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BREAKING THROUGH THE SELF- DELUSION

A guide to vipassana meditation

This gift of Dhamma is organized in order to give the reader or student of Buddhism, or those who are already practising vipassana meditation, a deep intellectual insight into the fundamental elements of the Buddha's teachings, The Dhamma. The deeply ingrained belief in an personal controlling Self or Soul within each person is the fundamental ignorance and primary source from which all individual and collective suffering arises. This is the primary focus of the Buddha's Teachings. And hence, the title of this booklet. For any deep insight to develop a good understanding of these basic principles is very helpful.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part is primarily quotations and selections from the Buddha's discourses found in the Pali Canon expounding on the five aggregates of clinging which are the main focus of insight meditation. The second part is a collection of different essays on the mind and meditation from this author and two other Dhamma teachers. The awareness exercise at the end will be a helpful guide or reminder for anyone desiring to make inroads in breaking through the Self-delusion.

This small book is not, however, a complete coverage of the Buddha's teachings. I encourage the reader to acquire some additional knowledge concerning the Noble Eightfold Path, Dependent Origination, and The Four Foundations of Mindfulness. Most of the Buddha's discourses used herein are taken from the English translation series of the Pali Text Society, London, whom I want to thank for their kind permission to freely use this material. I also want to thank the authors of the other sources listed at the back for the use of their material. The words or remarks found within parentheses are my own to help clarify certain points.

Last but not least, I want to thank all the kind and generous people who helped in various ways and who made this Dhamma Dana financially possible.

May the merit acquired from such a work being put together and freely distributed, be shared with all fellow sentient beings. May it help those who are ready, put an end to suffering and attain and abide in the highest blessing, Nibbana.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE WELL AND HAPPY

Bhante Yogavacara Rahula
Bhavana Society Forest monastery
West Virginia, USA

Abbreviations used: S.-Samyutta-Nikàya; A.-Anguttara-Nikàya; M.-Majjhima-Nikàya;
V.-Vissudhimagga; Dhp-Dhammapada; PTS-Pali Text Society.

PART I

What the Buddha Discovered

'Buddhi' in Sanskrit means the 'pure intellect', the mind which is free from the conditioned influence of the emotions so that no biased or prejudiced observations or deductions are construed. The minds of most people operate under all kinds of biases and perversions so that all of their perceptions and thoughts are tainted and conditioned to habituate in set patterns. In this way, they can never really perceive things in their true nature. The power and scope of their mind remains limited and confined.

The Buddha, the Awakened One, was one who freed his faculty of intellect from all distortions so as to bring it to the clearest possible degree. From this point he was able to develop an acute awareness and penetrating insight into how the mind and body function together. As his insight deepened he discerned the why and wherefore of the mind and body and all the phenomena related to it. Through his perfected insight, the Buddha saw the complete cycle of cause and effect, the law of kamma as it pertains to the elements of mind and matter and directly experienced how it operates.

The Awakened One saw that the root cause for the suffering and unhappiness which living beings experience in their lives is rooted in their own minds. By cultivating awareness and acquiring control over the operation of the mind, people can undermine and destroy those root causes which bring misery, sorrow, and frustration in their life. They can cultivate and develop other root causes to become firmly planted in the mind which will enable them to experience the gradual and eventual ending of all sorrow and confusion. People can then live in a stable state of calm and happiness, free from all doubts, anxiety and so forth which disturb their well-being.

The Buddha said this in the first two stanzas from the Dhammapada:

"All conditions proceed from the mind;
The mind is their source, they are mind-made
If one acts or speaks with an impure mind,
Then ill effects will follow, just as the wheel of the cart
Follows the hoof of the ox that pulls it.
And if one acts or speaks with a pure mind,
Then happiness and ease follow that person,

Just as his shadow that never leaves him."

What are these factors and sources in the mind from which suffering, confusion and ill conditions in our lives arise? The Buddha discovered that they are-greed and desire, our insatiable thirst after the objects of sense gratification and trying to find our happiness in the impermanent things of the world. And even more deeply, it is due to the false notion of a permanent, individual 'Self' or Soul, which experiences the objects in the world as being separate and distinct from itself.

In reality this notion of 'I' is only an illusive/delusive feeling which has attached itself to consciousness like a parasite, due to ignorance. This erroneous idea of 'I' is itself the generating motive for the continuance of our desire and thirst to go on living to experience the objects of the world.

When, through penetrating insight, the notion of an individual 'Self' is seen through and fully understood to be an illusion, then the desire and attachment to things, the thirst after selfish living, and to assert oneself, and the actions which follow in their wake are gradually reduced, and eventually eliminated permanently from the mind.

As another verse from the Dhammapada puts it:

"Little by little, one by one, as time goes by.
Gradually let the wise
Remove their own impurities
as the smith blows away
The blemishes of gold which mar its purity." 1

When the mind is free from those sources and conditions from which spring sorrow, pain and restlessness in one's life, then what remains is a state of unalloyed peace, calmness and happiness which is grounded in wisdom and compassion. This mind cannot be shaken or disturbed to any extent, nor can mental unrest or agitation be caused by any of the passing vicissitudes of life.

"Who ever has turned to renunciation,
Turned to detachment of the mind,
Is filled with all-embracing love,
And freed from thirsting after life,
Having the unobstructed sight of mind,
Knowing the senses' origin
One's mind indeed is fully freed
Who has found the stillness of the heart
He heaps up no more the deeds he did,
And naught remains for him to do.

'Just as a big and solid rock
Cannot be shaken by the wind,
So cannot visual forms, sounds,
Or smells, tastes, touches,
Lovely or ugly things,

Shake any more the enlightened one
Firm is his mind, his mind is freed
Seeing how all things arise just to pass away." 2

Meditation

The application or direction of thought in the system of Buddhist meditation is aimed at bringing about the purification of those conditions which produce suffering. Vipassana meditation is initially cultivated by means of awareness and investigation that observes the comings and goings of the mind and body during the process of sense perception, thought formation and the subsequent outward actions by the body. All of this is observed without getting personally involved, attached or identified, which is possible. One views the whole show or process in the various manifestations as being just an impermanent, fleeting consecutive series of conditioned phenomena which are not being controlled by anybody.

By detaching the mind from all of the sensory impingements and undermining the feeling of a separate 'I' who is experiencing, the mind gradually quits reacting to stimuli; the sense of 'I' fades away and a state of expanded, undifferentiating, is experienced. This direct, intimate experience of the mind's uninfluenced nature is intuitive proof that what we think is an individual 'self' that experiences the world, is merely an illusive/delusive reflexive-like phenomenon. There are only conditioned mental and physical activity arising and passing away according to the law of cause and effect, without a substantial soul or governing entity. These physical and mental activities are the source from which arises this whole complex, mysterious thing called life with all of its entailing trials and tribulations.

Now one might ask, `what good is there by arriving at this view? The answer is, that this will be the impetus for actually starting the disentanglement process from this whole sticky affair and the elimination of many of one's worries, fears, self-wrought pain and discomfort which one experiences. The meditator will stop doing all the unnecessary things in life which only add to the involvement and bondage to his body and mind.

This is because he will understand how it is all kept going by the unwholesome actions he is presently doing. These present actions are based on the previously done actions and the future actions will be conditioned by the habits one is now practising. Eliminating the unwholesome, selfish, greedy and unnecessary actions in one's life will pave the way for a calmer, smoother flowing life in the future. This is accomplished by practising the Noble Eightfold Path laid out by the Awakened One for this purpose. This task has to be taken up by everyone personally. No one else can do the purifying of another's mind.

This is stated in another verse from the Dhammapada:

"It's by oneself that evil deeds are done, One makes oneself corrupt.
By oneself is evil left undone,
It's by oneself that one is purified.
Purity and impurity on oneself depend.
No one can another purify".3

It is up to each person to start the process of disentangling and freeing his or her mind from the bondages of their past actions. And this can only be started and successfully completed when one has the proper, detached, attitude towards the body and mind and the objectified world.

The Noble Quest

The Buddha was born the son of a king and queen and he grew up amongst all the pleasures and luxuries of a royal court. But he abandoned them all in order to seek the Noble Quest as described by him in the Ariyapariyesana sutta.

"These, monks, are the two quests: the noble quest and the ignoble quest. And what is the ignoble quest.

As to this, monks, someone who is himself liable to birth, old age, decay, death, sorrow and stain, he seeks what is likewise liable to birth, ageing....stain. And what, monks, is liable to birth.....stain? Sons and wives, monks, are liable to these conditions. Woman-slaves, men-slaves, goats, sheep, cocks, swine, cows, elephants, horses, gold and silver are liable to these conditions; yet this man, being enslaved, infatuated, addicted, himself being liable to birth, ageing ... stain; he seeks happiness in what is likewise liable to these conditions.

And what monks, is the noble quest? As to this, someone himself being liable to birth, ageing stain; but having seen the peril in what is likewise liable to these things: he seeks the Unborn, the Undying, the uttermost security from the bonds-Nibbana. This, monks, is the noble quest.

