this person that we call “I” is made up of mind (*citta*) and body (*Kāya*). So long as they are together we say that it is a living being. At death, when they are separated, we say that the body is lifeless. When we consider our body on its own it is the nonliving component and the mind is the component that we consider as life. Therefore, to find out about the entire world we need to begin by investigating our own body (form) and that which we call life (mind).

When we rotate a burning torch of fire very fast in a circular motion we see a circle of fire. But when we stop the act of rotation we realize that it is just a burning torch. The circle of fire was an illusion and it does not really exist. The fast pace of rotation led to a false image of a circle of fire. In the same way the Buddha said that the way we see this body is an illusion, a false image that leads to desire. He said that this body is made up of indivisible particles that have the properties or nature of earth, water, fire and air that arise and pass away at a very fast pace. In the Samma Diṭṭhi Sutta, Venerable Sariputta Thero said we should have proper understanding of the place and dangers of the nutriment. We will need to investigate this further.

The Body – Just a Heap of Earth

What has happened to all the food and drink that we have taken from the time of birth? Do we still have all that we have consumed from birth? No. It has nourished and kept this body alive by transforming it into various body parts and secretions and excretions such as mucus, tears, saliva, phlegm, sweat, pus, urine, feces, etc. Our physical body - all the body parts that make up this body - are made up of the properties of earth, water, heat and air. This body is just a heap of earth.

One's parents, spouse, children and all beings are sustained by food – earth. All that we do to beautify and adorn this body; washing, dressing, ornamenting etc. are all done to this heap of earth. We are constantly doing all of this, because we don't understand that this body is really just a heap of earth.

All living beings including animals are just lumps of earth. That is why the Lord Buddha has said to live knowing and understanding that everything we do to preserve and beautify this body is of no value because this body itself is of no value. Do we ever think or realize that we are carrying excrement when we are moving? We do not like to touch or smell excrement when it is outside the body but we do not think about it when it is inside.

We do not wish to understand this truth because of our desire, lust and craving for this body. Therefore, we must subdue our desires for our bodies at every opportunity. If we don't do so, we will never understand the truth. We must live understanding the real nature of our body and mind. We are unable to do so, because of our strong *samsāric* habit of desire. We have been doing so all throughout our lives. But we have to give up that habit of associating oneself with and the desiring of external objects.

When you go back home and when you see your children do you think that they are just heaps of earth? No. Do you move away from them? No. Why? The Lord Buddha said that, when you are with desire for those that you love, you can never stay away from them. You cannot let go of them. So you should understand that all those you love are not what they seem to be. They are just heaps of earth. When you think of all the acts of your children don't you go in search of the causes for their conduct? This is a result of your past habits of desire, suspicion, and fear. You will never realize the truth if you cannot eliminate desire. In the *Bāla Vagga* of the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha said,

“ Puttā maṭṭhi, dhanaṃ maṭṭhi - Iti bālo vihaññati

Attā hi attano natthi - Kuto puttā kuto dhanaṃ”

“ I have sons, I have wealth-Thus the fool torments himself. When even he himself doesn't belong to himself, How then sons? How wealth? ”

Developing the Noble Eightfold Path

1. Right View (*Sammā Ditṭhi*) - This is your first glimpse of the reality of the body. By knowing the reality of the body we are able to understand the nonliving (inanimate) objects in the entire world as creations of the earth element, water element, heat element and the air element. We begin developing Right View by knowing this. This is important as it leads to the letting go of this *samsaric* habit of desire.

2. Right Thought (*Sammā Saṅkappa*) - It is now possible for thoughts of letting go, renunciation or Right Thought to arise in the mind. The three right thoughts are good-will, harmlessness and renunciation (*Avyapada*, *Avihimsa* and *Nekkamma*). Based on the first glimpse of right view you begin to understand that there is no reason to desire anything or any person because all beings are just heaps of earth. Also there is no reason to harm anybody because there is no ‘real person’ to harm. Therefore, the possibility of letting go of everything and everyone because all persons and things are of no value is understood.

3. Right Speech (*Sammā Vācchā*) - Speaking about the world based on the understanding of the properties of the earth, water, heat and the air element is Right Speech. This is because when thinking and speaking like this one doesn’t create any desire, anger or delusion in one’s speech.

4. Right Action (*Sammā Kammanta*) - By developing right view and right thoughts and right speech you will also develop Right Action.

5. Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ājīva*) – Developing Right Action and living and working according to Right View leads to Right Livelihood.

6. Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*) - This will help you to develop Right Effort. Living with right thought, speech and action will help to let go of unskillful thoughts that have arisen and prevent new

unskillful thoughts from arising. It will also lead to the fruition of skillful thoughts and developing of skillful thoughts that have not arisen.

7. Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*) – This will lead to Right Mindfulness in your daily life because you have worked towards reducing desire and the hindrances. It will also assist in developing right mindfulness in your meditation practice.

8. Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*)–The practice of the above in your daily life, will enhance your meditation experience. This will help in developing right concentration required for the practice of Insight Meditation.

You can now work at developing all of the Noble Eightfold Path.

By listening to the Dhamma we can develop the mind to Access Samādhi (*Upacāra Samādhi*) which results in partial reduction of hindrances. Then by developing this method further, you will gain *Appanā Samādhi* or *Sammā Samādhi* which is required for the practice of Insight Meditation (*Vipassanā*). However, at present because of the force of the hindrances you are unable to stay within the Path. Hindrances make you remain within the worrisome, mundane unwholesome path. That is why we need to develop our mind further to have the fully stable hindrance free mind required for the practice of insight meditation.



Chapter 5

Eliminating the Hindrances

When you listen to *Dhamma* without purification of your mind, the *Dhamma* will be difficult to understand. The factors that obstruct or hinder understanding and practice of *Dhamma* are called hindrances or “*Neevarana*”. There are five hindrances. They are Desire, Anger, Laziness (to perform skilful deeds), Doubt (regarding the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha) and Distractions (a diffused mind that jumps from one topic to another).

When and how do the hindrances arise? Where do the hindrances arise? To answer these questions let us begin by examining when we do not have these hindrances. We do not have these hindrances when we are in deep sleep or if we are unconscious - that is when our consciousness is not functioning either due to trauma such as a blow to the head or sickness. One does not feel desire, anger, laziness, doubt or distracted when one is asleep or unconscious.

Therefore, it means that these hindrances arise and operate when we are awake and conscious. Let us take some examples for desire and anger to understand when and how they arise.

1. A young man sees an attractive woman. Liking followed by desire arises when the young man sees and thinks about the woman. A musician hears a great performance of music. Liking and desire arises when the musician hears and recollects the music.
2. A teenager is enjoying very loud rap music with harsh language and his father walks in. The father yells at his son in anger. Dislike and then anger arises when the father

hears the unpleasant, loud music. A mother sees her son smoking. Dislike and then anger arises and the mother reprimands her son for endangering his health.

When we are in deep sleep or are unconscious we don't have desire or anger. When you see something attractive or hear something pleasant you may feel longing or desire. Liking and then desire arises when you see something attractive or enjoyable. Desire also arises if you hear something pleasing, taste something delicious, smell something fragrant, feel a pleasant sensation on body contact or remember a desirable event or object. In summary desire arises when there is contact between the six sense organs and something enjoyable.

If desire is a hindrance to understanding the Buddha Dhamma, then we must restrain or manage our desires. How do we manage our desires to ensure they do not interfere with our understanding and practice of the Dhamma? We subdue our desire by paying close attention to the six sense organs that take in outside objects. We must cleanse our mind by managing the likings so that we can prevent them growing to desire, craving, clinging and lust. Thoughts will come from outside and remind you of past pleasing and desirable events. This results in fabricated actions of the mind (*mano kamma or citta saṅkhāra*).

You are happy when you get what you want. However, you cannot always get what you want. You are unhappy, frustrated and angry whenever you do not have your own way. When you see hear taste or smell something unpleasant you have a natural disliking that, if unmanaged, leads to anger and ill-will. These hindrances are with us all the time during waking hours.

Hindrances (*Neevarana*) arise when we pay inappropriate attention to external objects. This means that you have lived for a very long time with an inappropriate mind with hindrances. You must live with an appropriate mind without hindrances. To

eliminate hindrances you require mindfulness. Attention or concentration on an object that does not trigger or lead to hindrances is called mindfulness.

Do you have this hindrance free mindfulness? If you have it, when and where do you have it? When you go to sleep all these six organs do not act but you have also lost your awareness. This mindfulness exists when you are able to keep your mind in the six sensory organs without any hindrance. Then you are no longer taking objects with inappropriate attention. If you are sensing or feeling from one of these six sense organs, then it means that they are getting objects from the outside, and hindrances will occur. So you must halt or disable, in a spiritual sense, the operation of all these six sensory organs.

How do you get the mind away from the six sense organs? At any given moment the mind will be with the functioning sense organ. The mind will be with the eye when you are seeing, ear when you are hearing, nose when you are smelling, tongue when you are tasting... etc. When sensing has arisen, then the hindrance will arise. So you need to keep desirable objects that you are attracted to away from the six sense organs to suppress and eliminate these hindrances.

How do you keep the mind in a hindrance free environment? We have to find an object or place that does not lead to hindrances. The Buddha chose the breath for the practice of mindfulness. The act of breathing is natural, always available and does not lead to the formation of hindrances. The Lord Buddha himself used and recommended this meditation, referred to as Breathing Awareness Meditation or “*Anāpānasati Bhāvana*”.

The following example of cause and effect highlight the importance of concentration for mindfulness and eliminating the hindrances.

Birth causes suffering,
Habit (*Kamma* or actions) causes Birth,
Desire (Craving) causes the Habits (*Kamma* or action),
Ignorance or lack of wisdom causes Desire,
Not hearing *Dhamma* causes Ignorance,
Hindrances cause not Hearing of *Dhamma*,
Un-mindfulness causes the Hindrance,
Wrong Concentration causes Un-mindfulness,

We need knowledge and wisdom to break the habits of the past that result in becoming. Now we know that for wisdom to arise, we have to have mindfulness. So the first step in achieving Enlightenment or Spiritual Awakening is to develop mindfulness. We do this by directing our awareness (*sati*) to an object that does not trigger or lead to hindrances. The breath is such an object.

Concentration on Breathing Awareness

From birth, our breathing in and breathing out has been happening automatically without our knowledge. When high levels of concentration on breathing awareness are reached, then the hindrances will be (temporarily) suppressed. When we breathe how do we avoid the arising of these hindrance? Where do we keep our mind?

If a security guard has to ensure that only authorised persons enter the building, he has to be watchful at the gate. Similarly we have to keep our mind and be mindful at the entrance and the exit of the breath- the nostrils. We will then know and be able to know and distinguish the breath coming in and the breath coming out of the body. We have to be aware and watchful to ensure that our mind

does not wander away from the breath at the nose, just as the gate keeper does not move away from the gate post to watch the event.

To be a good guard he must keep still and watch the gate. Similarly, we should keep our body still and watch the breath. The Buddha gave us two tools/resources to help halt the distracted, diffused or wandering mind. They are referred to as “*Vitakka*” and “*Vicāra*”.

In this context, *Vitakka* means identification and *Vicāra* means evaluation of its nature. We have both these tools/resources within us. We have to distinguish and think about the act of breathing to use these tools. How do we activate these two resources or tools (*Vitakka* and *Vicāra*) when breathing?

Can we count and know the number of compartments if we are in a moving train or driving alongside the train in a car? No, we cannot. We need to stop and wait until each compartment moves past and count each to know the number. Similarly if we want to see a parade we have to stop, stand still and watch the parade. We cannot watch the parade if we join the performers.

This is what we should understand about-breathing meditation. It is wrong to think or note silently that it is inhaling, just when you start inhaling. You should study the whole process of inhaling from start to finish and then identify and note it as the in-breath. Similarly, you should study the act of exhaling from the start to finish and then identify and note it as the out-breath. This identification is known as (*vitakka*).

If it takes a long time to inhale, then note it as a long in-breath. Similarly if it takes a long time to exhale note it as a long out-breath. When we inhale and exhale we note both the inhaling and the exhaling (*vitakka*). We also examine and note its aspect such as length, whether it is long or short (*vicāra*).

At the end of an inhale you note that it is an inhale and if it takes a long time, you note that it is a long in-breath. Similarly when exhaling, you study it from start to finish and when the act is complete you note that it is an exhale and if it takes a long time note that it is a long out-breath.

After some time you may feel that both the in-breath and the out-breath are shorter than before. Then you identify and note it as a short in-breath or a short out-breath.

When you continue in this manner, after some time, the breath becomes calm or subdued and you feel only the whole act of the in-breath and the out-breath. No longer can you distinguish any qualities such as short or long or in or out-breath. At this point in time you think of the breath and note it as being calm or subdued.

When you continue in this manner you will reach a point where the breath will no longer be felt at all. The breath seems to have stopped and you feel a relaxed calmness in both body and mind. This state of mindfulness is called the “*First Jhāna*” At this instance you identify and note that it is the first *Jhāna*. This is the first stage of concentration (*Samadhi*) resulting from mindfulness and the first understanding of the benefits of Breathing Awareness.



Chapter 6

Guided Meditation for Breathing Awareness (Mindfulness)

Let us start meditation on Breathing Awareness or Breathing with Mindfulness Meditation in a suitable location with appropriate posture. This meditation hall is considered a suitable location as it is a quiet place in a forest with no distractions. At home, you should look for a quiet room, meditating preferably early morning, with no distractions. You can assume the full lotus or the half lotus position whichever is easier for you or be seated on a chair with your feet firmly placed on the ground. Your body should be relaxed with your back straight and your hands on your lap, with the right palm on your left palm. The tip of your thumbs should gently touch each other. Close your eyes. Keep your body still.

We will now ask for pardon for any unskilful acts done through the mind, speech or body to the Triple Gem (*Buddha, Dhamma* and *Saṅgha*). While keeping your eyes closed, raise your hands together in the *ānjali* position to your forehead. Repeat this verse, to yourself to be excused from unskilful actions.

**May I be pardoned and released from any unskilful action
which I have done in the past towards the Buddha.**

**May I be pardoned and released from any unskilful action
which I have done in the past towards the Dhamma.**

**May I be pardoned and released from any unskilful action
which I have done in the past towards the Saṅgha**

After reciting these verses, bring down both hands onto the lap. Now take a deep in-breath with effort and let the air exhale quickly, without any effort. Now direct your awareness to the nostrils.

When you feel the air entering your nose through your nostrils, be mindful of this act until the inhaling is ended and then identify and note it as in-breath (inhale). Next when the air starts to exit through the nostrils, be mindful of this act until the exhaling is ended and when all the air has exited, identify and note that it is an out-breath (exhale). It is important that you keep your body still with no movements during this meditation.

Inhale... (Identify and Evaluate) Exhale.... (Identify and Evaluate)

Inhale... Exhale....

Inhale... Exhale....////...

While you are involved in these two actions, you will feel that it takes a long time to finish one act. Then you note that the inhale is long and the exhale is long.

Inhale long..... Exhale long..... (Identify and Evaluate)

Inhale long..... Exhale long.....

Inhale long..... Exhale long.....////...

During the act of breathing in and out you need to feel the breath and identify it and then evaluate by observing and comparing the length. Feeling, identifying and evaluating. After doing so for a considerable period of time, there will be a time, when both these acts inhale and exhale become shorter than earlier. Then you note that inhale is short and exhale is short. You recognise the shortness and note that they are short. It is only after you notice or feel the difference that you note it as being short.

Inhale short..... Exhale short.....

Inhale short..... Exhale short.....

Inhale short..... Exhale short..... ////...

This breath will continue to diminish and after some time you will not be able to identify and separate the in-breath and the out-breath and its length. Then you describe the breath as calm or subdued. Inhale calm and exhale calm.

Inhale calm..... Exhale calm.....

Inhale calm..... Exhale calm.....

Inhale calm..... Exhale calm..... ////...

After some time, you will come to a state when you do not feel your breath at all. Then you evaluate this stage and think of it and note as the **First Jhāna**. At this stage be mindful that it is the first **Jhāna**. It is the first state of mind when you don't feel anything external. Continue noting it as the **First Jhāna** for a considerable period of time.

First **Jhāna**..... First **Jhāna**

First **Jhāna**..... First **Jhāna**

First **Jāana**..... First **Jhāna**////...

When you are well established in the first **Jhāna**, (usually about one hour) think that the **Jhāna** state is falling. Little by little you will start feeling or hearing the external sounds. Then the state of **Jhāna** falls away. You can feel the external activities as before. Open your eyes slowly. This is being mindful about-breathing or Breathing Awareness Meditation (**Anāpānasati Bhavana**).

Your first experience may be a challenge. You may have felt uneasiness during the process of the breathing awareness. If this

happens, you should endeavour to eliminate that uneasiness in body or mind by relaxing. Have confidence in yourself and the technique. If you do not do so with some effort, this state of *Jhāna*, cannot be achieved. You cannot achieve a result without an effort of your own. No one else can do this for you. You yourself must do it for your own welfare.

We monks, guide, direct and teach you how this should be done. You must with effort do the work. Sometimes you may see some visions. They are just mental images "*cittaja rūpa*". Continue as instructed. I want to remind you, that it is very important that you practice the Breathing Awareness Meditation for a long period of time. You must also keep the body still with no movements. Therefore, make sure that you are seated in a balanced and comfortable posture.

Also, it is important that you get well acquainted with this process, because the next meditation that we will be practicing is based on the strength of your mindfulness. If you are a beginner or do not have a consistent daily meditation practice, you will need to work towards a two hour sit. If you have been practicing meditation consistently daily for an hour or more you may find it easier to sit without moving for longer hours. This breathing awareness meditation will be the foundation for the next step.



Chapter 7

Developing the Jhāna

Activities that Weaken Mindfulness

In the previous chapter we discussed Breathing Awareness Meditation and practiced it for over an hour. We also discussed about the real state of the material world, and how to purify ourselves from the hindrances such as desire, anger and restlessness.

If we add purified water to a pot, without washing the dirt inside the pot, the adding of pure water will not result in the desired outcome. It is useless because the water will be contaminated, and mixed up with the dirt.

In the last chapter, I instructed you to practice the meditation on Breathing Awareness for as long as possible. Four hours of meditation time was made available for you, at the retreat, so that each person could progress at his/her own pace. Are there any persons who did the meditation and had any difficulties? It is important that you speak with the teacher and have your doubts and concerns clarified. If not there is the possibility that you will carry forward wrong practices or misunderstandings into your practice.

There are four main activities that will weaken the power of mindfulness you gain by the Breathing Awareness Meditation and instead increase the hindrances. They are:

- **“Kammāramatha”** –Recalling to memory or reflecting on previous desirous objects that came into contact with any

of your six sense organs. This habit will increase your hindrances.

- **“*Bashsharamatha*”** – talking with others. If you are talking with others about people, events or things that you desire or that arouse anger these conversations will increase your hindrances.
- **“*Sangilikaramatha*”** – Staying with or entertaining relatives and friends or involvement with mass community activities will build desire and result in conflict that leads to anger. These type of activities will increase your hindrances
- **“*Niddaseelitha*”** – Sleeping more hours than the recommended healthy sleeping hours. This will increase the hindrances.

If you are involved in the day to day activities with your family and friends you will face all of these weakening activities. So you must try to avoid these types of activities or at least minimize them.

Guided Meditation up to the Fourth Jhāna

In the last chapter, we trained ourselves for the first meditative state (First Jhāna). Let us now repeat it and try to attain higher stages of *Jhāna*.

While keeping your eyes closed, raise your hands together in the *ānjali* position to your forehead. Repeat this verse, to yourself to be excused from unskilful actions to the Triple Gem.

May I be pardoned and released from any unskilful action which I have done in the past towards the Buddha.

May I be pardoned and released from any unskilful action which I have done in the past towards the Dhamma.

May I be pardoned and released from any unskilful action which I have done in the past towards the Saṅgha

After reciting these verses, bring down both hands onto the lap. Now take a deep in-breath with effort and let the air exhale quickly, without any effort. Now direct your mind to your nostrils.

When you feel the air entering your nose through the nostrils, be mindful of this act until the inhaling is ended and then identify and note it as in-breath (inhale). Next when the air starts to exit through the nostrils, be mindful of this act until the exhaling is ended and when all the air has exited, identify and note that it is an out-breath (exhale). It is important that you keep your body still with no movements during this meditation.

Inhale... (Identify and Evaluate) Exhale.... (Identify and Evaluate)

Inhale... Exhale....

Inhale... Exhale....////...

While you are involved in these two actions, you will feel that it takes a long time to finish one act. Then you note that the inhale is long and the exhale is long.

Inhale long..... Exhale long..... (Identify and Evaluate)

Inhale long..... Exhale long.....

Inhale long..... Exhale long.....////...

During the act of breathing in and out you need to feel the breath and identify it and then evaluate by observing and comparing the

length. Feeling, identifying and evaluating. When doing so for a considerable period of time, there will be an instance, when both these acts inhale and exhale become shorter than earlier. Then you note that inhale is short and exhale is short. You recognise the shortness and note that they are short. It is only after you notice or feel the difference that you note it as being short.

Inhale short..... Exhale short.....

Inhale short..... Exhale short.....

Inhale short..... Exhale short..... ////...

This shortness will slowly diminish and will not be felt. The breath will be very faint and you will not be able to identify and separate the in-breath and the out-breath and its length. Then you describe the breath as calm or subdued. Inhale calm and exhale calm.

Inhale calm Exhale calm

Inhale calm Exhale calm

Inhale calm Exhale calm ////...

After some time, you will come to a state when you do not feel your breath at all. Then you evaluate this stage and think of it and note as the **First Jhāna**. At this stage be mindful that it is the first **Jhāna**. It is the first state of mind when you do not feel anything external. Continue noting it as the (**First Jhāna**) for a considerable period of time.

First **Jhāna**..... First **Jhāna**

First **Jhāna** First **Jhāna**

First **Jāana** First **Jhāna**

As you establish in the first **Jhāna**, difficulties and any physical or mental discomfort will be subdued. Do not pay any attention to

external disturbances whatsoever. Keep on noting **First Jhāna**. Continue this in quick succession, allowing no time for other thoughts to occur. It is common for the mind to seek something to cling to when the breath has left. Difficulties and uneasiness in body and mind will try to take over your mindfulness. Do not let the mind wonder. Keep thinking or noting First **Jhāna** First **Jhāna** First **Jhāna**.

Your body feels light. The feeling of lightness continues. You feel as if you are moving in an elevator or a lift. You are ready to rise to the second Jhāna. First determine to rise to the Second **Jhāna**. By noting let the concentration rise (**Samādiya Nageeva**). The feeling of this state of mind lies in front of your eyes. Go on thinking and noting as second **Jhāna**.

Second **Jhāna**..... Second **Jhāna**.....

Second **Jhāna**..... Second **Jhāna**.....

Second **Jhāna**..... Second **Jhāna**.....////...

Keep on thinking like that for a long time till you feel the Jhāna rising.

Then make a determination to rise to the third **Jhāna**. You will feel the mind rising up to your forehead. Think and note as the third **Jhāna**. Go on thinking about the third **Jhāna** noting:

Third **Jhāna**... Third **Jhāna**...

Third **Jhāna**... Third **Jhāna**...

Third **Jhāna**... Third **Jhāna**... ///..

You must continue to meditate and focus your attention to the level of your forehead.

Now, think again and make a determination to raise the *Jhāna* (*samdiya nageeva*) Think and note as fourth *Jhāna*:

It will be felt at the top of your head. Continue thinking and noting fourth *Jhāna*.

Fourth *Jhāna*... Fourth *Jhāna*.....

Fourth *Jhāna*... Fourth *Jhāna*.....

Fourth *Jhāna*... Fourth *Jhāna*.....///...

Do not let your mind go astray. Continue concentrating on fourth *Jhāna* noting for a considerable period of time. When you are ready to descend from the fourth *Jhāna* think as follows:

Let the state of *Jhāna* mind fall. Think, and note as third *Jhāna*.

Third *Jhāna*... Third *Jhāna*... Third *Jhāna*...

Go on noting as third *Jhāna*. The change will be felt at your forehead.

Now think again, let the state of *Jhāna* mind fall or descend. It will be felt at the level of your eyes. Think of this as the second state of *Jhāna* mind. Go on thinking and noting second *Jhāna* again and again.

Second *Jhāna*..... Second *Jhāna*..... Second *Jhāna*.....

Now think and let the *Jhāna* descend. You will feel that the *Jhāna* mind is at your nostrils. Go on thinking and noting this as first *Jhāna*.

First *Jhāna*..... First *Jhāna*..... First *Jhāna*.....

Now again think, let the *Jhāna* fall. You will feel your breath at your nostrils. The breath is felt and you will feel that the *Jhāna* is descending. Now you have come out of the state of *Jhāna*.

Slowly open your eyes. Good!

The Guided Meditation that we practiced in this chapter and in the previous chapter helps to raise the mind up to the fourth level of *Jhāna*. According to the Buddha's teaching one's mindfulness will be elevated and ready for Vipassanā Meditation at the fourth stage of *Jhāna* meditation.

Some Problems One May Face

I am now addressing those who practiced this type of meditation for the first time. What were the changes encountered by you as beginners? Let me know about those changes. Were there any difficulties in body and/or mind? Discussion of the problems encountered by the participants during the course of the meditation is very important.

All those who have not followed what I have asked you to do, will not have attained the stages that I have mentioned. Those who fell asleep may not be aware as to changes that happened in their minds. Some of you may have experienced uneasiness. Those of you who have respiratory ailments or difficulty in-breathing will not be able to follow the stages of meditation properly. They would need to have their ailments cured first.

If you are feeling your breath at the stages of second and third levels, then you have not attained these stages. Do not be worried about this situation. When you are doing it together with all the others attending the retreat, it is not possible for everyone to attain the various stages at the same time. The stages will change according to each individual's state of mind.

Even if you feel your breath when thinking of *Jhāna* rising, just ignore or disregard this feeling and continue thinking about the *Jhāna* stage. Then you will attain the proper levels.

Those who are involved in lust and unskilful activities will have Identification and Evaluation (*Vitakka* and *Vicāra*) take place but the mind will still be with the hindrances. The purpose of this technique is to be free of the hindrances. Those who are having skilful involvements will have non-hindrances *Vitakka* and *Vicāra*. If you follow the instructions with effort, then you will attain the various stages of *Jhāna*.

You now have to practice this exercise and ensure that it is followed according to the instructions. When you feel and recognize the stages properly, you will be in the appropriate stages. Through long hours of practice you will obtain the expected results.

When practising Breathing Awareness Meditation you are developing five skilful and important characteristics in your mind. They are:

- “*Vitakka*” – The ability to distinguish or identify the meditation object without hindrances.
- “*Vicāra*” – The ability to evaluate the nature of the meditation object without the hindrances.
- “*Pīti*” – Happiness in the mind without the hindrances.
- “*Sukha*” – Pleasure in mind without the hindrances.
- “*Ekaggata*” - The ability to concentrate on one object without hindrances.

The Importance of an Experienced, Good Dhamma Teacher

Even if you have achieved the higher stages of *Jhāna*, you may still not be released from suffering. For this we need to establish the stage of “no more re-becoming or no more re-birth”. To be released from suffering we also need to investigate the true state of the world using Insight or *Vipassanā* Meditation. When you can practice Breathing Awareness Meditation in this manner for about one hour or more, then it is time to start the Insight Meditation for the arising of wisdom.

As monks, we teach and guide you showing the path to enlightenment. You need to have a good Dhamma teacher (*Kalyana Mitta*) to direct you. Understand that you can never do this on your own without proper guidance.

Let us take an example. A man has to cut down a tree. However, all he has is an axe which is blunt. It will be very hard to cut down the tree with the blunt axe. Even with great effort he may not be able to cut down the tree. Likewise those who do not have the appropriate *Jhāna* or a hindrance-free mind, will not be able to attain the stage of discerning, deep insight or the results of *Vipassanā* meditation.

Just as you require the sharpening of the axe to fell the tree, you need to have a sharp mind to cut down the gross and subtle defilements. You need to have an experienced teacher to lead you to the required stages of mindfulness. The monk, your teacher could guide and direct you in preparing your mind for enlightenment.



Chapter 8

Insight Meditation –Meditation on the 32 Parts of the Body

The hindrances arise in our minds as a result of external objects that interact with our six sense organs. Through the practice of Breathing Awareness Meditation (*Anāpanasati Bhāvana*) we now have the ability to control the mind and are able to investigate any situation without the hindrances. We need to investigate the whole world as we discussed in the previous chapters, but we do so with a mind free of hindrances. A mind free of hindrances is sharp like the sharpened blade of a knife or axe. It cuts through defilements so that wisdom can arise.

The Buddha taught meditation that leads to mindfulness and insight in the discourse known as the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satara Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*). This discourse was dispensed by the Lord Buddha in the town of Kuru to the people of Kuru. It was dispensed to them because they were people advanced in the Dhamma who had inherent qualities of wisdom and intelligence. The Buddha said, “Monks, this, Four Foundations of Mindfulness is the one and only path to freedom from suffering”. We hold this discourse in high regard and practice it because of this praise by the Lord Buddha.

Being pre-eminent in the world “*Lokottara*” and knowing everything in the world “*Lokavidu*” are states realized by Lord Buddha. What did the Buddha know about the world that resulted in being referred to as *Lokottara* and *Lokavidu*. We begin by investigating the world as the Buddha did to see the true status or nature of all the objects or things in this world. We categorise the

world into living and not living things. Then we use ourselves for the examination and start with the tangible component, the body.

To cultivate the meditation practices revealed in this discourse, you also need to be able to observe the arising and passing away of all objects (*dhammatā*). Therefore we need to know about the three stages of existence of all living and nonliving things. Knowing about the birth/arising, existence and destruction/passing away “*uppāda, thithi & bhangha*” of the living and nonliving things in the world will let you know about the true nature of the whole world. We will address these topics in the following chapters.

Getting to Know the Body Through Investigation

We take great care of our bodies and love our bodies. Therefore, it is important that we know the true nature of the body first. Let us take another look at the body and the food that you eat with such desire. We know that physical nutriment (solid food, liquid food and air) are required to live. Let us examine what happens to the food we eat. The very delicious piece of cake you eat is chewed up with saliva to a mush. Spit it out and observe the chewed up food. Is it pleasing to you now? Will you put it back in your mouth?

As it goes down your throat it mixes with phlegm and then enters the stomach. The food you ate churns with other partially digested food which is mixed up with various enzymes and acids that promote digestion. It is a warm, fermented churning mixture of food that smells and emits gas. Have you ever vomited? This is what the food that you ate with such desire looks like in the stomach. Have you brought up gas and burped after a big meal? This is the foul smelling gas that is emitted from the stomach.

The nutriment from this food is absorbed by the body as it passes through the small and large intestines. This is what nourishes the blood, and other organs in your body. The heart, lungs, stomach, kidneys, brain and bones are all nourished by this vomit like mixture that you reject when you vomit. This is what nourishes the body that you are attracted to and desire.

What is left after all the nourishment is absorbed is the excrement and urine that the body rejects. This is what happens to the food that you eat with such desire. All people that we love and care about are made up of blood and organs nourished by this partially digested food that you will never put back into your mouth. If you see the body as it really is, you will not be attached to it or view it with desire. We will begin by investigating the body, the tangible component, to understand its makeup.

The Components of the Body (Thirty Two Parts of the Body)

What are the components of the body? You say that the body is comprised of 32 parts. Can you tell me the 32 parts? If this is so, then you should know exactly what they are, where they are and what they look like. You should examine yourself and understand clearly without any doubt (*paccattham vedithabbo*) before you say that you are made up of 32 parts. You must examine them by their position, color, shape, smell and taste so that you will have a comprehensive idea of the composition of the body. This must be followed by a video or photographs of the individual parts so that you can visualize the composition of the body. The Buddha examined his body and identified thirty two parts that are common to human beings.

There are five visible parts outside the body. They are:

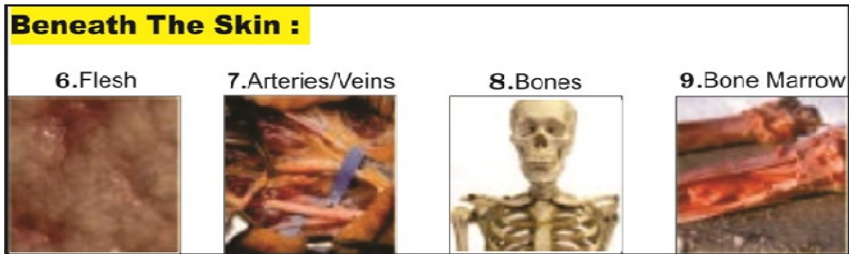
1. **Hair** – outside the skull, black or white, thin and long, burnt smell, blood taste.
2. **Body hair** – on the skin, black or white, thin and long, burnt smell, blood taste.
3. **Nails** – at the end of fingers and toes, white, flat, burnt smell, and blood taste.
4. **Teeth** –in the jaws of the mouth, white, long and short, burnt smell, dusty taste.
5. **Skin** – covering the body, brown black, white or yellow, thin layer or film, blood smell, blood taste.