And I too monks, before my 'Awakening', while yet unenlightened, being myself liable to birth, ageing, decay, dying, sorrow and stain, I also sought happiness in what was likewise liable to those conditions.

Then it occurred to me: Why do I, being liable to birth, ageing stain, myself seek what is likewise liable to these conditions? Suppose that I... having seen the peril in what is likewise liable to birth..... should seek the Unborn, Undying, the uttermost security from the bonds-Nibbana.

Then I, monks, being a quester for what is good, searching for the incomparable, matchless path to peace, walking on tour through Magadha, in due course arrived at Uruvela, the camp township. There I saw a delightful stretch of land and a lovely woodland grove, and a clear flowing river with a delightful ford, a village for support nearby. It occurred to me, monks, 'Indeed, it is a delightful stretch of land; Indeed this does well for the striving of a young man set on striving. `So I, monks, sat down just there, thinking `Indeed this does well for striving.'

So I, monks, being myself liable to birth, ageing, decay, disease, dying, sorrow and stain, having seen the peril in what is likewise liable to the same, seeking the Unborn, Undying, the uttermost security from the bonds, did win the Unborn, Undying-Nibbana. Knowledge and vision arose: `Unshakeable is freedom for me, this is the last birth, there is no more again becoming" 4

The Four Noble Truths

The Buddha set fourth in his teachings which collectively are called the Dhamma that which he directly perceived and realised to be true and common experience to all living beings. He explained his discoveries and taught them in what he called the Four Noble Truths. They are termed `Noble' because if understood and practised to the full, they lead one to experience and live in a purified, calm state of mind. This is a state of unsurpassed, unalloyed peace and

happiness in which none of the passing vicissitudes of life can disrupt. Following are some of the Awakened One's own discourses which set it forth.

"Monks, there are these Four Noble Truths: The noble truth about suffering, the noble truth of the arising of suffering; the noble truth of the ceasing of suffering; and the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. And what monks, is the noble truth about suffering? Birth, ageing, sickness, pain, sorrow, lamentation, grief, despair and death are suffering. Not getting what one desires and coming into contact with the undesired is suffering. In short, it is the five aggregates of clinging that are suffering. What are the five?

All forms or material shapes (rupa) whether it be past, present or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior, or superior, far or near that is called the aggregate of form. Every feeling (vedana), whether it be past, present or future, internal or external. gross or subtle...that is called the aggregate of feelings.

Every perception (sanna), be it past, present or future...that, is called the aggregate of perceptions. Every mental formation (sankhara), be it past, present or future... that is called the aggregate of mental formations. Every moment of consciousness (vinnana), be it past, present, or future...that is called the aggregate of consciousness. These five, monks, are called the five aggregates of clinging. And what, monks, is the noble truth about the arising of suffering? It is that craving which leads back to continued rebirth and suffering along with the lure and the desire that lingers longingly now here, now there, -namely the craving for sensual pleasure, the craving to exist forever, and the craving for life to end. This is the noble truth about the arising (and continuation) of suffering.

'And what, monks, is the noble truth about the ceasing of suffering? It is the utter passionless cessation, the giving up, the forsaking, the extinction, the release from this craving. This is the noble truth about the cessation of suffering.

And what, monks, is the noble truth about the way that leads to the cessation of suffering? It is this Noble Eightfold Path, to wit: Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. This is the noble truth about the path leading to the complete ending of suffering.

These, monks, are the Four Noble Truths. Wherefore an effort must be made to realize: This is suffering; This is the arising of suffering; This is the cessation of suffering; This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering." 5

As stated above, the noble truth of dukkha or suffering is quite evident as far as the physical symptoms of birth, ageing, sickness, decay and death are concerned. But how do these five aggregates of clinging which the Buddha mentions, relate to being the dukkha or suffering itself? These five aggregates of clinging are the elements which comprise the body and mind of sentient beings and based on these 'five factors of existence' arise all the different kinds of material and mental phenomena. which exists in the world.

These five elements of matter and mind which the Buddha has elaborately explained as being inflamed and bound-up, with suffering, are themselves the things that are involved and undergo the birth, ageing, sickness, decay, disappearance, sorrow and confusion. With penetrating insight the Buddha discerned that these five 'elements of a being' are what living beings attach and identify themselves to, regarding them as mine, myself' or my soul'. It is from clinging to and identifying these phenomena as being one's 'Self' or 'Soul', or it being contained or represented

somewhere therein, that the, illusive/delusive notion of there being an individual entity or soul to whom these things belong, has sprung.

These five aggregates of clinging which constitute a living being and which are involved in each moment of sensory perception are here further detailed.

The first, the aggregate of matter (rupa), consists of all the material manifestations which are the objects of sense cognition. These include the physical body and all material objects in the world, i.e. visible objects, sounds, smell, flavours-any sense stimulus whatsoever of a material nature. All forms are compounded and derived from four primary modes or characteristics which matter can assume. These are, the earth element, which is experienced as being solid/hard or soft and having extension or occupying space; the water element which is experienced as being liquid or fluid in nature and having cohesive properties; the fire element which is experienced as different ranges in temperature-hot and cold- and which functions in the maturation or ripening process; the air element is experienced as motion or pressure and allows the movements of the body parts.

These four primary elements are the constituents of the human and animal body and the various ways in which they combine produces the various parts with their peculiar characteristics and functions of maintaining bodily life. All four elements are inherent in each manifestation of matter but one is usually predominate and stands out over the others so the object is said to be or exhibits that particular characteristic.

The following is part of a discourse by the Buddha to his only son, Rahula, describing these elements which make up matter.

Earth element: "Whatever, Rahula, pertains to oneself as an individual, is hard, of a solid nature, and an object of grasping, to wit: hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, kidneys, diaphragm, liver, spleen, lungs, stomach, intestines, excrement, brain, or anything else whatsoever in oneself that is hard (or soft), of a solid nature and an object of grasping or clinging, this is called the internal element of earth. But even this personal earthy element, as well as the external earth element, this is merely the element of earth.

Water element: "Whatever, Rahula, pertains to oneself as an individual, is liquid, of a fluid nature, and an object of grasping or clinging, to wit: bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, tears, saliva, nasal mucous, urine, or anything else whatsoever in oneself is liquid, of a fluid nature, and an object of grasping, this is called the internal element of water. But even this internal water element, as well as the external water element, this is merely the element of water.

Fire element: "Whatever, Rahula, pertains to oneself as an individual, is hot (or cold) of a fiery nature, and an object of grasping, to wit: that whereby there is deterioration, intense burning, fever, digestion, or anything else whatsoever in oneself that is hot..... this is called the internal element of fire. But even this internal fire element as well as the external fire element, this is merely the element of fire.

Air element: "Whatsoever, Rahula, pertains to oneself as an individual, is gaseous, movement, of an airy nature, and an object of grasping, to wit: the ascending and descending airs, stomach gas, pressure in the bowels, inhalation and exhalation, movement of the limbs, or anything else

whatsoever in oneself that is gaseous..... this is called the internal air element. But even this internal air element as well as external air element, this is merely the element of air.

Space element: 'Whatever, Rahula, pertains to oneself as an individual, is void, of a empty or hollow nature, and an object of grasping, to wit: the cavities of the mouth, nose and ears, the inside of the stomach, intestines or bowel, or anything else inside the body that is void... this is called the internal element of space. But even this internal space element as well as the external element of space (the enclosed space in a house, a rubber ball, a glass or cup), this is merely the element of space. 6

'These five elements, Rahula, in accordance with fact and with perfect insight, should be regarded thus: This is not mine, this I am not; this is not my self.' 7

In other words, whenever a person feels these elements of solid, liquid, heat, motion or space in his own body the picture or idea of a body arises in the mind and he immediately thinks about it as belonging to and affecting 'him'. Therefore, because of his taking it for 'self', the sensations of discomfort and pain come to affect him and disturb his mind. Rather, one should regard those cognitions as just being these modes of behaviour and nothing more. One should not think and conceive them as pertaining to oneself. If one does insist on clinging to these 'characteristics of matter' and grasp them as 'self', belonging to his body, then he will have to suffer whatever consequences which they bring.

Knowing this, having seen with perfect insight that such is the case, a wise person does not identify himself with these elements and he detaches his mind from them; he becomes free from their overwhelming influence.

The second aggregate of feelings (vedana) are the sensations that continually arise and pass away in the body and mind whenever there is sensory impingement.

"Monks, there are these six seats of feeling: feeling (pleasant, painful, or neutral) that is born of contact with the eye; feeling born of contact with the ear; feeling born of contact with the nose, with the tongue and with the body (skin) and feeling that is born of contact or cognizing mental objects (memories, dreams, hallucinations, ideas, thoughts etc.) That is called feeling. From the arising of contact is the arising of feeling; from the ceasing of contact is the ceasing of feeling. 8

These feelings are conditioned, habit-reflex mental reactions, which arise on account of sensory impingement or contact. It is these feelings or sensations constantly arising and vanishing in the body and mind that cause or condition the craving/attachment for certain objects, the aversion/hatred towards other objects, and just indifferent or neutral reactions to the rest. Most unaware people think it is the object itself that they desire or crave. When it is seen closely however, it is actually the conditioned, habit-reflex element of feeling which the object stimulated the mind to-re-create. So, it is this mental activity of feeling, which is reacted to and not really the object itself.