There are four parts beneath the skin. They are:

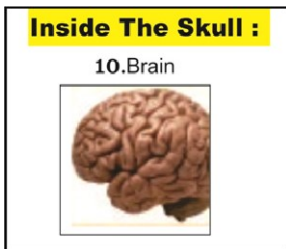
6. **Flesh** – under the skin, red, small or big, blood smell, blood taste.
7. **Arteries/Veins** – all over the body and under the skin, red, tube like, 900 in number formed of flesh, circulates blood all over the body, stretchable, blood smell, and blood taste.

8. **Bones** – surrounded by flesh, form the human skeleton, white, different sizes, 206 in number, It is hollow inside, dust smell, dusty taste.
9. **Bone marrow** – inside the bones, blood color, manufactures blood, burnt smell, blood taste.



There is one part inside the skull. It is:

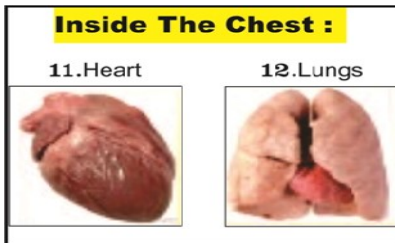
10. **Brain** – inside the skull, just like jelly, does remembering and thinking, white, burnt smell, blood taste.



There are two parts inside the chest. They are:

11. **Heart** – made of flesh, red, shaped like a mango, the size of a person's fist, circulates blood, flesh smell and taste,

- 12. Lungs**– shape of the two wings of a butterfly, red, like a bee hive, like a balloon, purifies blood, two in number.



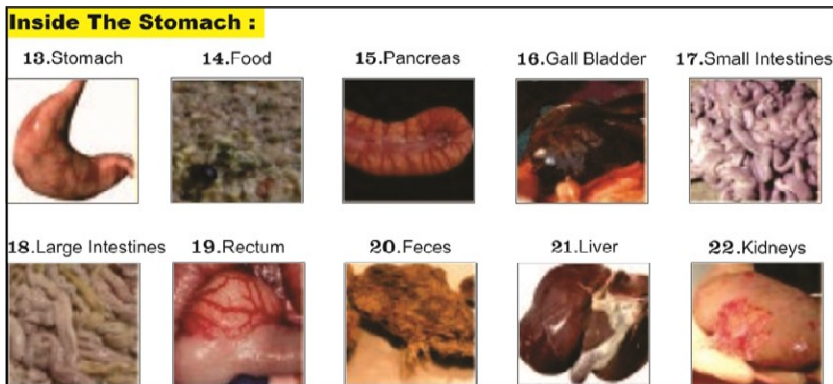
There are ten parts inside the abdomen. They are:

- 13. Stomach** – like a bag or like a water pumpkin, formed of flesh, food we eat is digested inside, smell of flesh, flesh taste.
- 14. Food (partially digested)** – based on the color of food we eat, taste and smell of vomit.
- 15. Pancreas** – supplies acids to digest food, dirty smell and taste.
- 16. Gall bladder** – makes bile, helps food to be digested, acid smell and taste.
- 17. Small intestines** – like a tube made of flesh, size of a thumb, the length is about five or six times the height of a person, bent in curves, absorbs the food we eat, smell of flesh, taste of flesh.
- 18. Large Intestines** – surrounds the small intestines, made of flesh, food is digested inside, length is about twice the height of a person, smell of flesh, taste of flesh.
- 19. Rectum** – stores the residue of digested food, red color, formed with flesh, dirty smell, tastes dirty.

20. Feces/Excrement – the residue of food after digesting and absorbing of water. Waste matter you expel through the rectum, smell dirty, tastes dirty.

21. Liver – like a bag, absorbs food, red color, gives strength when food is not supplied, smell of flesh, taste of flesh.

22. Kidneys – absorbs water from the blood, two in number, red color, formed of flesh, smell of flesh, taste of flesh.



There are ten liquid substances which are waste matter, eliminated from the body. They are:

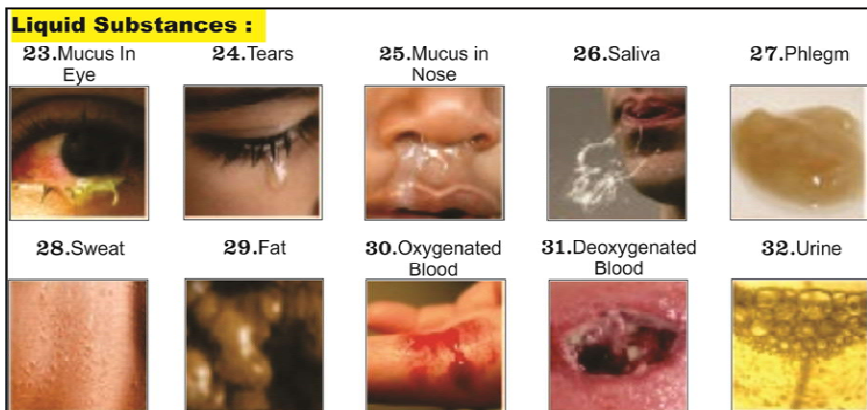
23. Mucus of the eyes – forms in the eyes and sent out as waste, white color, lime taste, lime smell.

24. Tears – formed in the eyes as waste, color of water, lime taste, lime smell.

25. Mucus in the nose – formed in the nose, waste matter, yellow color, lime taste, lime smell.

26. Saliva – formed in the mouth, watery, helps digest food, lime taste, color of water.

- 27. Phlegm** – forms in the lungs, waste matter, yellow color, lime taste, lime smell.
- 28. Sweat** – formed in the skin, watery, secreted as waste, salty taste, salt smell.
- 29. Fat** – formed inside the skin, oily substance, oily taste, oily smell.
- 30. Oxygenated Blood** – formed inside bones, red in color, blood taste, smells of blood.
- 31. Deoxygenated Blood** – formed of blood when wounded and clotted outside, white color, dirty smell, salty taste.
- 32. Urine** – waste water drained in the bladder and sent out, white color, salty taste.



This is the constitution of the human body. All 32 components of the body that the Buddha described are now known to you. The Buddha has considered the major parts of the body common to both men and women. The body that we take care of and adorn with beautiful clothes and ornaments is comprised of 32 impure,

putrid parts. When we look at and investigate the human body, as the Lord Buddha has investigated, there is no separation or identification based on nationality, gender, age, religion, occupation, station of birth ... etc. All such conventions that separate and divide beings into me, mine and other are based on conventional truth and is not absolute truth. Also, in truth, there is nothing beautiful and attractive in the body to be desired.

Do you see any distinguishing features of American, English, African, Chinese, Indian, Russian or any other nationality in the 32 parts of the body? No. Do you see any distinguishing characteristics of Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or any other religion in these 32 parts? No. These are terms used conventionally to separate and categorize persons, but it is not the absolute truth. Do you look for colour, nationality or religion when a person has a grave illness and in need of a blood transfusion or an organ transplant? No.

Are there any distinctions in these 32 parts whether they belonged to a king, a teacher, a lawyer, a farmer or a mechanic? No. Can you distinguish and say that these 32 parts are mine and these are someone else's? No. These 32 parts are common to all human beings. The names or titles used based on employment or stations in life are also just conventions.

When we refer to these 32 parts as "I am", "My Self", "He", "She" it is not the absolute truth. Are these terms included in these parts? No. We cannot identify the parts as belonging to a woman or man when we dismantle a body to its constituent parts. We love the body saying it is good, beautiful, pleasant, attractive, ... etc. Is there anything like that in these parts? No.

Each time we examine the body based on its actual components or make up, we can only find the putrid, unpleasant smelly secretions and excretions produced by the body such as pus, tears, mucus, saliva, sweat, urine, feces, ... etc. This happens continuously from

the beginning to the end of life. By living we are filling the world with all these secretions and excretions. As the Buddha said, this body is like a gold-plated pot filled with sludge. The body is a production factory of sludge even though we consider it as an attractive and desirable thing. Nor will this condition change over time. As in the past, this body will continue to produce these excretions in the present and future.

Therefore, the ‘Wise Ones’ will never adorn, decorate, or desire this body. They will live moderately and focus their attention on the practice of the path to enlightenment. They will exert maximum effort to overcome this recurring birth by ending re-becoming.



Chapter 9

The Eight Pure, Primary Properties (*Suddastaka*)

Conventional Truth and Absolute/Universal Truth – The Body or Form

It was on the full moon day in the month of May over 2600 years ago when the Lord Buddha realized full awakening that he analyzed and understood the Higher Teachings (*Abhidhamma*). Examining this one fathom long body he realized that it was made up of various parts such as hair, nails, teeth, skin, bones, muscle, heart, liver, lungs, blood, tears, mucus etc. Conventional truth labeled this conglomeration of solid and liquid body parts as the body. When examining further, the Buddha realized that the body and these parts could be dissected into four primary or source elements based on their properties or nature. These elements are known as the four great elements (*Satara Mahā Dhātu*) as follows.

1. The earth element (*paṭhav Dhātu*) has the nature or property of hardness and softness, rough and smooth, and heavy and light.
2. The water element (*āpo Dhātu*) has the nature or property of cohesiveness/conjunction and collapse/separation. It is also known as the nature of fluidity.
3. The fire element (*tejo Dhātu*) has the nature or property of heat and cold.

4. The air element (*vāyo Dhātu*) has the nature or property of expansion, contraction and movement. It is also known as the nature of pressurizing.

These four properties also have colour (*varna*), taste (*rasa*), smell (*gandha*) and energy (*ojā*). These eight properties arise or come into being all at the same time. They do not arise consecutively. The body that looks solid which we can see and touch and is subject to gravitational forces is the conventional truth (*samuthi dhamma*). It is just a naming convention. The reality is that the body or form (*rūpa*) as it is also called because of its absence of any substance is really comprised of these eight unique, source or primary properties (*suddastaka Dhātu*).

This reality, absolute truth or universal truth applies to all animate (living) and inanimate (nonliving) objects. If you examine a vehicle, building or even a marker pen they have all been given a conventional name so that they can be identified. These names will change based on the language used and it is required to identify the object. However, when it is dissected into its component parts by one's mind as the Buddha did, one sees that in reality there is no solid substance. The reality is that each of these objects is comprised of many primary or source elements each of which has the eight properties described above.

The importance of these eight source properties, however, is their life span. They arise and pass away swiftly. They live for only 17 thought moments (*cittakshana*). The Buddha uses the word impermanence (*anicca*) to show the ageing and decay that occurs in these 17 thought moments. These eight are known as *suddastaka* and they are indivisible or have unbreakable properties. All form (*rūpa*); animate and inanimate are made of these eight unique properties. The proportions of each of the qualities, however, are varied depending on the object. We identify each object as being of earth, water, fire or air element based on

the predominant quality. Despite this identification, all eight properties are present in all objects.

Identification of the Four Great Elements

How do we identify these qualities of matter? How do we prove to ourselves the Truth of this reality? The main characteristic of these four states of elements are, that you cannot distinguish each from the other independently. We can only identify or recognise them when they are together because they arise, exist/decay and pass away together. When they are together, they can be identified or recognised by seeing, hearing, sensing or mental review (*ditta, sutha, mutha, viññatha*).

Earth element - How do we identify the quality of *paṭhav* in an object? We identify the earth element by touch. We have to touch the object to see if it is hard or soft, rough or smooth. We can say that this chair, table, and wall have the property of earth as they are hard to the touch. When the properties or quality of the earth is more we say it is hard if it is less, as in a cushion or pillow, we say it is soft.

The property of earth can also be understood by lifting the object to assess its weight. The property of earth is more if it is heavy and less if it is light. The property or quality of earth cannot be identified by seeing or hearing.

When can you identify the property of the earth element? It can be identified only at the moment of touch. This is because the *suddastaka* are arising, decaying and passing away (*uppada, thithi and bhangha*) swiftly every moment in time. The *paṭhav* nature in an object can be identified by body sensing.

Water element - How do we identify the quality of *āpo* in an object? The Lord Buddha said it is of the nature of cohesiveness or

conjunction and collapsing or separating. These qualities are understood by inspection. A wall could be made of bricks, sand, cement, water, ... etc. How can we know it? Some objects need to be together, to be seen, when separated into the original states they will not be seen. When the parts forming the wall are separated the wall disappears. When brought together it forms a wall. How do we inspect this *āpo* state? If we can see and identify an object when the constituent parts are together, and the original object cannot be identified and is no longer there when the constituent parts are separated, then this quality in an object is due to the *āpo* nature. The *āpo* nature can be identified by mental review.

Fire or heat element - How do we identify the quality of *tejo* in an object? It is by feeling or touching. When heat element is more in an object we say it is hot, when heat is less we say it is cold. The *tejo* nature can be identified at a given moment of touch by body sensing.

Air element - How do we identify the quality of *vāyo* in an object? It moves forward by compressing itself. When you pour water on to a brick the water thrusts itself into the brick. When we hammer a nail into the wall the nail drives into the wall. This is because of the air element in the brick and the wall. This is called the nature of contraction or compression in *vāyo*.

Because of the very swift arising and passing away of the *suddastaka* the nature of any object has to be decided at this very moment. You cannot identify the nature of objects based on past examinations because it is continuously arising and passing away and its composition may have changed over time. In fact its existence of 17 *cittakshanas* is such a minute time frame that it is not even accounted for. The arising and passing away occurs faster than the speed of light. The examination is true only at the moment of inspection. For example a fruit decays over time. It's constitution, when it is raw, ripe and over ripe is not the same. Even though the earth element is predominant through-out all three

stages, the water element increases as it decays. Let us consider the composition of earth, water, fire and air. Let us examine each of these to see if they have the four properties?

Earth - It has hardness (*paṭhav*), the earth can be seen as earth when it is together. It becomes a heap of soil when separated (*āpo*), the earth can be hot or cold (*tejo*). It can be penetrated by a stick or a spade (*vāyo*). So the Earth has the nature of *paṭhav*, *āpo*, *tejo* and *vāyo*. It is a collection of all four elements.

Water – It is smooth, has texture and can be felt, it comes together and disengages. Heat is there. Things can penetrate into water. Therefore, **Water** has the nature of *paṭhav*, *āpo*, *tejo* and *vāyo*. It is a collection of all those four elements.

Fire – It can be touched, you may feel a very light touch, and it is smooth. It is hot and it can move apart and come together because of *āpo* nature. Anything can be pushed through the fire. Therefore, **Fire** has the nature of *paṭhav*, *āpo*, *tejo*, and *vāyo*. It is a collection of all four elements.

Air – You can feel the air flow to touch, there is smoothness in it, air can come together and move apart, you can feel hot or cold air and anything can move through the air. Therefore, air has *paṭhav*, *āpo*, *tejo*, *vāyo*. It is a collection of all four elements.

All animate and inanimate objects are made of the four elements (*paṭhav*, *āpo*, *tejo*, and *vāyo*). Therefore, inanimate objects including the bodies of living beings are a collection of all these four elements.

Therefore, we can surmise that all matter is constituted of the four primary properties. This investigation to prove the properties of an object has to be done by oneself in this very moment. One must traverse in the Dhamma to understand this concept (*Carātha Dhamma*).

Identification of Objects that cannot be Touched

We just examined earth, water, fire and air and demonstrated to ourselves that we could identify the four great elements in each of them. Can we inspect any object in the universe and identify their composition? How about the sun, moon and the stars? Can we examine them to see if they are made up of the *suddastaka* or eight primary properties of all these states of matter? We cannot inspect these things because we cannot touch them or break them apart to examine. We can distinguish the stars, moon and sun by their color. If at least one property can be identified, then we can surmise that it is a collection of all these eight because they arise and pass away together.

How about unseen realms such as heaven and hell? Have you gone to heaven or to hell to know about the things existing there? No. For that we have to do a common inspection.

Objects too far a way to touch that we see and refer to as form (*rūpa*) are also an image made up of *suddastaka* because there is color in the form. Whatever we see is made up of *suddastaka*. Whatever we can see in the whole world is made up of *suddastaka*. Those which we have seen in the past and can see in the present are all made up of *suddastaka*.

We know that if we can touch an object, then it is made up of *suddastaka* because the *paṭhav Dhātu* has been identified. What do you have in the eye? We can touch the eye and know that it is formed by the eight qualities or nature of matter. Similarly the ear, nose, tongue, body and brain are all referred to as form and made up of swiftly arising and passing *suddastaka*.

- Colour/Image - Form (*Rūpa*) – Comes in contact with the eye and we see.
- Sound (*Saddha*) – Comes in contact with the ear and we hear.

- Smell (**Gandha**) –Comes in contact with the nose and we smell.
- Flavour (**Rasa**) –Comes in contact with the tongue and we taste.
- Tactile sensations (**Sparsha**) –Comes in contact with the body and we feel.
- Thought (**Sithum**) – Comes in contact with the brain and we remember.

Form, sound, smell, taste, tactile sensations and thoughts all come in contact with the six sense bases and then seeing, hearing, smelling,... etc. happens. Now what else is left to inspect in the whole world? Knowing of the world is limited to the capabilities of your six sense organs. This is the only way that you can know or learn about an external object. If you can examine all matter that you can sense you will be able to know that the whole world is made of **Suddastaka**. So you know the entire world is created by the eight elements. All these are referred to as the material world.

The Three Characteristics of the Eight Pure, Primary Properties (**suddastaka**)

We now have to consider the three main characteristic of the **suddastaka** - Impermanence, emptiness and not-self (**anicca, dukka, anatta**).

1. Impermanence (**Anicca**) – instantaneous arising (formation) and passing away (destruction) of **Suddastaka**, leaving nothing behind.
2. Emptiness (**Dukka**) – The lack of substance in all objects or the emptiness of all objects.

3. Not-self (*Anatta*) – Not controlled by anyone. The arising, passing away and the resulting lack of substance or the emptiness is happening without a doer.

1. **Impermanence (*Anicca*)**- All that arises is prone to destruction. This is because of the *āpo* nature of all matter. The *suddastaka* will not be in a collected constant state or togetherness forever, they are apt to separate and come together instantaneously. As we know in quantum physics there are certain energy packets in matter that result in this movement. The nature of the water element (*āpo*), results in the quality of cohesiveness and separation. The speed of cohesiveness and separation cannot be measured; its speed is greater than that of light. Therefore, it is referred to as *anicca* by the Buddha

In 1960 an American by the name of Donald Glaser Ph.D. received the Nobel Prize for Physics because he invented a machine to measure the number of times a sub-atomic particle changed in one second. He called his instrument the bubble chamber and found that in one second a sub-atomic particle arises and vanishes 10^{22} times. It was already known to scientists that these particles which make up all substances/matter arise and pass away with great rapidity. The invention of the bubble machine quantified their knowledge of sub-atomic particles.

Over 2,600 years ago the Lord Buddha realized this Truth. He realized that at every moment the matter that comprised what we call “self”, changed. The physical reality changed constantly, at every moment. Through insight meditation and a concentrated mind, He penetrated deeply into His own nature and realized that the entire material structure is made up of indivisible particles (*rūpakalāpa*) (with eight properties that He referred to as *suddastaka*) which are continuously arising and vanishing. “In the blinking of an eye”, He said, “These particles are arising and passing away many trillions of times.” Unbelievable as it seems, this body which appears to be solid and permanent is in actual fact composed of indivisible particles that are arising and passing

away continuously at incredible speed, without any remainder. Science has now quantified the arising and passing away of sub atomic particles with instruments. The Buddha realized this truth with his concentrated mind in the indivisible particles that has the nature of the eight pure, primary properties or elements.

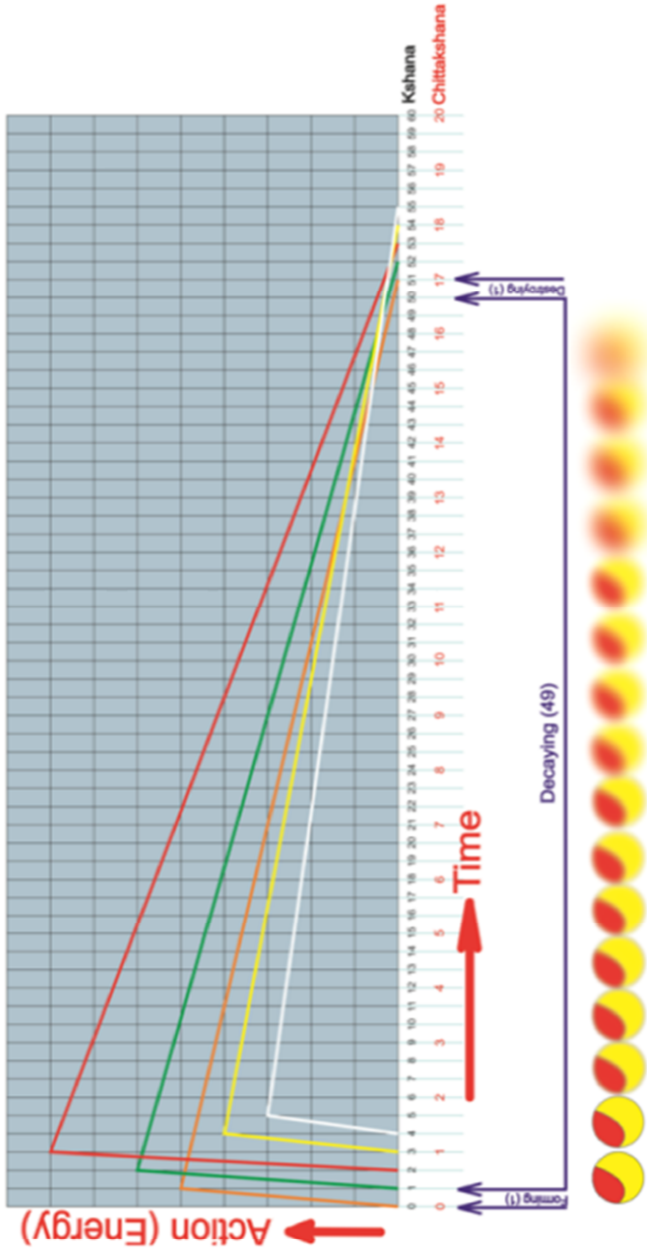
If we consider our bodies, is there any part of our body that existed before birth and will anything remain after death? No. This is because there is no ‘body’ as perceived before birth or after the death. Therefore even in the present there is no constant, form or body as perceived by us. There is just a conglomeration of parts that together is perceived as a body. Each of these parts is comprised of many eight pure indivisible primary properties that arise and pass away together with no remainder at a speed exceeding the speed of light. Therefore it is impermanent (*anicca*).

We need to know more about this phenomenon to understand the details of this process. If we look at any object we are unable to identify this kind of phenomena in the object because of the speed of the coming together and separation of the particles and because the particles are very tiny and not visible.

This phenomenon is explained in Dhamma as follows: The tiniest indivisible particle created by the eight elements is referred to as a “*Rūpakalāpa*” (smaller than the neutrons, protons & electrons). If we consider one single atom it may consist of trillions of *Rupakalāpa*. Each and every *Rūpakalāpa* will remain for only 17 *Chittakshana*.

One *Cittakshana* is the time period of forming, decaying & destroying of a feeling / sensing (mind). It is stated that within a second it is possible to create trillions of feelings/sensing (minds). So we have to understand that the time taken to create one single feeling or sensing is extremely small and there is no instrument to measure this. Instead we have to use our intelligence and understand it by thinking and reflection. Using the following graph some of the actions can be explained for the understanding of impermanence.

Life span of Rupakalāpaya



In this graph you can see the Orange line marked to show one set of ***Rūpakalāpa***. Those were created in first ***kshana*** (moment of time), decay during 49 ***kshana*** and destruct at the 51st ***kshana***. All the ***rūpakalāpa*** arise and pass away in this pattern. The 17 ***chittakshana*** is equivalent to the time period of 51 ***kshana*** You can see that before the first ***rūpakalāpa*** destructs, within the time period of the first set, that another set of 8 properties has come into being. This set will destruct after the first set of ***rūpakalāpa***. This set may have a similar energy level, higher energy or lower energy level depending on the nourishment of the object and the life span of the object.

If the energy level is higher (green & red lines) than the previous energy level (orange line) we say the object or person is growing and in the younger stages of life (applies to plant and animal life) when the energy level is lower (yellow & white lines), then we say object or the person is older or in the latter stages of life and decaying fast. However, we need to clearly understand, that each of these ***rūpakalāpa*** is newly formed and there is nothing remaining from the previous set. In each instance, the first set of ***rūpakalāpa*** is destroyed and a new set is created. There are many reasons and causes for the arising and destruction of the ***rūpakalāpa***. This information is stated in the higher teachings (***abhidhamma***). What we need to understand is that each and every object formed as a result of the cohesion and separation of the eight elements will only remain for 17 ***chittakshana***. In one second an object may arise and destruct trillions of times.

A simple example of a water tank will explain this phenomenon. If the tank is full and we simultaneously extract and fill the same amount of water from the tank, a person observing the tank may think that the tank is full all the time. But this is not the absolute truth. Also, no one can separate the water that is in the tank and the new water that is added to the

tank. This is what happens to every object in this world. This is what the Lord Buddha referred to as impermanence.

2. **Emptiness (*Dukka*)**—Let us consider our body or any other object (*rūpa*) as an example. Is there any part of our body or object (form) that existed before the birth or creation of the object and will anything remain after the death or destruction of our body or any object? No. Why is that? Because there is no such body or object existing before or after the death of the living being or destruction of the object. If so in the present we are unable to describe this as a body or an object. There is no such body or object. The body or object is empty and without substance. There are only eight pure, primary elements there. If we burn a candle nothing remains at the end. Suffering is there in the words because living beings have this false belief or feeling regarding the true nature of this process of birth and destruction. They think the body and the objects are constant, permanent form (*rūpa*). After the destruction nothing remains; everything vanishes. Even though we are unable to see this process this is what happens to the world at the end. It vanishes. This emptiness or lack of substance of all things is referred to as ***Dukka*** or emptiness by the Lord Buddha.
3. **Not-self (*Anatta*)**- There is no person or method to stop or control the arising and passing away or emptiness (***anicca & dukka***) of the eight pure, primary, properties. This is a natural phenomenon that happens without a doer. No one can escape from these actions, it is a universal law. Therefore the Lord Buddha referred to it as not-self (***anatta***)

The Body – Sack of Skin Filled with Sludge

All that we eat changes into waste matter after digestion. Is all the matter that we ate and drank like butter, cheese, milk ... etc. any longer there? No. The Lord Buddha has said that, from the top of

the head to the feet this body is filled with all kinds of putrid secretions and excretions. (*Uddam padathalā ado kesamaththaka taca pariyantham pūraṇ nānappakārassa asucino paccavekkhati*). When you smell excreta, we know that it is also touching the five sense organs of your body. It is coming in contact with your mouth and whole body. This is because you smell the excrement when minute particles with the eight properties come in contact with the nose. If they come in contact with the nose, then they also come in contact with the mouth and the rest of the body. The body is just not sensitive enough to feel it. When you go home and kiss your child, your spouse or any other person, what are you kissing? You are kissing a body filled with excrement and putrid secretions.

When you cry for a loved one's death, aren't you crying for the loss of a heap of excrement? Do you have to weep for the loss of a heap of excrement? Now all along in your life what have you been doing? What should you do when you understand the true nature of the body? You tire yourself daily by going to work, earning money, accumulating wealth and possessions for what? What do you collect? For whom are you collecting? Just for a heap of excrement. Either you have not understood what was explained or else you don't like to stop enjoying your own excrement.

As monks we do not desire or crave to enjoy excrement. We have renounced all worldly attachments. We eat whatever is offered to us and live a simple life of non-attachment. Our purpose is the ending of birth by the realization of enlightenment. The Lord Buddha said that there are four groups of persons who cannot understand the Dhamma-Rustic, Unwise, Ignoble, and Misdirected (*Garmo, Pūthugjano, Anariyo, Anaththasanhiho*).

When you are in flames don't you want to step out of the fire? Can you escape from it, by waiting for the others to do it for you? No one can do this for you. You have to understand the instructions correctly and work towards enlightenment. Do you understand that

you have been traversing in *samsāra* in the darkness of ignorance? This body is made up of blisters, wounds, various ailments and disgusting secretions and excrement. This is the real state of the world. What happens to this heap of excrement? It all disappears without a remainder at the end.

In short all beings and objects (matter) are made up of the eight pure primary properties (*Suddastaka*). Colour/image (*Rūpa*), Sound (*Sadda*), Smell (*Gandha*), Taste (*Rasa*), Feeling (*Sparsha*), Thought (*Sithum*) all are termed as external form (*Bahira Rūpa*) All of your sensory organs are also created by these eight elements Eye (*Cakkhu*), Ear (*Sotha*), Nose (*Ghana*), Tongue (*Jivha*), Body (*Kāya*), Brain (*Mano*) all are termed as internal form *Abyanthara Rūpa*. All these are destined for destruction.

You have nothing inside your body except for these ever changing attributes? Then, what do we refer to when we use the word SELF? It is just the cohesion and separation of the eight pure primary properties at a rapid speed. This happens because of the property of fluidity or water (*āpo*).

What has happened to all the food you have consumed? All has transformed into nutrients, excrement and waste matter. The nutriment has been absorbed by the organs that are decaying and moving towards death. Understanding this truth, do you want to repeat the same mistake of remaining in *samsāra*? Are you ready to discard and let go of this body and work towards enlightenment?

What happened to the 10,000 persons sent by King Suddodana to bring the Lord Buddha back to Kapilavattu? Did they return? No. All of them ordained as disciples of the Lord Buddha. Why did they not return? After hearing the Buddha Dhamma they understood the emptiness of this body.

Spit a little on to your palm and try to eat that saliva on your palm. Can you do it? No. Why not? You cannot do it because it is putrid and disgusting. However, it was in your mouth a moment ago.

Why is it desirable when inside the body and putrid and disgusting when it is outside. It is because you have not understood the constitution of the body and your mind and has not understood the true nature or state of the body. You have not inspected the parts inside and understood their reality. You have not really seen this body as it is. That is why the Lord Buddha has said that the entire body from top of your head to bottom of your feet that is covered by this sack of skin is filled with sludge.



Chapter 10

Guided Meditation on the Impurities of the Body

We are now going to reflect or meditate on the true nature of the body by examining each of the 32 parts in detail. (*Kāyanupassanā Bhavana*). Sit comfortably with your back straight. You must remember the thirty two parts as described before and visualize them as shown in the video. To practice *Kāyanupassanā* Meditation, stage by stage you have to imagine your body parts as described below; this has to be done mindfully. It is not enough to just listen or memorize the body parts.

Close your eyes and look with your mind at each of the 32 parts of the body. Direct your mind to the top of your head. Look closely at your hair. You have hair that is black or may be white, long/short, rooted deep into the scalp. Observe and recognize them well. Now hold the long/short hair mentally in a fist like when you are about to tie them together or when you are combing your hair. Then pull them out. Take them in your hand and put it on the ground in front of you. Examine the fallen hair carefully. Observe its true nature.

Next, take a shaving blade and shave all the body hair in the whole body and pick them up and put them also on the ground in front of you. Look carefully as to what happens to the hair on the ground in front of you. They get scattered by the blowing wind, ants are walking on them, and they are getting mixed up with the dirt and earth on the ground.

You are no longer cleaning, washing, combing or shampooing your hair. It is mixed with dirt on the ground. It looks like the hair of a person who hasn't bathed for months. Now, take them back in

your hand and place them back on your head, thinking that they are yours. Is it attractive, pleasing and valuable? No, they are useless, discoloured and emitting a foul smell. There is no way that you will take the hair back or even touch it. All of the hair that is on the floor is worthless. This is the absolute truth.

If some of this hair get mixed up in the food that you eat, will you eat your food? No, you are disgusted and cannot even bear the thought of it. You now understand that the head hair and body hair are just a construct of the eight primary properties of *paṭhavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, varna, gandha, rasa and oja (suddhastaka)*.

This image that you have of the body is an illusion just like believing that there really is a circle of fire when you rotate a burning torch. It is not real. It is simply an illusion due to the speed of a natural phenomenon. The *suddastaka* will never be stationary or constant. They are arising and decaying continuously. Sooner or later they will go back to earth. These hairs get sick, grow old, decay and change from the original state every moment. When they decay and turn back to earth and dust there is nothing left that you can refer to as hair?

This hair that you perceive as attractive and beautiful is just an illusion. Just like a mirage in the desert or the reflection in a mirror. It is not real. If you can say that this hair is mine and it is a part of me, then you should be able to keep it as you wish. There is no possibility of keeping your hair from decaying as they are constantly degenerating. This is the truth, the absolute truth.

Let us examine the teeth in our mouth next. They are in the upper jaw and the lower jaw, white in color, 32 in number. Move your lips apart and pull out all the teeth one by one. Look carefully at the teeth in your hand. There are pieces of flesh, blood, plaque and food particles with the teeth. Some of the teeth are yellow due to plaque and some are stained brown due to tea and coffee stains. Drop them onto the ground in front of you. Now take those teeth in

your hands and put them back in your mouth imagining that they are yours. Can you do it/ No it is disgusting you do not even want to pick them up.