We must understand these feelings and sensations that are continually arising and passing away in the body and mind and see how, really they are the main thing which keeps the mind whirling on its insatiable quest for sensual gratification. It is like a monkey swinging through the forest among the trees, grasping one branch after another as he moves swiftly along. So do living beings continually grasp the sensations/feelings which arise due to delusion and attachment.

The body is like a skinned cow; wherever she stands, she will be subject to ceaseless attacks by the insects and other creatures living in the vicinity, just as a man is helplessly exposed to constant excitation and irritation of sensory impingement, crowding upon him from all sides, through all six senses. 9

We must develop an attitude of detachment and equanimity to these feelings, knowing that they are impermanent, continually changing, conditionally arising and without substantial self nature. They are not our possession and they are the source of most of our frustration, confusion and sorrow. We are not able to have the pleasant sensations at our will and we are subjected to the unpleasant ones, also not under our control. If we train the mind to remain equanimous when they arise, not desiring or avoiding, then we can be free from their binding influence.

The third aggregate is perceptions (sanna) This consists of the perceptions or recognitions of visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily impressions and mental objects. Perception is the mark or peculiar characteristic of a thing or the memory of an object, how it is normally pictured and recognized. These perceptions are also conditioned, habit-reflex mental reactions which arise on account of sensory contact, just as the feelings and sensations; since, 'What one feels, that one perceives.' But we also cling onto these perceptions as being absolutely real, identifying with them and forming likes and dislikes, love and hate towards them.

The fourth aggregate is the mental-formations (sankhara). This consists of the thoughts and emotions and latent tendencies which the mind creates and involves itself in towards objects come into contact with. These mental activities again, are conditioned habit-reflex reactions which the mind spontaneously produces and they include the newly formed volitions and other activities of mind as well. These sankharas are the result of our past actions (kamma) of body, speech and thought, and on which the present and future thoughts and actions are based. They are actually the stuff of the mind from which all mental activity and the corresponding bodily activities are conditioned and develop into habits.

Some of these mental factors are: intention, attention one-pointedness of mind, awareness, contact, initial and sustained thought, interest, desire to act, energy, decision, kindness, sympathy, anger, greed, ignorance, ill-will, envy, egotism, worry, doubt, dullness and laziness, shame, fear, scrupulousness and so forth. Some of these arise all the time, in each sense experience and some only arise whenever the proper conditions are present, according to their function and habitual exercise. By use and repetition they gain strength to affect our thinking and actions. It is these sankhar which we must understand and recognize by our direct experience and learn to control. Because it is from these that all of our personal weal and woe arise.

The fifth aggregate is consciousness (vinnana) itself. There are six kinds of consciousness which arise, named according to which of the six sense organs was contacted and stimulated. It is only when the appropriate conditions are present that consciousness or awareness is able to arise.

"Monks, consciousness is generated by conditions; apart from conditions there is no manifestation of consciousness. It is because of the appropriate condition arising that consciousness is known by this or that name. If consciousness arises because of the eye coming into contact with a visible object, it is known as eye-consciousness (seeing); if consciousness arises because of ear and sounds, it is known as ear-consciousness (hearing); if it arises because

of the nose and odours, it is, known as nose-consciousness (smelling); if it arises because of the tongue and flavours, it is known as tongue-consciousness (tasting); if it arises because of the body and tactile objects, it is known as body-consciousness (touching); if consciousness arises because of the cognition of mental objects, then it is known as mind-consciousness (knowing).

'Monks, as a fire burns because of this or that appropriate condition or fuel, by that it is known. If a fire burns because of sticks, it is called a stick-fire; if it burns on grass, it is known as a grass-fire; If it burns on cow-dung, it is called a cow-dungfire; if it burns on rubbish, then it is called a rubbish-fire.

Even so, when because of a condition appropriate to it, consciousness arises, it is known by this or that name-eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind -consciousness." 10

It should not be understood that there are six separate kinds consciousness, each one connected with its respective sense organ. It is merely the role of the sensory activity of consciousness which plays within the realm of the six sense-spheres' This consciousness is not owned by nor is it under the control or direction of any permanent entity such as an eternal individual 'self' or soul. Consciousness is merely the habit-reflex like phenomenon of mind occurring by the stimulation of a sense object on its respective sense organ, just as for feeling, perception and the sankhara. If there is no stimulation or contact, or if the sense organ is impaired, then this consciousness of object is not able to arise. This is because of its empty nature and it being dependent on other factors. It is this phenomenon of consciousness which most people take to be their 'soul'. The illusive notion of an individual, separate 'I' which arises with consciousness has developed due to ignorance and craving and has strongly attached itself like a parasite to each moment of sensory experience.

A discourse by the Buddha's close disciple, Ananda, given to an enquirer describes the soulless nature of consciousness.

"Is it possible, friend Ananda, just as this body has in diverse ways been defined, explained, set forth, opened up by the Blessed One as being without a Self or Soul, is it possible in the same way to describe consciousness, to show it, make it plain, expose it as being without a Self or Soul?

'It is possible, friend Udayin; Owing to the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body or the mind, and from contact with their respective objects, consciousness arises, and not otherwise. Does it not friend?

'It does friend Ananda'.

'Well, friend, Udayin, it is by this method that the Blessed One has explained, opened up, analysed, exposed and proclaimed that this thing called consciousness is dependently arising without a 'Soul' in the entire sixfold sphere of sense. So beholding consciousness as such, an ardent dwelling disciple is attached to nothing in this world, nor does he yearn for other worlds. He is untroubled and hankers after nothing, and he is, of himself set utterly free, and he realizes, 'Destroyed is all reason or impetus for rebirth, lived is the holy life, done is the task, for life in these conditions there is no hereafter'." 11

Following are two questions from The Questions of King Milinda

"A certain King Milinda asks the Arahata Nagasena some questions concerning the Soul.

King's question: 'Nagasena, is there such a thing as a soul? Is it the 'living-principle' within which sees forms through the eye, hears through the ear, smells with the nose, tastes with the tongue, feels objects with the body and cognizes mental objects with the mind, just as we sitting here can look out of any window we wish to look'?

Nagasena: 'O King, it is by reason of the eye and forms that sight arises and those conditions-contact, feeling, ideation, thought abstraction, sense of vitality, attention and so on. Each arises simultaneously with its predecessor's passing away. A similar succession arises with each of the other senses when they are brought into play. These phenomena are not united one to another indiscriminately, the latter sense to the former organ, etc. So herein, there is no such thing as a Soul'.

King's question: 'These three, Nagasena, perception, reason, and the Soul that exist in a being, are they all different, both in letter and essence or are they the same in essence, only differing in the letter'.

Nagasena: 'O King, recognition is the mark of perception, and discrimination is the mark of reason, and there is no such thing as a Soul in a being.

King: 'But, if there is no such thing as a Soul in a being, how or what is it then which sees forms with the eye, hears sounds with the ear'?

Nagasena: 'If there be a Soul which does all of those things, then, if the door of the eye were shut or the eye torn out of its socket, could it then stretch out its head as it were through the larger aperture and with a greater range, see forms more clearly than before? Could one hear sounds better if the ears were torn away or smell better if the nose were cut off, or the tongue torn out could he taste better, or feel touch better if the body were destroyed'?

King: 'Certainly not.Sir'!

Nagasena: 'Then, O King, there can be no such thing as a Soul inside the body'." 12

Following are a number of discourses by the Buddha to his followers concerning the five aggregates of clinging.

“If monks, the eye that is internal, or the ear, nose, tongue, body, or the mind that is internal, is intact and the appropriate external object impinges upon one of them, and there exists in the mind tendencies (sankhara) reacting towards the impingement, then the appropriate consciousness of eye, ear, nose etc. is thus able to arise. Whatever is material shape in what has thus come to be,-that is included in the aggregate of material shapes.

Whatever is feeling or sensation in what has thus come to be ,-that is included in the aggregate of feelings. Whatever is perception in what has thus come to be, -that is included in the aggregate of perceptions. Whatever are the mental-formations..that is included in the aggregate of mental-formations. Whatever is consciousness...that is included in the aggregate of consciousness.

Thus, there is the including and the coming together of these five groups of grasping. These are generated by conditions. Whatever among these five grasping groups is desire, sensual pleasure, affection, infatuation, catching-at, that is the uprising of 'Ill' (dukkha). Whatever among these five groups is the control of desire and attachment, the non-existence of desire and attachment, that is the ceasing of 'Ill'." 13

A certain monk addressed the Blessed One as follows:

“Lord, are these the five aggregates of clinging, to wit: the material aggregate, the feeling aggregate, the perceptions aggregate, the mental-formations aggregate, and the consciousness aggregate?”