Look at the nails in your fingers and toes. There are 20 of them. Now, pull them out one by one, and drop them also onto the ground in front of you. Remember, all these things have to be done mindfully. It is not enough to just listen to what I am saying. You must visualize the actions and do it mentally with understanding and comprehension. Look at the nails and teeth in front of you. These nails are not cleaned, washed or polished. They have become dirty. Just like scales of a fish in a fish market when the fish is cleaned. Flies are buzzing around them. Take these nails back in your hand and put them in your mouth. Would you like to bite them, thinking that they are yours? Can you bite them as you may have sometimes done before? Is it attractive and pleasing? No. You can't bear to even look at them. You loathe them.

Now, look again at the teeth which are in front of you, on the ground. They are discoloured and dirty. No one is brushing and cleaning them. Flies are feeding at the attached pieces of flesh. Do you like them and want to care for them as before. They are dirty, smelly and worthless. This is not how you felt when they were in your mouth before. Even at 60 or 70 years of age you cared for them. You cleaned the food particles and brushed and flossed your teeth polishing them with tooth paste. You smiled often thinking they are attractive and worthy.

When you separate the hair, teeth and nails from the body, it is loathsome, filthy and dirty. This is the truth, the absolute truth. These hair, teeth and nails are also speedy illusions of the eight primary properties. They continually decay and transform into worthless material. The initial status and attractiveness will never remain. Overtime they transform into earth and reduce to dust. There will be nothing left. This false view of permanence, this illusion, must be rejected. You cannot keep thinking that they are

me and mine. It will only lead to grief. It is a fallacy that is dangerous and this fact has to be understood.

Let us move on to our skin. Look at it closely with your mind. The skin is there, in the chest, in the face, in the head, in the legs and in the arms. It is covering the whole body. Take a blade and cut open the skin from the top of your head down across the body. Now open it like a shirt. You can see the inside of the flesh and skin, red in color. Insert your hand through the skin which is parted and remove the skin from the top to the bottom. Remove the skin in the face, neck, body, hands and legs, just like removing a coat or a pair of pants. Take it in your hand, stretch it and look at the inside.

It is red in colour stained with blood and pieces of flesh that have come out when the skin was removed. Put the whole thing on to the floor in front of you. Now, look at what is on the floor. You are no longer washing or cleaning the skin. It is filthy and black in colour as it is mixed up with dirt and dust from the ground. It is like the skin of a person who hasn't bathed for months, it is rotting, smelly and flies have landed on it and are feeding on the juices from the skin. The heap on the ground is filled with maggots. Flies and maggots are walking all over the hair, teeth, nails and skin that you cherished and took care of for so many years.

Now take the skin in your hands and kiss it thinking that it is mine. Would you like to wrap it around your body? No. Is it pleasing? No, it is filthy, smelly, discolored and, loathsome there is no value in it now. It has become worthless. This is the absolute truth. This body and its parts will never be permanent or constant. This skin changes and transforms into earth at the end. This skin will also get sick, grow old, decay and die. The initial state of youth and attractiveness will never remain. In the end nothing will remain. This too will reduce to earth and dust.

Good health is an illusion, Youth is an illusion. In reality the skin like the rest of the body is in a state of flux with no substance. It is

a cause of suffering and grief. It is a thing to be discarded. There is never a value in it. It is an illusion due to the speed of change in the eight properties of matter (*Suddastaka*). There is no possibility of keeping it as you want, thinking it is part of me and mine. The skin is without a self or with not-self as there is no doer managing and controlling the nature or ageing and decay of the skin.

Now let us look inside the chest, look at the heart and the lungs inside the chest. Pull out the heart and the lungs from inside the chest cavity and put them onto the floor with the outer parts of the body. Look at them to see what is happening to them. The heart is beating and pumping, and when you go on looking at it, it stops the movement. It is red, like a lump, there are tubes around it. Look at the lungs, two of them, two lumps of blood, like a beehive in a sack, they are off-white in colour.

There is a pancreas and a gall bladder inside the stomach. Remove them also and place them on the floor and observe them well. They are also rotting, and pus and putrid smelling liquid is oozing out of them. Flies are buzzing around them and feeding on the oozing liquid. Crows are also pecking at the body parts that you have thrown on the ground and feeding on them. Worms and maggots have arrived and are moving amongst the body parts. Now pick up this mess imagining that they are mine and keep them on your chest. Can you do that? No. Is it good, pleasing and useful? No. They are loathsome, smelly and discolored. They are an illusion of the eight properties of matter. These are also changing every moment and destined, over time, to be a part of earth. They are of no substance and are not real. They also grow old, decay and rot. The original state will never remain constant. Every moment they change until they too become dust. There is no remainder. There will be nothing left. It is just an illusion which should be discarded. It is a falsehood. You will never be able to keep these body parts as you want them, thinking that they are me and mine.

Now pull out the stomach from the abdomen, and put it on to the floor. Isn't it like a swollen dead rat? Cut it open with a blade. Pull out the partially digested food and put it onto the floor, and see what is happening to the food you ate with so much enjoyment. They were tasty and good and you ate them with great pleasure. Now they are mixed with saliva, phlegm, enzymes and bile. They are on the floor just like a lump of vomit mixed with all the dirty and putrid body parts.

Look well at the food which is on the ground, they are like the vomit thrown out by a dog. Now take a handful from this lump and put it in your mouth and see whether it is tasty. Is it tasty, pleasing, and valuable? Do you like it now? You can't even put it in your mouth, it is loathsome, dirty, smelly, discolored and displeasing. There is no possibility of taking it back as me and mine. Every moment it is changing rapidly, and transforming into earth. It will never be permanent. When they change they will never come back to the former state. This too will eventually be absorbed by the earth and become one with the earth. There will be nothing left over.

The pile of organs with a putrid smell in front of you too is just an illusion of the ever changing eight properties of matter. Just like the circle of fire visible when a burning torch of fire is rotated fast, and invisible if not for the speed of rotation. Clinging to it as me and mine leads to grief. There is no possibility of keeping it in its original sate. Decaying starts from the moment form arises. Food too is just an illusion with no substance like the reflection in the mirror.

Let us pull out all the small and large intestines. Place them on the ground next to the rest. Pick the colon, the bag of feces at the end of the intestines and the appendix. Place all of it on the ground so that it is visible to you. Cut open the colon and spill the feces inside on to the ground. Pull out the liver and the kidneys and put them onto the floor along with the rest. Now, look at the intestines,

liver, kidneys and excrement which are on the ground. Look at the real nature of the body and the changes taking place. They resemble the remnants or remains of a dog which has been run over by a vehicle. Its stomach has burst open and all the entrails inside have come out. They have rotted, and pus is oozing out. Maggots and flies are crawling all over the heap of rotting, smelly body parts. Crows, vultures and dogs have gathered to feast on the rotting flesh.

They are feasting on the rotting flesh and body parts. There are maggots crawling all over the body parts. Pick up some of it and put it in your mouth and swallow. Is it possible? No. Is it valuable and attractive? No, it is loathsome. There is no possibility of getting close to it now. You can't even look at it. Filthy, smelling and discolored, these parts continue to change, decompose and transform into earth. The initial state will never remain the same. It is an illusion and an insult that you were fooled by the reality of the body. It is an insult to your education and intelligence. You feel foolish. This is a new experience in stress. It is the suffering of being fooled by the speedy illusion of the eight properties of matter. If it belongs to me and mine, then one should be able to manage and control its changing nature. One should be able to keep it constant as one wished. Instead the body or form is impermanent (like the froth at the edge of a pond), empty (*dukka*) and not-self.

Pull out all the nerves and veins, which are all over the body, twist them around your fingers and pull them out. Put them all onto the ground, they have got entangled in the legs, take them off and put them also on to the ground. Pull out all the flesh as well. Pull out the flesh in the face, at the back, in the chest, in the stomach, in the hands, in the legs, in the fingers and toes and put them all on to the ground. Dismantle the skeleton, pull out the skull, vertebrae, chest bones, leg bones, bones in the arms, bones in the feet and the hands, break them all and lay them on the ground in front of you. Now, observe mindfully looking at the heap of flesh and bones, to

observe what is happening to them. The bones that appeared to be white are slowly discolouring. It is yellow and light brown. The bone marrow is rotting, and pus is draining out along with maggots who are feasting on this carnage. Dogs pull at the body parts and run about holding it in their mouth, scattering parts of the body all over the place.

Look at the heap of flesh, which was red earlier. It has now turned into black and got swollen. It has swelled enlarging itself to two or three times its original size. The body parts are rotting continuously. Pus is draining out; flies are sucking at the rotting flesh. Maggots are creeping out from inside the rotten flesh. Dogs are fighting and eating dropping body parts as they fight. The veins are hanging from the beaks of crows and pus is pouring out from them. They are all rotting, dirty and filthy. Putrid smelling liquid is flowing out. Now collect all those pieces which have been scattered all around the ground and take them in your hands. Embrace them, thinking that they are mine. Embrace all the rotten flesh, veins and bones saying that they are mine. Can you do it? No you cannot. Do you like them? Are they worthy of your love and desire? They are loathsome, smelly, filthy, discolored, and worthless. There is no possibility of even staying close to them.

All the body parts are rotting and turning back to earth. The willingness to cling to them and hold them close is slowly fading away. You are aware that at the end, nothing will remain. Your health, youth and even your body will not remain constant. Even the earth will not remain constant. They all go back to invisible states. It is merely an illusion of the speed of change associated with the eight pure, primary properties of matter. This is a natural phenomenon. There is no being, person, life, soul, individual or a person called I or me. It is a natural phenomenon and there is no possibility of controlling it and keeping it in the condition one wants. It is without a doer or a soul. It is not-self.

Finally there is the brain matter, jelly like, inside the skull. Scrape it all out and put into a bucket. One by one add the liquid parts of the body to this carnage. Put the mucus in your eyes, tears, snot in the nose, phlegm and saliva into the same bucket. Pour in the sweat, fat and oil into the bucket. Pour some urine and add some blood and pus into it. Take a stick and mix all the contents of the bucket well. After mixing them well, bring it close to your nose and smell it. Is it fragrant and pleasing? Do you like it?

Can you kiss, lick or touch this body now? No, never. The body is loathsome, dirty smelling, discolored, inauspicious, useless and of no value. There is not even a possibility of taking it close. It is slowly turning into nothing. These are the results of rapid illusions of the eight properties of matter. It is a natural phenomenon and it cannot be stopped or controlled. All around you there is never ending change resulting from decay and deterioration. This is impermanence (*anicca*).

Take the liquids in the bucket and pour them onto the heap of bones, flesh, veins and feces. You can imagine all that liquid flowing around and getting mixed with the earth and being absorbed into the earth. The rest reduces to earth and dust over time. It is only an illusion that leads to a feeling of foolishness, embarrassment and disappointment when you realize the truth. There is nothing to cling to as me and mine. There is nothing attractive and desirable. No matter how hard you try to clean, feed, nourish and preserve the body, it is decaying and moving towards destruction. Every moment in time it is destructing. The speed leads to this illusion. All matter is without substance. All matter is changing and decaying to remainder-less emptiness. Form is impermanent, empty and not-self. Eliminate the false view of me and mine for it leads to grief and suffering.

There is never a possibility of avoiding sickness, decay and old age. There is never a possibility of preventing this march to death by clinging and holding tight saying this is me, this is mine. This

body is not-self. It is marching towards decay and death without a doer.

This is the truth, the absolute truth. Now look, at all the body parts on the floor. Observe for some time looking mindfully at what is happening to the various parts of the body. If an animal, like a rat, rots in the house before long the whole household will be suffused with a filthy smell. If a dog dies in your back yard, it rots. If you let it rot without burial the body swells and bursts open. The bowels spill out of the swollen belly and pus and putrid smelling secretions drain out of the body. Flies buzz around the body and with the coming of flies maggots arrive. The whole garden and compound smells of rotting flesh.

Similarly this heap of human flesh and filth is like a dead animal left to decay. Unattended, it decays and rots and the putrid smell permeate the wind. It pollutes the whole neighborhood. It is loathsome to look at and unhygienic for the people living nearby. Now look at the body intently. This is reality and absolute truth. Until now you have been fooled by the illusion or magic trick of an invisible clever magician.

What has remained? Only the mind has remained. It is observing all that is happening from the side and is looking at the carnage with loathing and sadness. This heap of rotting body parts is lifeless. It is impermanent, empty and not-self. Finally it understands that the mind is one thing and the body is another. The body has been rejected. The body with its filthy secretions and excretions that is continuously destructing without a doer has been rejected. For the first time it has been seen the way it really is. This body is made up of eight pure, primary properties that arise and pass away faster than the speed of light, without a remainder.

Similarly, consider the bodies of those you love that you refer to as 'mine'. You must consider your mother, father, brother, sister and children in the same way. Each and every person's body is the

same. The thirty two parts are common to all humans. The swiftly, ever changing *suddastaka* is common to all things in the whole world. At every moment our bodies are decaying, rotting, and emitting filthy smelly secretions and excretions. They are unpleasant and will reduce to a filthy heap of smelly bodies if not washed and cleaned continuously. The bodies of others are also the same as mine. The entire world is created by the eight properties of matter that arise and pass away resulting in decay and change. Therefore this body is not valuable or precious for it is without substance.

We have been in the darkness of ignorance for a very long time. We have been fooled by the speed of change of the *suddastaka* into believing that the body is solid and real as we perceive. We now know the absolute truth of the body. We may feel let down and foolish. We may feel sad and stressed. Let us impart good-will and kindness to ourselves and to all the others, so that we could come out of this delusional darkness to the real state of the human body. Let the state of *jhāna* meditation fall slowly, back to the third, second and first *jhāna*. Relax and open your eyes slowly.

Teaching the Truth to Others

We inspected the human body in detail and understood our own human body, and thereby about the human bodies of all others. We learnt that this body is just like a bag of putrid, decaying, and inconstant sludge. It should be rejected and abandoned. There is nothing attractive or of value to cling to as me and mine. If you have realised that the body is without substance like the froth and foam in a pond and that it should be abandoned, how and what are you going to do to accomplish this? We know what we have to do but how are we going to discard, abandon and let go of this body.

You have to live imagining the ill of the form of our human body. How can you understand about all this in detail? It is only by listening

to the true doctrine and reflecting on the absolute truth. You got to have the direction and advice of a good friend (*kalyana mitta*) How can you eradicate any doubts or disbelief about the Triple Gem (*Buddha, Damma and Saṅgha*)?

For that we have to follow the Noble Eightfold Path of virtue, tranquility and insight meditation. (*Sila, Samadhi and Pañña*). Observe the precepts of virtue, meditate and reflect on the Truth so that insight can arise. If you are to eliminate these false views that you have had in the past, then you have to follow this Noble Path.

He, who traverses in the Noble Eightfold Path, will experience all of this himself. You have to be devotees who are developing the path of the Triple Gem and observing the five precepts. If you have seen the whole world by examining yourself, then you should understand the real state of this body that we refer to as I, me and self.

With great effort and many skilful deeds you have achieved a human life. Have you, in the past, learnt about the constitution of the world? Has any teacher taught you how to identify the constitution of the whole universe? Have they taught you how you should let go or abandon these conventional or worldly false views? If they have not, do you think that they can be called skilful or good friends?

They have not taught you because they themselves are ignorant of the Absolute Truth. That is why they have not taught you the correct path. It is now your duty to teach this truth to others. This is what you have to do. Your friends and family are still with ignorance and false view. You have to show them the correct path. The Lord Buddha said that once we saw the truth, then it is our duty to teach our friends and family who are still with false views. If you have learned the truth, you should teach that truth to those that do not know this Truth. You will be inhumane and insensitive if you will not do so.



Chapter 11

Guided Meditation on Compassion and Loving Kindness

The Lord Buddha has instructed us to show compassion and goodwill to all beings, so that they too are enlightened to this truth. For that we have to practice the Meditation on Compassion and, Loving Kindness.

You now know that there is no ‘I, me and mine’ but we have to live in the conventional world and use such language to be understood. However, you know now that it is a false view. Therefore even though we use conventional language of “I”, me and mine you can do the meditation on compassion and loving kindness, with this idea in mind. There is no such being in the world – It is all a false view. All beings are a product of the ever changing *suddastaka* that leave no remainder when they destruct.

First you may think – May I get rid of the false view of “I, me and mine.” May I abandon this long journey traversing in “*samsāra*”. May the Blessings of the Noble Triple Gem protect me. May I realize the purity and wisdom of Enlightenment. Let us now meditate on the Meditation on Compassion and Loving Kindness.

May I abandon the false view of self.

May I abandon re-becoming.

May I be protected by the blessings of the Noble Triple Gem.