‘That is so, friend, those are the five aggregates of clinging as you say’.

‘But, Lord, these five aggregates of clinging, in what are they rooted?’

‘These five aggregates of clinging have their root in desire’.

Then that monk asked again:

‘Now, this same grasping, Lord, is it those five aggregates of clinging, or is grasping something apart from those five groups?’

‘No, indeed friend, this same grasping is not those five groups, nor yet is it something apart from them. But where there is desire and attachment, there is also grasping’.

“May it be, Lord that in the five aggregates of clinging there is a variety of desire and lust?”

It may be so, friend. Herein, one thinks thus: ‘May I be of such and such a body in the future; may I have such feeling, such perception, such mental-formations; may I have such and such consciousness in the future’. In this way friend: in the five aggregates of clinging there may be a variety of desire and lust.

‘What Lord, is the condition, what is the cause for the arising of the material-aggregate, the feeling-aggregate, the perception-aggregate, the formations-aggregate, and the consciousness-aggregate?’

The four great elements (earth, water, fire, air) are the condition, the cause for the arising and designation of the material-aggregate. Contact is the condition, the cause for the arising of the feeling-aggregate, the perception-aggregate and the formations-aggregate. Name-and-form is the condition, the cause for (it is the object of) the consciousness-aggregate.”

‘It is well, Lord, but what is the individual-self view?’

Herein, friend, the untaught, common folk, unpractised in the Dhamma, regard the body as their ‘self’ or their ‘self’ as having body; or they regard the body as being in their ‘self’ or their ‘self’ as being in the body; and in the same way they regard feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. They regard these phenomena of mind as being their ‘self’. That is how the individual-person view comes to be’.

‘It is well, Lord. And how, Lord, is there no individual-self view?’

‘Herein friend, the well-taught Noble disciple, skilled and practiced in Dhamma, does not so regard the body, feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness as being his ‘Self’. He regards them as: ‘This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my ‘Self’. This is how no individual self view comes to be.’” 14

Here are more suttas by the Buddha on the five aggregates.

“Those recluses and Brahmins, monks, who regard the Self in many diverse ways, regard it as the body-mass of the five aggregates of clinging, or as some one of these. Thus this is the view, it has come to him to think, ‘I-am’. Now when it has come to someone to think ‘I-am’ there comes to pass a descent of the five feeling faculties of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. Consciousness is the result, mind-states are the result, delusion is the result. Touched by the feeling born of contact, tainted with delusion, there comes to the untrained person the view, ‘I-am’.”

"Owing to a cause comes the conceit 'I-am', and not otherwise. And what is the cause? Owing to body, owing to feeling, perception, mental-formations, owing to consciousness it comes, and not otherwise.

Suppose that a woman or a man or a young lad, fond of self-adornment, should gaze at the image of his face in a mirror that is clean and spotless, or in a bowl of clean water, he –would behold the image owing to a cause and not otherwise.

Even so, through the cause of the body, the feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness, comes the conceit, 'I-am', and not otherwise."

"Just as a dog tied with a leash to a strong stake or post; if he moves, he moves towards that stake or post; if he stands still, he stands near that post; if he sits down, he sits close to that post; if he lies down, he does so close to that post.

Similarly, the uninstructed, unpractised, ordinary person looks upon the body as, 'This is mine, I am this, this is myself; he looks upon feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness as, 'This is mine, I am this, this is myself; if he moves, he moves towards these five; if he stands, if he sits, if he lies down, he does so close to these five aggregates of clinging."

"Just as a dyer or a painter, with dye or paint, and a well smoothed wooden panel or wall or piece of cloth, can reproduce the form of a woman or man, complete in every detail; similarly, the unformed, untrained, common person brings body (and sense objects) into existence too; he brings feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness into existence too (by grasping and clinging to them)."

"The venerable Radha said to the Blessed One: 'Lord, 'a being, a being' one is called. In what respect is one called 'a being'?

'Because of being caught and held fast by that desire, that attachment, that infatuation, that delight, that craving for the body (and sense objects), for feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness; therefore is one called 'a being '.

'Just as when little boys or girls are playing with mud-pies, as long as they are not rid of attachment to those mud-pies, are not rid of desire, affection, thirst, excitement and craving for those mud-pies-then so long do they delight in them, are amused by them, value and cherish them. But as soon as those little boys or girls are rid of attachment and desire, affection, thirst, excitement and craving for those mud-pies-they do stop playing with them, scattering them by hand and foot.

'In the same way, Radha, do you stop playing with five aggregates of clinging, scatter them. Practice so as to end craving and attachment for them. Indeed, Radha, the ending of craving is Nibbana."

"Whatever recluses or Brahmins who remember a number of their former lives, they all remember one or another of the five aggregates of grasping, saying: 'In the past I had this sort of body', and thus remembering, it is just the body he remembers; –'In the past I had this sort of feeling, this sort of perception, this sort of mental-formation, this sort of consciousness'. Thus remembering, it is just feeling..... consciousness that he recalls.

'And why, monks, is it said 'body'? It is afflicted, therefore it is called 'body'. Afflicted by what? Afflicted by cold and heat, afflicted by hunger and thirst, afflicted by coming into contact with gnats, mosquitoes, flies, wind, sun, and snakes, It is afflicted, therefore it is called 'body'.

'And why is it called 'feeling'? It is felt, therefore it is called 'feeling'. What is felt? Pleasure is felt, pain is felt, and neutral feeling is felt. It is felt, therefore it is called 'feeling'.

'And why is it called 'perception'? It is perceived, therefore it is called perception. What is perceived ?

Blue is perceived, yellow, red, white is perceived. it is perceived, therefore it is called 'perception'.

'And why are they called 'mental-formations'? They determine or activate that which is formed (sankhara), therefore they are called mental-formations. What is the formed that they activate. They activate the body in its corporeal nature, they activate feeling in its nature of feeling, they activate perception in its perceptual nature, they activate the mental-formations in their determining nature, and they activate consciousness in its cognizing nature. They activate or determine that which is formed and conditioned, therefore they are called the 'mental-formations'.

'And why is it called consciousness? It cognizes, or is conscious, therefore it is called consciousness. Of what is it conscious? It is conscious of various sense-impressions, therefore it is called consciousness".

'Then, monks, the well-instructed Noble disciple thus reflects: 'I am the prey of these five aggregates of grasping now; in the past likewise I was prey to them; should I now continue to be enticed, lured and cling to them, then in future time I shall also continue to be prey to them, just as I am now because of my infatuation and clinging to them in the past.'

'Thus reflecting, the Noble disciple is freed from desire and enticement by them and he is apt for dispassion and non-attachment for his present body (and sense objects), for present feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness; he is apt for turning away from them, from clinging to them; he is apt for the ceasing of them.'

'Therefore, monks, every body (or sense object), every feeling, every perception, every mental-formation, every moment of consciousness, be it inward or outward, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, past, present or future, I say every one should be regarded as, 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not myself', as it really is by perfect insight. Regarding rightly in this way, in this body having consciousness, and in all external conditions, there comes to be no tendency to the conceit 'I' and 'mine' concerning these five elements of being." 15

These five aggregates are not something which can be physically or mentally pulled apart and exist independently. They arise more or less simultaneously in each sense experience and are blended together in a mass so to speak. Each individual factor is difficult to distinguish, but they can be to some extent by 'bare attention' and keen awareness.

Because this fivefold-mass-sense-experience arises seemingly as a whole unit, and not perceived moment by moment in its fleeting nature as it really is, most people take sensory cognition for a stable, self-owned activity. They mistake it as being their self' or their 'soul'. They fail to see its' true nature, as being completely devoid of any type of individual, substantial self-nature.

The five aggregates were taught and explained by the Buddha for the purpose of easy apprehension and understanding in the order as follows.

"Materiality which is gross, is the objective field of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind; and after that. arises feeling which feels that materiality as desirable or undesirable; then perception arises which apprehends the aspects of the feeling's objective field (the object), for

'What one feels, that one perceives'; then arise the mental-formations and mind-made concepts which form volitionally through means of perception; and lastly there is consciousness, which these things, beginning with feeling, have as their support and which is dominate over them." 16

Two similies are given here to describe the five individual aggregates and their functions.

"The materiality, as object of clinging, is like a sick room because it is the dwelling place as physical base, door and object of the sick man (consciousness). The feeling as object of clinging is like the sickness because it afflicts. The perception as object of clinging is like the provocation of the sickness because it gives rise to feeling associated with greed, aversion etc. owing, to the perception of sense objects and so on. The formations aggregate as object of clinging is like having recourse to what is unsuitable because it is the source of feeling, which is the sickness. For it is said, feeling as feeling is the formed that they (the sankhara) form', and likewise, because of unwholesome karma having been performed, resultant body-consciousness has arisen accompanied by pain. Consciousness as object of clinging is like the sick man because it is never free from feeling (it has to experience it) which is the sickness.