May I realize the purity and wisdom of Enlightenment.

Similarly, we will practice Compassion and Loving kindness meditation to various groups of persons for a short period of time. Feeling for others as for self, think as follows:

May my teachers... - Think of all your teachers.

May my parents... - Think of your father and mother.

May those who care about me... - Think of all the persons who are near and dear to you.

May those who do not care about me... - Think of all those who are not friendly with you.

May all my relatives... - Think of all your relatives all over the world.

May they abandon the false view of self.

May they abandon re-becoming.

May they be protected by the blessings of the Noble Triple Gem.

May they realize the purity and wisdom of Enlightenment.

Continue the same pattern and practice for a wider group of people. Feeling for others as for self, think as follows:

May all beings living in the North - Think of all who are living in the North.

May all beings living in the East - Think of all who are living in the East.

May all beings living in the South - Think of all who are living in the South.

May all beings living in the West - Think of all who are living in the West.

May all beings living above - Think of all beings that are living in the sky and the heavens.

May all beings living below - Think of all beings that are living in the earth, worms, insects, ants, ghosts (*pretas*) and demons (*asuras*).

May they abandon the false view of self.

May they abandon re-becoming.

May they be protected by the blessings of the Noble Triple Gem.

May they realize the purity and wisdom of Enlightenment.

Let the Samadhi subside. Now open your eyes slowly.

Make sure that you can practice this meditation on compassion and loving kindness, with this idea in mind. There is no being in the world – It is all a false view. All beings are a product of the ever changing *suddastaka* that leave no remainder when they destruct. Also, understanding the dangers and suffering of beings in **samsāra**, one must feel the urgency of realization for all beings. It should not be just a mechanical recitation.



Chapter 12

Insight Meditation on the Mind (*Cittānupassana*)

Citte cittānu passi viharati

Ātāpi sampajāno sathimā

Vineiya loke abijjā domanassanti”

Observing the true nature of the mind,

By exerting great effort, wisdom and mindfulness,

Without any desire or conflict in the mind...

In the previous chapters we studied the True or Absolute nature of the body. In this chapter we will study the True or Absolute nature of the mind (*citta*). What is this ‘thing’ called mind? We know that the body when separated from the mind is lifeless or inanimate. Then it is the mind (*citta*) that helps the body to move and act. Lord Buddha compared the mind to a bull that is pulling a cart. When the bull is tied to the cart and it walks, the cart can move. If you separate the bull and the cart then the cart cannot move. The deed or action which helps to move the body is called the mind.

The mind does not have a shape, it is associated with the body, and it is an action. What is this action which helps the body to move or act? A dead body doesn’t have a mind. When you cut a dead body, it does not feel pain. But a living being will feel pain if you cut the body. If this feeling is not there it is said to be a dead body. This is the difference between a person who is alive and a dead person who cannot see, hear, smell, taste, feel or remember.

The power of knowing or understanding is a function of the mind. How many ways of understanding are there? There are six ways of sensing. This sensing, knowing and understanding, is unique to each individual person. The external object is sensed, known and understood by oneself. When you have the ability to know about external objects/activities, it means that you have a mind (*citta*). The six ways of sensing, knowing or understanding about the external world are:

1. Seeing,
2. Hearing,
3. Smelling,
4. Tasting,
5. Body feeling/Tactile sensations and
6. Remembering

These are the six actions performed by the mind. All through your life you perform these six actions repeatedly. Living is a continuous practice of these six actions. Mind does not travel from one sense organ to another. Mind arises due to another mind. We think that we are doing all these actions ourselves. But it is just the result of the arising mind. Seeing is a feeling or knowing created by the mind. It is created immediately when you feel something. When you feel something you know that it is an action of the mind.

Mind is an action that occurs when there is contact with external objects. Due to repeated usage remembrance comes into mind. All minds are activated due to repeated usage. It is instantaneous and it happens only at the moment of occurring. Being mindful of the mind (*Chittānupassanā*) is developing the mind by observing the mind and its contents. What is a mind? It is a sensing or a

knowing. We can now inspect that sensing or knowing that we refer to as the mind (*citta*).

- Open your eyes, seeing an object is an action of the mind. When you close your eyes you cannot see. Mind is no longer present in the eye.
- Listen to a sound, hearing the sound is an action of the mind. It is no longer there after the act of hearing ends.
- Smell something with your nose, that smelling is an action of the mind. It is no longer there after you smell it.
- Taste some saliva in your mouth; you get the subtle flavour of the saliva at that moment. Tasting is an action of the mind. It is not there after you finish tasting
- Feel something touching your body, that feeling is an action of the mind. It is no longer there after the touching ends.
- Remember something; remembering is an act of the mind, after that act ends it is no longer there.

Go on practicing these six actions of the mind until I say, ‘let the state of mind fall or come down. Let the concentration decline.’ Then you can slowly open your eyes.

This reflection is called meditating on the various actions or functions of the mind (*Cittānupassana Bhavana*). You can do this meditation, any time any place. Whenever you are involved in your daily activities you can identify and distinguish the six actions of the mind.

Consciousness (*Viññāna*)

A Buddhist is a person who has understood the real nature of both mind and matter. We will investigate the mind further to observe the details of all the actions and functions of the mind.

A person cannot hear after death. He still has an ear and external sounds are present but he cannot hear. A sound wave can travel into the dead body's ears but the hearing is not possible. Similarly if you touch the dead person's hand it does not feel. This applies to all six actions performed by the mind in the six sense organs. They are all no longer possible. As we discussed in the previous chapters we know that body is an illusion created by the eight pure, primary, properties or elements of matter. Objects are also created by the eight pure, primary properties or elements. These eight elements cannot create the action of knowing or feeling in the six sense bases. There has to be some other factor creating the action of knowing or feeling.

This factor is known as "*Viññāna* or consciousness. *Viññāna* is a set of actions. We cannot call it an object, property, element or a thing. It is an invisible, intangible, instantaneous set of actions. It appears when the causes that are required for consciousness to arise are present and disappears when the causes that are required for its existence are no longer there. We have to investigate how this consciousness or set of actions that result in seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling... etc. comes into being.

We must have a functioning eye; a form (colour/image) should come in contact with the eye and Consciousness (*Viññāna*) should get together with the eye and form. Then, at that moment a mind or action (*citta*) of seeing occurs.

We must have a functioning ear; a sound should come in contact with the ear and Consciousness should get together with the ear

and sound. Then, at that moment a mind or action of **hearing** occurs.

We must have a functioning nose; an odor should come in contact with the nose and Consciousness should get together with the nose and odor. Then, at that moment a mind or action of **smelling** occurs.

We must have a functioning tongue; a flavour should come in contact with the tongue and Consciousness should get together with the tongue and flavour. Then, at that moment a mind or action of **tasting** occurs.

We must have a functioning body; an object or touch should come in contact with the body and Consciousness should get together with the touch and sensation. Then, at that moment a mind or action of **feeling** occurs.

We must have a functioning brain; a thought should come in contact with the brain and Consciousness should get together with the thought and brain. Then, at that moment a mind or action of **remembering** occurs.

What do we mean when we say that the sense organ should be functioning? Each of the sense organs requires what the Buddha referred to as a *pasāda rupa* or an attracting area to function. If we don't have this special attracting area in the six sense organs then a mind of seeing, hearing... etc. will not appear. This attracting area (*pasāda rupa*) is also made up of the eight pure, primary elements or properties, but they cannot be touched or physically identified. The appropriate attracting area comes into being at the same time as when the action of seeing, hearing, smelling... etc. occurs. It is one of the set of actions of the consciousness (*viññāna*). If the attracting area gets damaged or is not functioning due to the administering of anesthesia, then a mind will not occur. If a person

was born with a damaged attracting area in his eye we say that he /she is “blind” because they will not be able to see. Similarly if a person is born with damaged attracting area in his ear, then we say that he/she is “deaf”. The *pasāda rūpa* and consciousness is named based on the sense organ that it operates in a given moment.

When it functions;

In the eye it is known as *Cakkhu Pasāda* and *CakkhuViññāna*

In the ear as *Sota Pasāda* and *SotaViññāna*

In the nose as *Ghāna Pasāda* and *GhānaViññāna*

In the tongue as *Jivhā Pasāda* and *Jivha Viññāna*

In the body as *Kāya Pasāda* and *Kāya Viññāna*

In the brain as *Vatthu Pasāda* and *ManoViññāna*

When a person is unconscious or in a deep sleep the person’s consciousness (*viññāna*) would not be functioning in any of the attracting areas. At this time it rests in the middle of the brain in a certain spot known as the “*Bhavaṅga Citta*”. This *bhavaṅga citta* generates the *kamma* power that determines the re-becoming or rebirth. When a person dies, consciousness will no longer act in that body. It passes away and arises instantly in another body according to the *kamma* power and then acts in that body as a new born creature. This consciousness is referred to as rebirth consciousness (*Patisandi Viññāna*)

Even though it seems as if there are many consciousnesses operating simultaneously, in more than one sense organ, at any given time, in reality there is only one consciousness that functions at a given moment. This one consciousness appears and disappears

swiftly creating an illusion of many consciousnesses (*viññāna*) in a single person's body. When it functions in a particular sense organ, then it is named, based on the appropriate organ. Only one sensing such as seeing, hearing, smelling... etc. can be generated in a person at a given moment. Because of the extremely fast pace of forming and ending of the consciousness, we feel as if we are capable of sensing more than one mind or action of seeing, hearing, smelling...etc. at a given moment. This is an illusion. Never can more than one action or sensing arise at the same time.

This consciousness appears and disappears at the various attracting areas at unbelievable speed. No one other than the Buddha can ever investigate the speed of its functions. In just one millionth of a second it can appear and disappear many times over to create seeing, remembering, hearing... etc. the Lord Buddha used very deep concentration and mindfulness to investigate and identify the reality of the consciousness.

We will now test our knowledge by practicing the following meditation:

- * Open your eyes and look, you know that the action of seeing has occurred in the mind. Then think how seeing arises in the mind. (When the **Eye, Colour/Image** and **Consciousness** come together, then seeing occurs).
- * A bell is rung. You know that the action of hearing has occurred in the mind. Then think how hearing arises. (When the **Ear, Sound** and **Consciousness** come together, then hearing occurs).
- * A stick of incense is lit. You know that the action of smelling has occurred in the mind. Then think how smelling arises. (When the **Nose, Odor** and **Consciousness** come together, the smelling occurs).

- * A candy is placed in your mouth. You know that the action of tasting has occurred in the mind. Then think how tasting arises. (When the **Tongue, Flavour** and **Consciousness** come together, tasting occurs).
- * The wind touches your body. You know that the action of feeling has occurred in the mind. Then think how feeling arises. (When the **Body, Tactile Sensations** and **Consciousness** come together, then body feeling occurs).
- * A thought arises. You know that the action of remembering has occurred in the mind. Then think how remembering arises. (When the **Brain, Thoughts** and **Consciousness** come together then remembering occurs).

Sense Organ	External Object	Consciousness (<i>Viññāna</i>)	Arisen Mind (<i>Citta</i>)
Eye	Image (Colour)	Consciousness acting in eye referred to as <i>Cakkhu Viññāna</i>	Seeing
Ear	Sound	Consciousness acting in ear referred to as <i>Sota Viññāna</i>	Hearing
Nose	Smell	Consciousness acting in nose referred to as <i>Ghāna Viññāna</i>	Smelling
Tongue	Taste	Consciousness acting in tongue referred to as <i>Jivha Viññāna</i>	Tasting
Body	Touch	Consciousness acting in body referred to as <i>Kāya Viññāna</i>	Body feeling Tactile sensation
Brain	Thoughts <i>cittaja rūpa</i>	Consciousness acting in brain referred to as <i>Manò Viññāna</i>	Remembering

Continue to practice these six actions of the mind till I say, “let the state of mind come down” and “Let the concentration decline”. Then slowly open your eyes.

You can do this meditation at any time in any place. Whenever you are involved in your daily activities, you can totally identify and distinguish the six actions of the mind.



Chapter 13

Constitution of Consciousness (*Viññāna*)

We can define consciousness (*viññāna*) as the name applied to a combination of a set of unique actions. The individual actions are referred to as “*Nāma dhamma*” or “*Cetasika*” in Pāli.

Let us take an example. When we consider the term “Driver” it is a name to identify a set of actions, such as the ability of starting an engine, steering a vehicle, changing the gears, accelerating the vehicle, applying the breaks, stopping the vehicle, ... etc. Without mentioning all of the individual actions involved in driving, we refer to him as the Driver. Any worker is similarly referred to by a name that represents the various tasks that he performs. Doctor, Engineer, Labourer, Carpenter, Mason, Planter,... etc. are all a collective names for set of actions required to perform the task.

The Lord Buddha identifies **fifty two** actions involved in the creation of consciousness. No one else has the ability to investigate and understand this phenomenon other than a Buddha. After He has identified and disclosed these teachings, we can justify and accept this by personal investigation.

Consciousness is not an element of a physical component made up of *suddastaka*; it is a set of actions. According to the teachings of the Buddha, the *Buddha Dhamma*, a combination of these actions together with the internal and external objects, creates the **Mind**. There are **eighty nine** different minds can be created in every human being in existence. As mentioned in the *Buddha Dhamma*, there is no possibility of creating minds other than these 89 that the Buddha has disclosed. All of these 52 actions of the consciousness

are not required for the creation of each and every mind. Only few actions are involved at a one time in creating a mind.

As per the Buddha *Dhamma* there are a set of actions required or mandatory for the creation of each and every mind. These are referred to as “*Sabba Citta Sādhāraṇa Cetasikā*”. These actions take place at simultaneously. Let us consider the set of five actions required to operate the sense organs:

1. Attention (*Manasikāra*) – Directing attention to the appropriate sense organ.
2. Contact (*Phassa*) – Choosing and selecting one object from all the competing objects available to the sense organ.
3. Feeling (*Vedanā*) – Distinguishing the feeling as **likable, not likable or Medium/Neutral**.
4. Perception (*Saññā*) – Distinguishing the object type for each of the sense bases *Rūpa* – Image/Colour, *Saddha* – Sound, *Gandha* – Odor, *Rasa* – Flavour, *Sparsha* – Body sensation, *Sithum* – Thoughts.
5. Volition or Intention (*Cetanā*) – Editing and finalizing the above 4 actions.

The *Prabhasvara Citta* is the very first mind (*citta*) formed in each of the six sense organs when sensing occurs. It is exceedingly pure and very clear. The *Prabhasvara Citta*, is not corrupted by, delusion, anger, desire, sloth, doubt, restlessness or any other defilement. All the un-wholesome actions occur in the brain. Whenever a *Prabhasvara Citta* is created in a sense organ, it is an effect of a previous kamma. Therefore, it doesn't contain any defilements or impurities. That happens only after, when thinking occurs in the brain.

This set of actions referred to as name (*nāma*) is universal truth for all beings of the past, present and future. It occurs in each and every living being's mind on contact with an external object. We cannot change or stop these actions from happening. This set of actions occurs only when the six object types (*rūpa*) are available at the appropriate sense organ. All these actions occur instantly and disappear after the process ends. None of these actions were there previous to the mind being created and none of them will remain after the mind passes away. The actions arise and pass away without remainder. Just as the term driver is used for a set of actions that he performs when he drives the vehicle, the term "sense base – consciousness" (eye, ear, nose... etc. consciousness) is used for the appropriate set of actions that results in sensing.

The following example will clarify its operation. When we switch on a light in a dark room, the light dispels the darkness. The appearance of the light and the disappearance of the darkness happen instantly at the same time. Similarly these sets of actions are functioning at the same time to 'create' the consciousness.

When a carpenter makes a piece of furniture all the acts involved in the preparation and making are performed one after the other. As a new action is started the previous one ends because there is only one carpenter working. The ending of one action and the starting of another happen instantaneously. You cannot see it happening, but it can be understood.

When he needs to build a new piece of furniture, he needs to perform the same process again from beginning to end. However, this process is not the same as the earlier process. This is a new set of actions which occurred after the ending of the previous set that resulted in a piece of furniture.

From this comparison we can identify the impermanence of the consciousness (*viññāna*). This process is carried out together with

the process of the external objects made up of the eight pure, primary elements (*suddastaka*) which is also impermanent. Similar to the *suddastaka* this process too is not-self. There is no doer. When the causes are there, then they come into being. When the causes are no longer there, then they disappear without remainder. No one is or can control or manage this process or set of actions. Therefore, no one can claim these actions as I, me, mine or mine. They arise without a doer.