'Also, they are respectively like the prison, the punishment, the offence, the punisher and the offender. The matter of the body is like the prison because it is the site of the punishment which is feeling. Perception is like the offence because owing to the perception of beauty or ugliness etc., it is a cause of the punishment, feeling. The formations aggregate is like the punisher because it is a cause of feeling. Consciousness is like the offended because it is afflicted (by being conscious of it) by the punishment, feeling." 17

The Buddha has likened forms or material shapes to a large mass of froth floating on the water, which when closely examined by a clear-sighted man, appears to him to be empty, unsubstantial and without essence. He has likened feelings and sensations which arise and pass away in the body and mind, to bubbles rising in a pool of water bursting into nothingness on the surface.

If a clear-sighted man were to see, observe closely and examine them, they would appear to him to be empty, unsubstantial and without essence. A perception is likened to a mirage which appears at noon on a hot summer day, which if seen, observed and examined closely, would appear to be empty...without essence. What essence could there be in a perception or mirage, which has a ghost-like appearance. The Buddha likened the mental-formations to be hollow like the trunk of a banana tree. Because when cut down and stripped of its outer skin or layers, there is found no inner core, or hardwood. A clear-sighted man seeing, observing and closely, examining it would find them (the habit-formations) to be empty, unsubstantial and without essence. Consciousness is likened to a magical illusion produced by a skillful magician. But if seen and observed keenly by a quick, clear-sighted man, that magical illusion which fools most people, is in reality empty, unsubstantial and without essence. What essence could there be in a magical illusion, and in the same way consciousness.

"Form is like a lump of froth,
Feelings are like water bubbles,
As a mirage, so is perception,
Mental-formations are hollow like a banana tree trunk,
A magical illusion is consciousness.
So the Awakened One did illustrate.
In whatever way it is observed

And properly examined,
Empty it is and unsubstantial,
To him who sees it wisely,
This body at the outset,
Was taught by him of Wisdom wide,
When abandoned of three things,
Life (vital force), warmth and consciousness,
Is cast aside, rejected, abandoned
When body is bereft of these,
Then thrown away it lies,
Insentient, mere food for animals.
Such is the fate of it,
A prattling illusion,

No essence here is found.

Thus should the aggregates be looked upon by a Bhikkhu of strong energy,
Continually both day and night, clearly aware and mindful.
Let him leave behind all fetters, make a refuge for himself,
And as though his head were all afire,
Act skilfully, aspiring for the deathless state (Nibbana)." 18

This fivefold-mass of phenomena, the body and mind, should, be regarded as, 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not myself'. It is because of being attached to and mistakenly identifying them as 'mine', that the more gross forms of suffering arise. These gross forms are experienced as physical pain, sickness, old-age, death, and mental sorrow, grief, lamentation, frustration, anxiety, confusion and misery which beset a person who is uncontrolled and heedless with respect to this 'person-pack'.

The following are more selections from suttas given by the Buddha concerning the five aggregates.

"Suppose, monks, a stream, a mountain torrent is cascading, rising from afar, swiftly moving, and on both banks are growing grasses, reeds, creepers and shrubs which overhang the, stream; and a man is swept away by that torrent; he clutches at the grasses, but they might break away, and he might clutch at the reeds and creepers and overhanging shrubs; but they also might break away. And owing to that instability of them, their breaking away, that man might come to his destruction, his downfall.

'Even so, the untaught many-folk who are untrained, unskilled, unpractised in Dhamma, they regard the five groups of grasping as their Self. Then the body (and sense objects) break away beyond their control, the feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness break away beyond their control, do not last, constantly changing, becoming otherwise. Owing to that instability and unreliability of those five grasping groups, the untaught many-folk come by their sorrow, suffering, grief, woe, lamentation and despair." 19

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"Monks, I will show you grasping and worry; likewise not-grasping and not-worrying. Listen to it, apply your minds to it thoroughly.

And how, is there grasping and worry?

'Those who are unskilled in the Noble Doctrine (the Dhamma), they regard the body (any sense stimuli), feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness as Self, and these as being in the Self, the Self as having these; of such a one the body alters, feelings alter, perceptions alter, mental-formations alter, and consciousness alters, becoming otherwise. Owing to this altering and becoming otherwiseness of the body..... consciousness, his mind is busied with the altering, constantly changing conditions. From thus being busied, worried thoughts arise and persist, laying hold of his heart. From laying hold of his heart, he becomes troubled, and owing to vexation and clinging, he is worried.

Thus, monks, comes grasping and worry.

'And how, is there no grasping and no worry? Such a one is well-trained in the Dhamma, he regards not, the body.... consciousness as being the 'Self'. He regards them not as having Self, nor as them belonging to any Self. He regards all five aggregates as, 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not myself'. Of such a one, the body etc. alter and become otherwise. But in spite of this constant changing and altering, sorrow and grief, dejection, frustration etc. do not arise in him. Thus, monks, there is no grasping and no worrying." 20

"Nakulapita, the housefather, came into the presence of the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side. As he sat there, the housefather addressed the Blessed One as follows. 'Master, I am old, broken down, far gone in years; I have reached life's end; I am sick and always ailing. Let the Blessed One comfort me, so that it will be a profit and a blessing unto me for many a long day.

'True it is, housefather, that your body is weak and cumbersome. For one carrying this body about, housefather, to claim but a moments health would be sheer foolishness. Wherefore, housefather, thus you should train yourself: 'Though my body is sick, my mind shall not be sick '. Thus, housefather, must you train yourself.

And how, Master, is the body sick and the mind sick too? And how is the body sick and the mind not sick?

'Then listen, housefather, apply your mind and give heed to what I shall tell you. And how is the body sick and the mind sick too?

Herein, the untaught many folk, who are unskilled, untrained in the Dhamma, who discern not those who are Ariyans—these ignorant people regard their body as the 'Self' etc. They say: 'I am the body, the body is mine', and are possessed by this idea; so possessed by this idea, when their body alters and changes for the worse, owing to the unstable and changing nature of the body, then sorrow and grief..... despair arise in their mind.

'They regard feelings, perceptions, the mental-formations and consciousness as their 'Self' etc. They say: 'I am the mind, the mind is mine', and they are possessed by this idea, so that when the feelings..... alter and change beyond their control owing to their unstable, soulless nature, then sorrow and grief... arise in their mind. That, housefather, is how the body is sick and the mind sick too. And how, housefather, is the body sick but the mind not sick?

As to this, the well-instructed disciple, skilled and trained in the Dhamma regards not, the body as 'Self'. He does not say: 'I am the body, the body is mine'. nor is he possessed by the idea. So when the body alters and changes for the worse..... then sorrow frustration etc. do not arise in him.

'In the same way, he does not regard feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness as 'Self'. He does not say: 'These are my mind, the mind is mine', nor is he possessed with this

idea. Not being so possessed, when the feelings....consciousness- change for the worse, sorrow and grief confusion and, depression etc. do not arise in him.

Thus, housefather, is it that the body can be sick but the mind not sick. Thus spoke the Blessed One, and the housefather, Nakulpitar was pleased and welcomed what was said by the Master." 21

"Monks, body, feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness are not the 'Self'. If they were the Self they would not be involved in sickness, decay and death etc., and one could say of the body, 'Let my body be this way, let my body be not this way. Let my feelings....consciousness be this way (only pleasant), let my feelings.... consciousness be not this way (painful)'.

'But, inasmuch as the body (and all material, objects), feelings. perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness are not one's 'Self', that is why they are involved and undergo sickness, pain, sorrow and death. And one cannot say: 'Let my body and mind be this way, let them not be this way.'" 22

"The body, monks, is impermanent. That which is the cause, that which is the condition for the arising of the body (and any material object), that is also impermanent. So how could the body, being produced by what is impermanent, ever be permanent?

Feelings are impermanent, perceptions, mental-formations, and consciousness are impermanent. That which is the cause, the condition for the arising of feeling..... consciousness, that also is impermanent. How could feeling etc., being produced by what is also impermanent and without self-nature, ever be permanent with self-nature?"23

"Monks, the untaught many-folk might well be repelled by this body, child of the four elements. They might cease to fancy it and regard it as their 'Self' and wish to be rid of it because its decay and death is inevitable.

Yet this that we call, 'mind', with this the untaught many folk are not able to feel repelled; they are not able to cease fancying it or wish to be free from it. They regard it as their 'Self'; they cleave to it and mistakenly conceive, 'This is mine, I am this, this is my Self.

Hence they are not detached, they cannot cease longing for it, they are not able to be freed from the suffering, confusion and frustration that it brings.

`But it would be better, monks, if those untaught many folk regard this body as the Self rather than the mind. Why so? Because, it is seen how this body, compounded of the four great elements, persists for a year, or several years, or ten, twenty or fifty years, sometimes persists for a hundred years or longer. But this that we call 'mind', it arises as one thing, ceases as another, continually changing and becoming otherwise, whether by night or by day, even in sleep.

'Just as a monkey faring through the woods, through the thick forest, catches hold of a bough, letting it go seizes another and so he quickly moves along; even so, that which we call mind arises as one thing, ceases as another, both by night and day, even in sleep.'" 24

"Monks, I will teach you the burden, the laying hold of the burden, the lifting of it up, and the laying of it down. Do you listen.

And what is the burden? It is the five aggregates of grasping. That is to say, material shape, feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness. This is called the burden.

And what is the laying hold of the burden? It is the individual person view, that venerable one of such a name and family (grasping the five aggregates as Self). This is called, laying hold of the burden.

And what is the lifting of it up? It is craving which leads to kamma accumulation, becoming and rebirth, along with the lust and the lure that lingers lovingly now here, now there; namely the craving and attachment to material forms, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. This is called the taking up of the burden.

And what is the laying down of the burden? It is the utter passionless, ceasing without remainder of that very craving/ attachment, the giving up and renouncing, the release and the absence of longing desire and clinging for the five aggregates of grasping. This is called the laying down of the burden.

`The Burden is indeed the fivefold-mass,
The seizer of the burden, man
Taking it up is sorrow in this world,
The laying of it down is bliss.
If a man lay this heavy burden down,
And take not any other burden up,
If he draw out that craving, root and all,
No more hungry is he, he is free." 25

"What is not yours, monks, renounce it. Renouncing it will be to your good, to your happiness for a long time. And what is not yours?

The body is not yours, feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness are not yours; renounce them. Renouncing them will be to your good, to, your happiness.

It is as if a person were to carry away, burn or do as he pleases with the grass, the twigs, branches and leaves in this, Jeta Grove. Would it occur to you to say, `That person is carrying us away, burning us, is doing as he pleases, with us'?

Certainly not, Lord.

For what reason, brethren?

Because, Lord, this is not ourselves, nor what belongs to ourselves.

'So also, monks, the body is not yours, the feelings and perceptions are not yours, mental-formations and consciousness are not yours; renounce them. Renouncing them will be to your good, to your peace and happiness for a long time." 26

"Before my Enlightenment, monks, while I was not yet completely awakened, I thought, `What is the satisfaction and what is the misery in regard to the body, in regard to feelings, perceptions' mental-formations and consciousness, and what is the release from them'?

And then, this occurred to me: 'Whatever happiness and pleasure arises dependent upon the body, dependent upon feelings.....consciousness--this is the satisfaction in them. Whatever there is of impermanence, changeability, pain and confusion on account of them this is the misery and unsatisfactoriness inherent in the body and the mind.

Whatever there is of being free of desire, delusion and attachment, the abandoning and forsaking of craving and clinging in regard to these five aggregates---this is the release from bondage, the suffering and frustration related to them.

'As long, monks, as I did not know the satisfaction as satisfaction, the misery as misery and the release as release in regard to these five grasping groups, according to actuality, as it really is--

then just so long it was that I did not acknowledge that I was fully Enlightened with unequalled and perfect Enlightenment.

But, monks, when I knew the satisfaction as merely satisfaction, and the misery as merely misery, and I knew the release as release concerning these five 'elements of being', according to actuality, then I acknowledged that in this world I was fully Enlightened with unsurpassable, perfect Enlightenment. And the knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unshakeable is the liberation of this mind, this is the last conditioned existence, there is now no further becoming.'" 27

"If there were not this satisfaction which comes from the body, from feelings and the rest, beings would not desire and hanker after them. But in as much as there is this satisfaction and pleasure in them, beings do desire and long for them.

If misery never afflicted these five aggregates, beings would not have aversion or be repelled by them. But in as much as misery does afflict these five aggregates, beings are averse and repelled by them.

If there were no way of escape from the sorrow and pain inherent in these five grasping groups, beings could not escape from it. But in as much as there is a way to escape from it, beings are able to free themselves from the sorrow and pain that they can bring.

'So long as beings have not thoroughly understood and comprehended as it really is, the satisfaction as such, the misery as such and the release as such in regard to these five grasping groups of material and mental phenomena - for just that long will they not remain aloof, detached and contented, with the barriers of the mind done away.

'But so soon as beings do thoroughly penetrate and understand by right insight according to reality, the satisfaction as such, the misery as such, and the release as such..... then beings will remain aloof, detached and contented, with the barriers of the mind done away with.'" 28

"Attachment, monks, is bondage, aloofness is freedom. By being attached to the five groups of grasping, consciousness if it gets a standing may persist. With the five groups for its object, with them for its platform, seeking means for enjoyment, it may come by growth, increase and abundance.

'If a man were to declare thus: 'Apart from form apart from feeling, apart from perception, apart from mental-formations, there will show forth the coming or the going or the increase or the rebirth of consciousness', to do that would be impossible.

'If desire and attachment to the five aggregates of clinging is abandoned, by that abandonment, its foothold is cut off. Thereby, there is no platform for consciousness. Without that platform consciousness has no growth, it generates no action, it accumulates nothing and is freed. By this freedom it is steady and by its steadiness it is happy, and owing to happiness it is not troubled. Being untroubled of itself, it becomes utterly well, so that one knows: 'Destroyed is rebirth, lived is the Holy Life, done is the task, for life in these conditions there is no hereafter.'" 29

"Then the venerable Raadhā came to the Blessed One. Having saluted the Blessed One he sat down to one side. So seated the venerable Radha thus addressed the Blessed One:

'They say, Mara ! Mara ! Lord. Please Lord, what is this Mara?

'Where there is form, Radha, there is Mara (temptation and delusion) or things having the nature of Mara, or at any rate what arises and perishes.

'Therefore, Radha, regard the body (any sense attraction) as Mara, as having the nature of Mara, or at any rate as perishable. Regard it as an impostor, as a dart, as suffering. as a liable source of

pain. They who so regard it, they rightly regard it. And the same is to be said of feelings, perceptions, mental-formations and consciousness.

“But rightly regarding, Lord, for what purpose?”

Rightly regarding for the sake of dispassion.

But dispassion, Lord, for what purpose is it?

Dispassion is to get release.

But release, Lord, what is it for?

Release means Nibbana.

But Nibbana, Lord, what is the aim of that?

This, Rada, is a question that goes too far. You can grasp no limit to the question; rooted in Nibbana, is the Holy life for the right complete destruction of suffering lived; Nibbana is its goal, Nibbana is its end.” 30

Feelings, perceptions, mental-formations, and consciousness can only come into being or arise through contact with one of the six objects of sense. This can occur only when there is a body with unimpaired sense organs. The body is lifeless and immobile without the mind to give it life and operate it. The body is merely a vehicle for the mind to work through. The interdependence of mind and body is illustrated by the following analogy.

“Just as when two sheaves of reeds are propped one against the other, each one gives the other consolidating support, and when one falls the other also falls. So too, in the five constituents of a being, mentality-materiality occur as an interdependent state. Each of its component factors give each other mutual support and when one falls owing to death or malfunction, the other falls too. Hence the ancient wise men said:

“The mental and the material
are twins and each support the other
When one breaks up, they both break up
Through interconditionality.” 31

“Furthermore, mentality has no efficient power, it cannot occur on its own. Mentality does not eat, it does not drink, nor speak, nor does it adopt postures. And materiality is without efficient power; it can not function on its own power or motivation. It has no desire to eat, drink, speak walk, sit or lay down and so forth. But rather it is when supported by mentality (as the motivation) that materiality occurs. When mentality has the desire to eat, drink, walk etc., it is the materiality that actually does the eating and so forth. This is illustrated in the following simile.

‘A blind man and a stool-crawling cripple wanted to go somewhere. The blind man said to the cripple, ‘Look, I can do what should be done by legs, but have no eyes with which to see what is rough and smooth.’ The cripple said, ‘Look, I can do what should be done by eyes, but I have no legs with which to go and come.’

The blind man was delighted and he made the cripple climb up on his shoulders, and thus sitting, the cripple spoke thus. ‘Turn left, take the right, leave the right, take the left’ and so on, and so they went about.” 32

"Herein, both the blind man and the cripple have no efficient power of their own by which to move freely, they are impotent, they cannot travel by their own strength. But there is nothing to prevent their going when they support each other.

So too, mentality and materiality each on their own have no efficient power to function. But there is nothing to prevent their functioning as a unit when they support each other.

`Hence, the ancients said:

"They cannot come to be by their own strength,
Or yet maintain themselves on their own
Relying for support on other factors.
Weak in themselves, and formed, they come to be
They come to be with others as condition,
They are aroused by others as their objects
They are, by objects and conditions,
And each by something other than itself.
And just as men depend upon a boat
For traversing the sea,
So does the matter-body need the mind for occurrence,
Each depending upon the other,
The boat and men go on the sea.
And so do mind and body,
Both depend the one upon the other." 33

"Therefore, just as a marionette is void, soulless and without curiosity, and while it walks and stands merely through the combination of strings and wood, yet it seems as if it had, curiosity and interestedness.