We now know about the present constitution of the mind. All these minds referred to as seeing, hearing, smelling, ...etc. are created with this set of five actions - consciousness (*viññāna*) - and eight elements (*suddastaka*) of the sense organ and the external form. When we consider the mind as the Buddha has described, then there is no truth in the convention referred to as American, English, Sri Lankan, human being, she, he, me, daughter, son, doctor, lawyer, engineer, king, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, ...etc. There is also nothing material, constant or real to be desired. The mind is just a set of action coming together with external and internal form.

Do you see any American, English, Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, Indian, or any other nationality in the make up or constitution of the mind? No. These are conventional definitions made up by humans to identify persons; it is not the absolute truth.

Are there any identifiable distinctions in mind or matter belonging to a king, a teacher, a lawyer, a farmer or any other person? No. Therefore, can you differentiate and categorize the mind as mine or someone else's? No. These are the same set of actions in every living being. The titles given based on status and work performed are also based on convention.

Can we consider the constitution of the mind and identify these actions as woman or man? No. When we refer to a person or their mind, as "He" or "She", are those terms in any of this set of

actions? No. We desire and love our close family and friends saying ‘this is my mind, my life or my son’s mind or son’s life,... etc. Is there anything called life in this set of actions that makes up mind? No. What then are we desiring and attaching to when there is no body or mind to desire?

Understanding the mind as a result of Name and Form (**Nāma and Rūpa**)

We now need to understand how a mind arises. This has to be done by each person for themselves. Sit comfortably with a straight back, close your eyes and try to understand the nature and constitution of the mind. When there is an external object (form) and the appropriate sense organ (form) and this set of five actions, then sensing occurs. The set of five actions is referred to as name (**nāma**) the sense organ and the external object are both known as form (**rūpa**)

- * When you open your eyes, then seeing has occurred. It is the coming together of two aspects **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

Manasikāra, Phassa, Vedanā, Saññā and **Cetanā** are the set of actions that constitute **Nāma**. The eye and the external image/colour which are made up of the eight pure primary elements are **Rūpa**. Then the action of seeing is a coming together of these two aspects **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

- * When you hear a sound from your ears, then hearing has occurred. It is the coming together of two aspects **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

Manasikāra, Phassa, Vedanā, Saññā and **Cetanā** are the set of actions that constitute **Nāma**. Ear and the external sound/form which are made up of eight pure primary

elements are **Rūpa**. Then the action of hearing is a coming together of these two **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

- * When you smell an odor from your nose, then smelling has occurred. It is the coming together of two aspects **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

Manasikāra, Phassa, Vedanā, Saññā and **Cetanā** are the set of actions that constitute (make up) **Nāma**. Nose and the external odor/form which is made up of eight pure primary elements are **Rūpa**. Then the action of smelling is the coming together of these two aspects **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

- * When you taste a flavour with your tongue, then tasting has occurred. It is the coming together of two aspects **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

Manasikāra, Phassa, Vedanā, Saññā and **Cetanā** are the set of actions that constitute (make up) **Nāma**. Tongue and flavour/form which are made up of eight pure primary elements are **Rūpa**. Then the action of tasting is a coming together of these two **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

- * When you sense a feeling from your body, then a body feeling (tactile sensation) has occurred. It is the coming together of two aspects **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

Manasikāra, Phassa, Vedanā, Saññā and **Cetanā** are the set of actions that constitute (make up) **Nāma**. Body and feeling which are made up of eight pure primary elements are **Rūpa**. Then the action of body feeling is a coming together of these two **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

- * When you recall/remember a thought from your brain, then a remembrance has occurred. It is the coming together of two aspects **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

Manasikāra, Phassa, Vedanā, Saññā and *Cetanā* are the set of actions that constitute (make up) *Nāma*. Brain and thoughts which are made up of eight pure primary elements are *Rūpa*. Then the action of remembering is a coming together of these two *Nāma* and *Rūpa*.

You have to mindfully concentrate and be aware of all of the six sensing, and think of each and every sensing as a coming together of a set of five actions, referred to collectively as consciousness, and the eight pure properties or elements of internal and external form.

What we have to understand and take away from this knowledge is that there is no living being or a creature called self, soul, life, *paramāṭṭa*,... etc. inside a living being's body. This applies to all living beings in any realm of existence. It is just a set of actions and pure primary elements processing together.



Chapter 14

The Philosophy of Cause and Effect

With the teachings of name and form (*Nāma* and *Rūpa*), the Lord Buddha claimed that the whole world is a result of Cause and Effect (*Hethu Pala Dhamma*).

Let us consider how a tree bears a fruit? What causes the fruit to bear? A set of actions of the roots, trunk, leaves, branches (and the required nutriment) all come together (cause) to form the fruit (effect). If any one of these action of the tree does not take place or fails and the required nutriment is not present, then the tree will not bear any fruit. Are all those components – roots, trunk, leaves etc. visible in the fruit? No. Was the fruit visible in any of the parts of the tree before the tree bore the fruit? No. The fruit is formed by the required actions of all the above parts of the tree and the required nutriments.

What happens to the fruit when we pluck it? It ripens, decays, rots then destructs or gets absorbed into the surroundings. However, because of the speed of the arising and passing away of the *suddastaka* we have an illusion of a fruit. When did this thing called the fruit come into being and how did it happen? Are we able to find a fruit inside the tree before the tree bore fruit? No. there is no fruit inside the trunk, leaves, roots, or in the branches. Neither are any parts of the tree - roots, trunk, branches, leaves... etc. in the fruit. From where did the fruit come? The fruit does not come from anything or place. When the causes required for the bearing of fruit are all present, then the tree bears fruit. This happens without a doer due to cause and effect.

When a burning torch of fire is rotated at a fast pace (cause), we can see a circle of fire (effect). When the rotating is stopped (cause

ceases), the circle of fire is no longer there (effect also ceases). It has disappeared with no remainder. Was there a circle of fire in the torch before the rotation? No. The cause, the rotation, had not as yet arisen. The effect does not lie within the cause.

The human body is a creation of the mother and fathers' getting together (cause). The new body (fetus) that is created is the effect. With the mother's nutriment (cause) the fetus develops, is born and eventually dies (effect). The entire life is sustained through the nutriment of food. Therefore, the body has many causes for its creation. Before the causes came together there is no fetus to be found. After death, over time, the body decays leaving nothing behind. Therefore, what we see as a body is not a reality. It is an illusion. This illusion happens because of the extremely rapid arising and complete destruction of the eight pure, primary elements.

Let us take an example of a table. The table is made by a carpenter using wood, a saw, hammer, nails, polish, ... etc. The carpenter then performs a set of actions such as sawing of the wood, hammering of nails, polishing, ... etc. (cause) that results in a table (effect). When all the causes required for the making of the table are present, then a table appears. It naturally disintegrates and disappears after a certain period of time. Within that time period the table, made up of the eight pure, primary elements/properties is in the process of instantaneous arising and destruction with no remainder. Because of its speed we are led to believe that there is a table. However, in truth there is nothing called a table because before the causes came together, there was no table and after causes cease, there is no table. Therefore the table is also an illusion.

Similarly, everything in this world comes into being because of the philosophy of cause and effect and therefore, all are illusions. As soon as the action (cause) ceases the effect is no longer there. When the fruit or product (*pala*) is destroyed, all these elements

are also destroyed. Similarly all things which are the results of cause and effect vanish as soon as the cause ceases. So everything ends in nothingness. This is the teaching of the Lord Buddha. All things are the result of Cause and Effect.

- * The fruit or product is an effect that arises (without a doer) when all the causes required are present together.
- * When even one of the required causes ceases, then the effect, the product also ceases to exist (without a doer) with no remainder.
- * Before the actions required that make up the cause come together there is no effect or product to be found in any of the causes. The effect does not lie inside the cause.
- * Neither does the cause nor any of the causes reside inside the fruit or product (effect). It ceases to exist after the product or fruit appears.

In summary, the philosophy of cause and effect is that a product which is formed when a set of required causes come together will cease to exist without remainder when the causes cease.

You will now have a better understanding of *kamma* (action) and *vipaka* (results) as cause and effect. Nothing passes from the cause to the effect.

We will now test this philosophy to see the appearing and disappearing of sensing.

- Open your eyes – Eyes, form (colour/image) and consciousness come together, resulting in seeing. Close your eyes. Seeing (the product or effect) is no longer there. It has disappeared without remainder. Therefore, it is an illusion.

- Focus your attention on your ears – The ears, sound and consciousness come together, resulting in hearing. When you take your attention away from the ears (consciousness is functioning elsewhere), the hearing is no longer sensed. It has disappeared without remainder. Therefore, it is an illusion.
- Focus your attention on your nose – Nose, odor and consciousness come together resulting in smelling. When you take your attention away from the nose, the smelling is no longer there. It has disappeared without remainder. Therefore, it is an illusion.
- Focus your attention on your tongue – Tongue, flavour and consciousness come together resulting in tasting. When you take your attention away from the tongue, the tasting is no longer there. It has disappeared without remainder. Therefore, it is an illusion.
- Focus your attention on your body – Body, Tactile sensations and consciousness come together resulting in feeling. When you take your attention away from your body, the feeling is no longer there. It has disappeared without remainder. Therefore, it is an illusion.
- Focus your attention on your mind – Brain, thoughts and consciousness come together resulting in remembering. When you take your attention away from the mind, the remembering is no longer there. It has disappeared without remainder. Therefore, it is an illusion.

All things which are the fruit (product) of Cause and Effect are illusions. There is nothing existing after the Cause and Effect ceases to function. So all things and matter on earth are mere illusions created by Cause and Effect. Keep on inspecting the

sense bases and examine the resulting sensing until you penetrate this Truth.

Let the concentration meditation subside. Slowly open your eyes.

Did any one of you see anything that was constant when you were meditating? No, there was nothing constant. All actions are there only at the instance it is formed, and vanish immediately. They are but illusions created by the swift actions of the mind.

Why do we have to work so hard to buy and accumulate all these illusions? Where in this whole world is this being called 'I'? The Lord Buddha claimed that this being called 'I' or soul or life is a creation of the coming together of the five aggregates (*skandas*). Let us examine the composition of the five aggregates for better understanding.

Difference in Composition/Formation of Name-Form and Five Aggregates

We are unable to identify the purified single mind (*citta*) created by name and form (*nāma-Rūpa*), because of the ultra-high speed of creation and destruction of the mind. We sense or feel something only after several of these kinds of minds (*cittas*) combine. Because of the inability to naturally sense the single mind and also because it requires very high levels of concentration that only few persons can reach, the Lord Buddha has introduced the aggregation of several minds and has highlighted only the much more identifiable components of the mind for our observation and understanding.

When one sensing occurs, it does not occur in random or in isolation. Instead it occurs as phases in a series of discrete cognitive events leading one to the other in a regular and uniform order. This is called *citta niyāma* which we have introduced in

chapter 3. This fixed order of creating sensing or feeling naturally has seventeen different interconnected minds. These are:

1. *Stream of bhavaṅga mind*
2. *Past bhavaṅga mind*
3. *Vibrational bhavaṅga mind*
4. *Arrest bhavaṅga mind*
5. *Five-door adverting mind*
6. *Sense-consciousness mind*
7. *Receiving mind*
8. *Investigating mind*
9. *Determining mind*
10. *Seven Javana minds*
11. *Two Registration minds*
12. *Stream of bhavaṅga mind*

Other than the *Stream of bhavaṅga* mind (1 and 12) there are 17-minds that occur to create a single sensing. This process is a natural phenomenon and acts in less than one trillionth of a second. Considering these bunch of minds the most recognizable categories were put together and introduced by the Lord Buddha as the five Aggregate (*Pancaskanda*).

The Fabricating of the Mind - From Intention to Fabricated Formations (*Cetanā to Sankhāra*)

Even though similar terms are used in some of the actions (feeling and perception) of name and form (*nāma-Rūpa*) and the five aggregates *panchaskanda* they are not necessarily the same.

As discussed in previous chapters the sensing that occurs when name and form (*nāma-Rūpa*) arises is pure and the pure mind of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and remembering that arise at the moment of coming together of the causes is known as *prabhāsvara citta*. As we cannot observe the pure mind resulting from name and form the Buddha grouped together several sets of

actions so that we could observe the arising and passing away of the five aggregates.

The intention or *cetanā* in *nāma-Rūpa* is a result (*vipāka*) of past kamma and not constructed or fabricated by skilful or unskilful kamma (*sankhāra*). We will address fabrication by unskilful thoughts (defilements) to observe this change. The term fabricated formations or *sankhāra*, is used after the mind is corrupted by desire and unskilful thoughts. What changes have taken place in the mind when several sets of repeated actions / several minds have been aggregated?

Both perception (*saññā*) - distinguishing seeing from sound, smell, taste... etc. And feeling (*vedanā*) - distinguishing feeling as likable, not likable or neutral is pure in name and form. Even a Fully Awakened Being can distinguish a feeling as likable, not likable or neutral. They do not, however, fabricate the pure feeling with attachment and desire which results in fabricated formations (*sankhāra*).

One day the Lord Buddha was seeking his mid-day meal with bowl in hand when a recluse named Bahiya stopped Him, bowed down, and requested the Teaching that leads to Awakening. The Buddha seeing with His compassionate eye that the man had little time to live spoke only a few words, but His words contained the crux of His teachings. He said, “In your seeing there should be only seeing; in your hearing nothing but hearing; in your smelling, tasting, touching, nothing but smelling, tasting, touching; in your remembering, nothing but remembering.”

As discussed previously, in *nāma-Rūpa* when each of the five sensing organs (other than brain) is functioning, it creates a thought within the respective organ. This thought then becomes the outside or external thought for the brain. These pure thoughts that arise in the five sense organs are referred to as *cittaja Rūpa* in Pali. This then recalls similar or relevant material from the brain

resulting in remembering. This thought and the first resulting remembering (used for identification as sound as opposed to smell, taste or seeing, ... etc.) that occurs is pure and is known as ***Prabhāsvara citta***.

However, in addition to remembering, the brain has the special ability to construct thoughts within the brain. These thoughts or actions of the brain are referred to as thinking and are fabricated with conditioned perceptions (***saññā***) that have identified the form and evaluated it as being pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. This takes place during the seven Javana minds

When contact occurs through any of the six bases of sensory experience, there should be no valuation based on desire and conditioned perception. Once perception starts evaluating any experience as pleasant or unpleasant with desire, one sees the world in a distorted way. In order to free the mind from all conditioning, one must stop evaluating on the basis of past fabrications recalled from memory and be aware, without evaluating and without any constructed thoughts. We do this by observing and experiencing the five aggregates as they really are – ***anicca, dukka*** and ***anatta***.

Five Aggregates

1. ***Rūpa skanda***– The aggregate of form, made up of the eight pure, primary elements. Image/colour-eye, Sound-ear, Smell-nose, Taste-tongue, Tactile Sensation-body and Thoughts-brain.
2. ***Vedanā skanda***– The aggregate of feeling identifies and selects the nature of feeling as pleasant unpleasant or neutral.

3. ***Saññā skanda***– The aggregate of perception identifies the type of object based on:

Rūpa–Image/colour,

Saddha–Sound,

Gandha–Smell,

Rasa–Flavour,

Sparsha–Tactile Sensations

Sithum–Thoughts.

4. ***Sankhāra skanda*** – The aggregate of fabricated formation constructs thoughts (thinking), verbalizing and doing.

5. ***Viññānaskanda*** – any one of this set of five actions constitutes the aggregate of consciousness. ***Cakkhu Viññāna, Sotha Viññāna, Ghana Viññāna, Jivha Viññāna, Kāya Viññāna, or Manò Viññāna***

Let us consider the composition of these five aggregates - Form, Feeling, Perception, Fabrications and Consciousness. This set of actions, when they arise as a set together, is referred to as the actions of the mind of a being. Let us consider the mind. We know that the mind is created with the coming together of the consciousness, sensing organ and the external object relevant to the organ. The Buddha claimed that a living being has eighty ninety different minds. We will examine the arising and passing away of six of the minds. Six of the nine minds occur as a result/effect of sensing. Three occur as a result/effect of thinking, verbalizing or doing.

The Formation of the Five Aggregates when Sensing Occurs

We use our eyes to see. The colour/image that we see and the eyes are made up of the eight pure, primary elements and they represent the aggregate of matter or form, “*Rūpa skanda*”.

When we see, feelings arises. The feeling could be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. This feeling represents the aggregate of feeling, “*vedanā skanda*”.

When we see we have perceptions related to what we saw. We may identify the object as a car of a particular make and model. These perceptions represent the aggregate of perception, “*saññā skanda*”.

When we see something and we think about what we have seen, then that is the aggregate of fabricated formations, “*sankhāra skanda*”.

To see there has to be consciousness functioning in the eyes. This is *Cakkhu viññāna* and it represents the aggregate of consciousness, “*viññānaskanda*”.

The five aggregates (*Panchaskanda*) are present when we see something. Similarly, all of the other ways of sensing; hearing, smelling, tasting, tactile sensations and remembering can be observed as the arising of the five aggregates.

The Formation of the Five Aggregates when Thinking, Verbalizing or Doing.

We use our brain to think. The brain and thoughts are made up of the eight elements and they represent the aggregate of form "**Rūpa skanda**". When thinking, feelings that are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral arise in the mind. This represents the aggregate of feeling **vedana skanda**. When we think we have perceptions related to our thoughts. These perceptions represent the aggregate of perception "**saññā skanda**". Thinking is an action performed by the brain. This is the aggregate of fabrications "**sankhāra skanda**". To think we need to have consciousness function in brain. This is referred to as **manò viññāna** and it represents the aggregate of consciousness "**viññāna skanda**".

All five aggregates are present when we think. Thinking results in the formation of the five aggregates **Panchaskanda**. All actions of thinking can be considered as the arising of the five aggregates.

When we talk or verbalize our thoughts we need to move our mouth and throat to create the sound. The mouth/throat and the sound are the creations of the eight elements. They represent the aggregate of form "**Rūpa skanda**". When speaking, feeling arises. The feeling could be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. This feeling represents the aggregate of feeling "**vedanā skanda**". We may have a perception when we speak; it is a perception based on sound. This represents the aggregate of perception "**saññā skanda**". When we are speaking we move our mouth which is considered as an action of the body. Speaking is the aggregate of fabricated formations "**sankhāra skanda**". To speak we need to have consciousness function in our mouth. This is **kāya viññāna** and it represents the aggregate of consciousness "**viññāna skanda**".

The five aggregates are all present when we speak. Speaking results in the formation of the five aggregates. Similarly all the actions that result in speech can be considered as the arising of the five aggregates.

Let us consider the actions of the body next. We will use the example of lifting the arm. The arm is created by the eight elements so it represents the aggregate of form "*Rūpa skanda*". When we lift our arm feeling arises. The feeling could be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. This feeling represents the aggregate of feeling "*vedanā skanda*". We may have a perception when we lift the arm; it is a perception or image of an arm that has been raised. This image represents the aggregate of perception "*saññā skanda*". When we lift our arm we are having movement or actions of the body. This represents the aggregate of fabrications "*sankhāra skanda*". To lift the arm we need to have consciousness function in our arm. This is *kāya viññāna* and it represents the aggregate of consciousness "*viññānaskanda*".

The five aggregates are all present when we lift our arm. The lifting of our arm results in the formation of the five aggregates. Similarly all of the actions of the body can be considered as the formation of the five aggregates.

We just examined nine different actions common to all beings that result in the formation of the five aggregates. These are the six actions or minds that result in sensing, and the thinking, verbalizing and actions done by the body. With this reflection and knowledge we are able to get a clear confirmation of what the Lord Buddha realized and disclosed. There is no human being, alien or celestial being responsible for, or creating these formations. These sets of actions are arising or coming to being due to certain causes and effects. We know that all of the aggregates are impermanent; all of them come together in a given moment of sensing, thinking, verbalizing, doing, ... etc. and are completely destroyed with no remainder.

From this knowledge we can clearly identify that there is no living creature any place inside this body. Nothing can be identified and referred to as me, he, she, I, mother, father, daughter, son, ...etc. From this we have to surmise that there is no such categorization

or differentiation of beings as humans, animals or any other beings. Fundamentally it is just a set of actions. Therefore there is nothing substantial to desire, protect or resent with anger. No one can change this process. That is referred to as the absolute truth of not-self (*anatta*). Attempts to change the natural process of cause and effect without clear understanding and knowledge of its operation would be a waste of our time and energy.

The Buddha used this metaphor to describe the lack of substance in these five aggregates.

Phenapiṇḍūpamam rūpam vedanā bubbuḷupamā

Maricmūpamā saññā sankhārā kadalūpamā,

Māyūpamaca viññānam dīpitā diccabandhunā.

1. *Rūpa skanda* – The aggregate of form described as froth/spume.
2. *Vedanā skanda* – The aggregate of feeling described as an air bubble in water.
3. *Saññā skanda* – The aggregate of perception described as a mirage.
4. *Sankhāra skanda* – The aggregate of fabricated formation as the core of the trunk of a banana tree.
5. *Viññāna skanda*– The aggregate of consciousness described as the illusions or magic created by a magician.

What we have to understand is that the Buddha has stated very clearly that all these aggregates are impermanent, without substance, a mirage, of no value, an illusion, and just a collection

of certain actions. We are in a misguided delusion of thinking that there exists humans, animals, gods, ... etc.

Ten Fetters (*Dasa Saṃyojanāni*)

The fetters are unwholesome mental factors which bind beings to the round of existence with the arising of the five aggregates. These ten fetters are divided into two categories. The first five fetters are known as the as lower fetters and the second five fetters as higher fetters.

1. Wrong views. (self view) *Sakkāyadittisaṃyojanaṃ*
2. Doubt. *Vicikicchāsaṃyojanaṃ*
3. Adherence to rites and ceremonies.
Silabataparāmasasaṃyojanaṃ
4. Sensual lust. *Kāmarāgasamyojanaṃ*
5. Aversion. *Patigha samyojanaṃ*
6. Attachment to fine-material existence. *Rūparāga samyojanaṃ*
7. Attachment to immaterial existence. *Arūparāga samyojanaṃ*
8. Conceit. *Māna samyojanaṃ*
9. Restlessness. *Uddhacca samyojanaṃ*
10. Ignorance. *Avijjā samyojanaṃ*

Now you can understand that there is no self-view in the five aggregates and no doubt about personal existence because you know that the five aggregates are only a set of actions that arise and pass away without a doer. There is no one to adhere to rites

and ceremonies. This is the first three fetters that bind you to *samsara*. If these three fetters are abandoned by understanding the Dhamma, then you will be able to attain stream entrance (*sotāpanna*).

Meditation on the Formation of the Five Aggregates

If we can identify and observe the operation of the five aggregates, then we can work towards the ending or abandoning of re-becoming or rebirth. By mindfully concentrating on this arising and coming together (formation) of aggregates one can realize enlightenment.

You can mindfully meditate now considering all of your actions; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, body feeling, remembering, doing/working, verbalizing, and thinking as the arising and passing away of the five aggregates. You can do this meditation at any time, any place, in any position. You have to develop this meditation until you have complete understanding and every action is automatically known and identified as the appearance of the five aggregates.

In the beginning of this book we considered the birth of a living being as the appearance of the aggregates (*skandas*) and the sense bases (*ayatana*). Where ever there is *āyatana* there is *skanda* as contact with external objects results in the formation of *skandas*. This is the birth of a being.

Our goal or mission is to stop or abandon rebirth or re-becoming. It is clear now that to stop rebirth or re-becoming one has to stop the formation of the aggregates in the six sense bases. When we feel something from the sensing area what happens? It is the birth of a new being. What happens when the feeling is instantly destroyed? It is the death of a being. This is what we refer to as instantaneous death of the being within every feeling or sensing.

If a person feels or senses something in that moment he discovers the world. If the feeling or sensing is not there, then the entire world has disappeared, it has vanished. Therefore the arising of aggregates in sensing/feeling, is the creation of the world, it is the birth of a being, it is the creation of a mind, it is the creation of name and form (*nāma- Rūpa*).

We can now come to the conclusion that the entire universe is created at the moment of sensing/feeling and destroyed instantly. The entire world is only just an instantaneous aggregation of actions. That is the impermanence, emptiness (nothing remains from aggregates) and not-self (cannot be controlled) of the universe. This true understanding about the entire universe is the cessation of re-becoming or stepping out of the universe. This is the cessation of delusion.

Arising and the Passing Away of the Five Aggregates when Breathing

Finally you can use this knowledge to meditate on Breathing Awareness. A very subtle feeling occurs in the nostrils or upper lip when the in and out-breath flows through the nose. We now observe and consider this feeling as the five aggregates and consider the impermanence of the breath. When you feel the beginning of the in-breath at your nostril think of it as “form” then keep concentrating on the in-breath until it stops then think of it as “destroyed”. Similarly when your out-breath begins think of it as “form” then keep on concentrating on the out-breath until it stops then think of it as “destroyed”. This is the forming of five aggregate and destruction of the five aggregate. When you do this for a certain period of time you may come to a stage that the in-breath and the out-breath become short and subtle and you are unable to feel the beginning and the end of the breath. When you reach this stage; just think “impermanence”. Carry out this

exercise for a certain period of time and discuss the outcomes with your meditation instructor for further clarification.

Meditations that you have to Practice Frequently.

1. Mindfulness on Breathing Awareness (chapter 6 and 7).
2. Mindfulness on the 32 body parts (Chapter 8).
3. Mindfulness on object forming eight elements (Chapter 9).
4. Mindfulness on impurities of body -*Asuba* (Chapter 10).
5. Mindfulness on loving kindness (Chapter 11).
6. Mindfulness on mind. (Chapter 12).
7. Mindfulness on how the mind is created (Sense Organ, Object & Consciousness) (Chapter 12).
8. Mindfulness on mind as name and form – *Nāma & Rūpa*. (Chapter 13).
9. Mindfulness on mind as cause and effect (Chapter 14).
10. Mindfulness on mind and acts as five aggregates. (Chapter 14).
11. Mindfulness on respiration as five aggregate of impermanence (Chapter 14).

You now have the knowledge required to realize *Nibbāna*. You know what needs to be done to realize *Nibbāna*, why it needs to be done and how it needs to be done.

What needs to be done – the abandoning of re-becoming or rebirth

Why it needs to be done – Because of the suffering of birth and the suffering resulting from birth

How it needs to be done –

- * Eliminating of *citta sankhāra*, *vacci sankhāra* and *kāya sankhāra*
- * Eliminating of *akusala kamma* and *punya kamma* and developing *kusala kamma*
- * Eliminating *loba*, *dosa moha* & developing *nekkama*, *avyāpāda/avahimsā*, *wisdom/insight*
- * Developing *Jhāna* to subdue hindrances so that wisdom/insight can arise
- * Penetrating the truth of form (*Rūpa*) – *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*
- * Penetrating the truth of nāma/consciousness (*nāma/viññāna*) – *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*
- * Penetrating the truth of cause and effect (*hethu pala Dhamma*)
- * Penetrating the truth of mind (*panchaskanda*) – *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*

You may get the theoretical knowledge from reading this book or listening to the appropriate Dhamma talks. However, it is only through appropriate practice that you will be able to realize purity, perfection and enlightenment. For this you need clear instructions from an experienced teacher and your doubts and questions resolved before starting the meditation. You also need to practice the

meditation with guidance first, so as to have the confidence to practice individually by yourself later. This requires a good teacher (*kalyāna mitta*) who has experienced the Truth. Are you ready to traverse the Path to Enlightenment and step out of the universe?

Conclusion

Let us excuse ourselves from the Triple Gem for any demeritorious acts done through our mind, body and speech knowing or unknowingly.

Kāyena vācā cittena pamādena mayā kataṃ....

Accayaṃ khama me Bhante bhūri pañña tathāgatha.

Accayaṃ khama me Dhamma sandiṭṭika akālika.

Accayaṃ khama me Saṅgha supaṭiṭṭana anuttara.

Let us make a wish for skilful friends, as a result of the merits accrued today:

Iminā puñña kamma ma me bālā samāgamo, sataṃ samāgamo hotu yāva nibbāna pattiya!

Iminā puñña kamma ma me bālā samāgamo, sataṃ samāgamo hotu yāva nibbāna pattiya!

Iminā puñña kamma ma me bālā samāgamo, sataṃ samāgamo hotu yāva nibbāna pattiya!

Let us bestow the merits accrued by us, to our relatives.

Idaṃ no ñātinaṃ hotu, sukhita hontu ñātayo!

Idaṃ no ñātinaṃ hotu, sukhita hontu ñātayo!

Idaṃ no ñātinaṃ hotu, sukhita hontu ñātayo!

Let us bestow our accrued merits to all Devas, Demons, Prethas, and Living Beings.

Ettāvatā ca amhehi sambhataṃ puñña sampadaṃ

Sabbe Devā anumodantu,

Sabbe Bhūthā anumodantu,

Sabbe Sattā anumodantu,

sabba sampatti siddhiyā.

*Ākaṣaṭṭha ca bhummaṭṭā devā nāgā mahiddikā puññaṃ
taṃ anumoditvā*

Ciram rakkhantu Buddha Sāsanaṃ,

Ciram rakkhantu Buddha Desanaṃ,

Ciram rakkhanhu Maṃ paraṃ.

*Idamme puñña kamman āsavaKāya vahan hotu sabba
dukka pamūncatu.*

Let the Blessings of the Triple Gem be with all of you!



Glossary of Pāli Terms

Aloba	Renunciation,
Adosa	goodwill/harmlessness,
Amoha	wisdom/insight
Anatta	Not-self (cannot change or control <i>anicca</i> and <i>dukka</i>).
Anicca	Impermanence (arising and passing away swiftly with no remainder.
Avijjā	Ignorance
Bhāvanā	Development of the mind (meditation)
Buddha	Enlightened One, Fully Awakened One, Blessed One
Citta	Mind. There are 89 different minds as per the Buddha. Seeing, hearings, smelling, tasting, body sensing, remembering, thinking, verbalizing and doing are some examples.
Cittānupassana	Insight realised by examining the Mind and its Actions
Cakkhu	Eye
Dhamma	Truth, The Buddha's Teachings

Dosa	Anger, Ill-will, Rage, Hatred
Dukka Sattya	Stress, suffering, (as per the first Noble Truth).
Dukka	Emptiness (as per the 3 characteristics of form – anicca, dukka, anatta).
Ghāna	Nose
Jhāna	High stages of concentration.
Jivha	Tongue
Kalyāna Mitta	Experienced Dhamma friend who leads you to Unbinding Nibbāna
Kamma	Action, Intention, Habit, Fabrications
Karuna	Compassion
Kāya	Body
Kāya Sankhāra	Bodily Fabrications
Kāyānupassana	Insights realised by observing the body as it is.
Loba	Desire, Greed, Lust
Manāyatana	Brain
Mano Sankhāra	Fabrications of the Mind
Metta	Good-will, Loving Kindness
Moha	Delusion
Nāma	Consciousness

Nibbāna	Unbinding, Awakening, Enlightenment
Pancaskanda	Five Aggregates (form, feeling, perception, fabrications and consciousness).
RūpaForm	colour/image, sound, odour, flavour, tactile sensation, and thoughts are referred to as external form.
RūpaForm	eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and brain are referred to as internal form.
Rūpa	All objects including those that are seen are also referred to as form. All form is made up of an infinite number of the eight, pure, primary elements.
Rūpakalāpa	The tiniest indivisible particle made up of the eight pure, primary elements.
Saddha	Sound
Samsāra	Cycle of birth, existence, death and re-becoming
Saṅgha	Ordained Disciples of the Buddha
Sankhāra	Fabricated Formation, Fabrications, Volitional Formations
Saññā	Perception
Satara Maha Dhātu	Four Great Elements (properties of matter)
Sati	Mindfulness on an object free of hindrances

Satara Satipattāna	Four Foundation of Mindfulness
Sithum	Thoughts
Sota	Ear
Thera/Thero	Elder or Awakened Being
Theravāda	Chanting's or Teaching of the Awakened Beings
Vacci Sankhāra	Verbal Fabrications
Vedana	Feeling (pleasant, unpleasant or neutral)
Viññāna	Consciousness
Vipassana	Insight

Tiṭṭhatu bhikkhave aḍḍhamāso, yo hi koci bhikkhave ime cattāro satipaṭṭhāne evaṃ bhāveyya sattāhaṃ, tassa dvinnaṃ phalānaṃ aññataraṃ phalaṃ paṭikaṅkhaṃ, diṭṭheva dhamme aññā, satī vā upādisese anāgāmitā'ti.

Ekāyano ayaṃ bhikkhave maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā sokapariddavānaṃ samatikkamāya dukkhadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamāya ñāyassa adhigamāya nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā'ti iti yantaṃ vuttaṃ idametam paṭicca vuttanti.

**Dīghanikāyo-Dutiyo bhāgo-
Mahāvaggo-mahāsatipaṭṭhānasuttaṃ**

“Let alone half a month. If anyone would develop these four frames of reference in this way for seven days, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here & now, or -- if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance -- non-return.

“This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of Unbinding -- in other words, the four frames of reference.’ Thus was it said, and in reference to this was it said.”



www.niwandora.com / E-mail - suryaratana.isipatanaya@gmail.com / +94-77-4306437