So too, this mind-body is void, soulless and without curiosity, and while it walks and, stands etc., yet it seems as if it has curiosity and interestedness. This is how it should be regarded. Hence the ancients said:

`The mental and material are really here,
But here there is no solid Soul to be found
For it is void and merely fashioned like a doll,
Just suffering piled up like grass and sticks." 34

"So, in many ways it is only mentality-materiality that is illustrated. Therefore, just as when the component parts such as axles, wheels, frame, poles, etc. are arranged, in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage, 'chariot'. Yet in the ultimate sense when each part is, examined, there is no chariot. In the same way, when bricks, wood, mud, tiles etc. are placed so that they enclose a space in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term 'house'; and when the fingers, thumb, and palm are brought tightly together, there is the term of common usage, 'fist'; with men, horses, weapons with `army'; with trunk, branches and leaves for a 'tree' so on and so forth.

'So too, when there are these five aggregates as object of, clinging, there comes to be the term of common usage, 'person' or 'animal' etc., yet in the ultimate sense when each component., part is examined, there is nothing as a basis for the assumption, of 'I am' or 'this is my Self', there is just mentality-materiality."

The Lute

"Suppose, monks, the sound of a lute has never been, heard before by a King. Then that, King hears the sound of a lute and says: 'Good man, pray, what is that sound so entrancing, so delightful and pleasant to the ear, so intoxicating, so ravishing, of such power to bind?'"

Then his attendants say to that King: 'That, O King, Is the, sound of a lute.'

The King says: 'Go my good man and fetch me that lute.'

So they fetch the lute and say to the King: 'Here is that lute, the sound of which was so entrancing, so delightful, of power to bind.'

Then the King says Enough of this lute, my man, fetch, me that sound.'

Then they explain to the King: 'This lute, O King, consists of diverse parts, a great number of parts, to wit: owing to the belly, the parchment, the handle, the frame, the strings, owing to the bridge. And because of the proper effort of a player, it produces sound. Thus, O King, this lute, so called, consists of so many diverse parts.'

Then that King breaks up that lute into many pieces and burns the pieces in a fire. Then he takes a heap of the ashes, and flings them into a strong wind, dissolving into nothing. Then the King says: 'A poor thing is that which you call a lute, whatever a lute may be. Herein the world is exceedingly, led astray.'

'Even so, monks, a wise discerning person, investigating the body (or any sense object) as far as there is scope for body; investigating feelings, investigating perceptions, investigating mental-formations, investigating consciousness, so far as there is scope for these phenomena-in all these investigations, whatever there be of 'I' or 'mine' or 'Soul', there is none of that to be found for him." 36

The Human Puppet:

At one time, (in the time of the Buddha) a Nun named, Sela, had finished her noon time meal and had sat down under a tree for her afternoon meditation, meditating on the realities of life. As she was sitting there observing objectively her body and mind, Mara, (the negative, disruptive subconscious tendencies in the mind), came into her awareness, and the following dialogue took place with Mara.

Mara:

"Who was it that made the human puppet?

Where is the maker of the human doll?

Whence, tell me, hath the puppet come to be?

Where will the puppet cease and pass away?

Sela, the Nun:

'Neither self-made the puppet is, nor yet

By another wrought is this ill—plighted thing.

By reason of causes it came to be,

By rupture of the causes it dies away.

Like to a certain seed sown in the field,

Which, when it lighteth on the taste of earth,

And moisture likewise, by these two doth grow.

So the aggregates and the elements,

And the six spheres of sense-even all these,

By reason of a cause (craving) they came to be,
By rupture of the cause they die away."

The same thing happened to another nun, named Vajira, on a different occasion.

Mara: " By whom was wrought this being?

Where is he who makes him?

Whence doth a being arise?

Where doth the being cease and pass away?

Vajira: 'Being !Being !, why dost thou harp upon that word?

Among false opinions, Mara, hast thou strayed.

Mere bundle of conditioned factors, this!

No `being' can here be discerned.

For just as, when the parts are rightly set,

The word `chariot' ariseth in the mind,

So doth our usage covenant to say,

A `being' when the aggregates are there.

Nay, it is simply Ill that arises,

Ill that doth persist, and Ill that wanes away.

Nought but Ill is it that comes to pass,

Nought else but Ill is it doth cease to be." 37

"When a person rejects this correct vision and attitude, towards the mind and body, and assumes that a separate, individual Soul exists, he has to conclude either that it comes to be annihilated at death or that it continues forever. If he concludes that this 'soul' does come to extinction at death, he falls into the annihilationist theory.

'If he concludes that his 'Soul' will exist forever, he falls into the eternalist view.

`Of these two types of soul belief, one either holds back, concluding that the assumed soul is eternal, or he over-reaches, concluding that it comes to be once and for all annihilated.

`Hence the Blessed One said: There are two kinds of view, monks. When gods and human beings are, obsessed with themselves, some hold back and some overreach; only those with eyes see. And how do some hold back? Gods and human beings love craving and becoming, they delight in becoming, rejoice in becoming. When the Dhamma is taught to them for the ceasing of craving and becoming, their minds do not enter into it, become settled and accept it, be resolute in it. Thus it is that some hold back.

'And how do some over-reach? Some are ashamed, humiliated and disgusted by that same becoming; they are concerned with non-becoming (not existing again in the future) saying in this way: 'Sirs. when with the break up of the body, this 'soul' is cut off, annihilated, does not become any more after death, this then is peaceful and sublime, this is true. Thus it is that some over-reach.

'And how do those with eyes see? Here, an intelligent, wise, discerning man sees what has become as, `having become' Because of ignorance of condition, the mental activities arise;. because of the mental activities consciousness arises; because of consciousness the mind-body organism comes to be; this makes for the completion of the spheres-of-sense and thus arises contact, feeling, craving, grasping, becoming, rebirth and subsequently old age, suffering, pain,

grief, decay and death. This is how this whole mass of `Ill' has become. But when ignorance and craving are cut off with Wisdom, all of this becoming ceases. This is how one with eyes sees, and he enters, upon the way to detachment and dispassion for all of it, to the fading away of desire and attachment and greed for it, he enters upon the way to its cessation."38

Thus have the five aggregates or grasped-after and clung to phenomena of mind and matter been described and illustrated in various ways by the Awakened One. The Noble Truth of Dukkha or suffering, as it is commonly called, is based on the universal impermanence and soullessness of conditioned existence. This truth of dukkha is direct and common experience to all living creatures. It is plain to see and realise if we just slow down and take a look at these things as they happen in and around ourself and in others. We will then perceive the reason for the various experiences which befall a person whether pleasant or painful. This universal truth of dukkha is constantly proclaiming itself everywhere. We should contemplate and reflect on these phenomena which make up conditioned existence. We must cultivate a detached and dispassionate attitude for these elements of 'being'. In this way the erroneously construed notion of an individual 'I' or self which arises along with and permeates this fivefold-mass can be understood, undermined and eliminated by the power of wisdom. Then one can live with consciousness free from the bondage of mind and matter and experience and live in the ultimate release and sublime happiness of Nibbana.

"Monks, so long as I did not fully understand these five grasping groups, the arising of these five groups, their ceasing, and the way leading to their ceasing, just so long was I not assured that in this world, with its devas, its Maras, its Brahmas, its men and animals, that I was fully Enlightened. But as soon as I did fully understand them as they really are, these five groups of grasping, their arising, their ceasing and the way leading to their ceasing, then I was assured that in this world, I had attained supreme, unsurpassable Awakening." 39

PART II

SENSORY COGNITION

The five aggregates of clinging will now be further detailed in how they function in the moment-to-moment sense experiences and thus come to affect the mind.

When a sense stimulus vibration comes into contact with and impinges on one of the sense organs, it is called the arising of rupa or matter. In the next instant, feeling, perception, mental formations (concepts, thoughts, emotions) and consciousness pertaining to the sense vibrations also arise. This is called the arising of nama or mind. The two-nama and rupa-arise more or less simultaneously and it is appropriately called the process of nama-rupa or mind-and-matter, name-and-form. The nama (feeling, perception, formations and consciousness) names or identifies the object which has impinged upon a sense organ.

Feelings, perceptions, formations and consciousness arise from, the subconscious life-stream according to how one is conditioned to react to each individual stimulus. Reaction is based on the law of cause and effect (kamma). As we act and react to each stimulus it is remembered and recorded so to speak in the the subconscious mind. These reactions become crystallized there very fast. The subconscious life-continuum thus has a stereotype pattern of response, a concept, which will again be recreated and utilized each time a vibration or stimulus of the same variety or intensity is contacted. Keep in mind that it is not the physical object itself that is reacted to, but the mind reacts to the conditioned feelings and perceptions.

Do not misunderstand, the object does exist,(as a material vibration) for it is perceived by the subject-consciousness. Yet it is private; it is not shared by others. It is constructed by the individual in the mind and remains for him alone. However, the same type of process happens in everyone's mind, so it seems as if everyone sees the same things. The way the mind transforms the vibration is conditioned by past experiences and conditionings. So on the plane of human beings the human mind is conditioned to perceive more or less the same.

"These concepts and reactions that we are continually constructing within our mental make-up are the most potent obstructions to perceiving things in their true impermanent, conditioned, and soulless nature. In fact, once a concept is formed, thinking appears to stop proceeding any further in that direction. Concepts take the thinker further away from actuality by fixing forces and events as permanent, concrete entities. These conceptual deposits in our subconscious life-stream keep on influencing all our behaviour, judgments and sentiments relative to all subsequent experiences, adding to and taking away from their quality. Knowledge is nothing more than accumulated concepts and in conceptual thinking logic, reason, imagination and living experience play different roles". 14

Understanding this process involved in every act of sensory perception is very important in order to help one see and realize the extent of his mind's entanglement with things of the world.

While sitting quietly with a calm, clear awareness in meditation, all these vibrations, feelings, perceptions, thoughts, ideas, etc. come flashing through the senses, rousing up consciousness. They seem to spring up from out of the void and to have no real relationship with us. They are only a whirlwind of feelings and mental pictures with no substantiality, but yet we build all our thoughts and actions based on them. Our whole objectified world of experience arises accordingly. It all depends on the contact between the six organs of sense and their corresponding objects, which includes thoughts, ideas, and imagination etc.

The incoming sensations or vibrations we receive through the senses come and go in one 'mind moment.' If we do not react or take further action they will vanish instantly back into the void of mind from where they arose. If we grasp or cling, ponder and think about, and automatically react to the objects they represent, then the objects, feelings, perceptions, concepts and thoughts about them seem to be real and to be something permanent, substantial and important to us. If they persist they can also agitate or cause mental unrest or negative thoughts and cause us to do some action or think about something else. This sets of a long chain of reactions, allowing the activities of past conditioning to manifest, causing a complete re-routing of our thought pattern, or of what is happening 'here and now'.

Feelings such as bodily sensations, aches or pains, seem to last or be the same for one, five, ten, or thirty seconds or more. However, in reality every instant or nanosecond they are continually

arising and passing away, conditioning another to arise, followed by another, instantaneously, consecutively in quick succession. To normal perceiving consciousness it feels like one long enduring feeling. In the movement of a step or swing of an arm, each instant is a different separate command from the mind to that body part causing it to move. Each tiny movement produces a different feeling or sensation, cognized by body consciousness. This in turn, conditions the arising of the next thought or directive to keep moving the arm or leg, whatever the case may be. It is a rapid consecutive series of movements and sensations which follow each other so quickly that they give the appearance of being one long, continuous movement. It is similar to the working of a motion-picture, which is made up of many individual, separate frames, each representing a single phase of action. When these frames are run rapidly through the film projector, it gives the appearance on the screen, of an uninterrupted, flowing scene.

"Just as the flame that now, is not the same flame that was a moment ago, nor yet something apart from that flame, but is the result of the growth of that flame. So is it with the five grasping groups. As the flame burns by laying hold of new fuel ever and again, so is the life process constantly arising ever and again, laying hold of objects by nature of habit tendencies that lie within the process of grasping." 24

Vipassana meditation is the process of becoming aware of the body and mind in the present moment and observing the mental processes involved in sensory perception. This specific observation brings the normally unconscious activity of the mind to a conscious level. In this way delusions concerning the nature of the mind are gradually uncovered and the truth perceived and realized. That is why vipassana is also called insight meditation.

In one's meditation practice, sufficient time should be given to perceiving the arising and vanishing of feelings, perceptions, thought activity and reactions from moment to moment. This is needed until the perception of it is clear and confirmed in the meditator's mind. The facts of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self in all feelings, perceptions, mental reactions and consciousness will become very evident. It is difficult to understand by only reading or theorizing, but with a little guidance, steady practice, and a quiet, watchful mind, it can be seen fairly clearly.

"Develop concentration, bhikkhus. He who is concentrated understands according to actuality. And what does he understand according to actuality? The origin and extinction of form, the origin and extinction of feelings, perceptions, mental tendencies, and consciousness." 3

The feeling and idea of there being a separate individual 'I' or 'self' in the mind has attached itself like a parasite to the arising consciousness. It is this illusive sense of 'I' which we must endeavour to understand and see through and to purify the mind of the ego-centred., ownership idea. This is because the 'self-cherishing-I' prevents a person from being able to experience higher or expanded states of awareness. The 'I' as subject will not allow the mind to let go of itself in order to experience no-self, anatta, non-duality, emptiness. The 'I' keeps the mind bound in dualistic perceptions and relationships.

"The perceiving of impermanence and soullessness in the five groups of grasping, if practised and enlarged, wears out all sensual passion, wears out all craving for material existence and rebirth, wears out and abolishes all conceit of 'I am'.

Just as in autumn a farmer ploughing with a plough, cuts through all the spreading roots as he ploughs. In the same way, monks, the perceiving of the impermanence and soullessness in the five grasping groups, developed and frequently practised, destroys all sensual passion, destroys and abolishes all conceit of 'I am'." 4

The objective in Buddhist meditation is to understand and let go of this illusive sense 'I', allow it to fade away. In this way one will truly realize that the five aggregates of phenomena are in reality not our 'Self', and that there is no permanent entity or individual soul controlling the body/mind experiences. There are only conditioned reflexive-like phenomena rolling on and on. Thus one will be able to free consciousness from its, bondage to the body and mind and to experience the ultimate release and bliss of Nibbana.

The Ego and Desire

The feeling of a separate 'I', which we call ego-consciousness, is directly related to the strength of ignorance, greed, and hatred. The deepest meaning of ignorance is believing in, identifying with and clinging to the ego, which as we have seen, is nothing but an illusive mental phenomenon. But because of this strong clinging to ego-consciousness, attachment/desire, anger/hatred arise and repeatedly gain strength.

The ego needs activity in order to exist. Like and dislike, attachment, aversion, greed and hatred are the main overt activities of the ego. The more desire and aversion we have the more alive we feel, the more real and concrete the ego seems. In reality, the ego depends on desire, its life-blood is desire. The ego and desire are like the two sides of a coin-one cannot exist without the other. The ego is projected desire, and desire is projected ego. It is like pedalling a bicycle: if we go on pedalling, the bicycle goes on moving; but if we stop pedalling the bicycle will start slowing down and eventually collapse. The more we go on generating desire the ego seems very real. When desiring stops the ego then appears as an illusion.

This is why desire cannot be satisfied. If we stop desire (and this means aversion also) then our sense of self starts getting weaker, it starts to dissolve. Actually, the objects we desire, like or dislike are not really that important. They are merely scapegoats or excuses for the activity of the ego, to prevent ego-death. Any object will do. Though to keep from appearing foolish, superficial or unwise the ego comes up with all kinds of good sounding reasons and justifications for why it needs to acquire something or reject-get away from something else.

That is why people in the West, especially in America, have 'yard' or garage-sales. They have attics, closets, and garages full of stuff they don't use anymore, and not because it is necessarily worn out or broken. Some of it-clothing, toys, gadgets, tools etc. were probably used very little or perhaps never. These people need to empty out their closets and attics in order to

make room for more. Much of it, the shopping trips etc. are simply more activities, life-saving ruses of the ego. And even getting upset, irritated, and angry at others for seeming trivial things is often only more excited energy to make the ego seem more alive. However, at the same time it entails and generates a lot of suffering. So we can see the direct connection between ignorance, desire and the ego.

This is why it is so difficult for the average person, who does not meditate, to quieten their mind and experience total rest. We are called human beings, but a better term would be 'human doings'. Even in sleep the body will toss and turn and the mind goes on dreaming. The hardest thing for the average person to do is to sit still, not move the body at all, close the eyes, and do not go to sleep or get lost in daydreaming. After a few minutes they would become increasingly restless, wanting to do something. They cannot simply enjoy just 'being'.

This is because the ego-self would feel uncomfortable, strange, useless and either go to sleep or start dissolving. The latter is in fact what happens during deep concentrated meditation. That is why many people shy away from or do not want to meditate. Many who do meditate, cannot go into deep meditation for very long. The ego shrinks away from the deep silence (even unconsciously) because it feels like death-ego death.

Ego or 'I' consciousness arises as a resistance to the flow of impermanence coming through the senses. Resistance manifests as attraction or aversion to sense stimuli, including our thoughts, memories, and emotions etc. When attraction and aversion subside resistance also subsides and along with it the strength of ego awareness subsides. This can be directly observed during meditation.

Desire is also directly related to the past and future. When we see, hear, smell taste, touch, and think, the mind unconsciously brings in our past memories of attraction and aversion and reactions to the present sense stimulation, and then it projects these into the future with the subsequent thoughts, emotions, and reactions in the next moments (or microseconds). So the conditioned mind is always moving between the past and future, and this movement activity creates the illusion of time. It also creates the illusion of 'I' consciousness. Both time and the ego are simultaneously created through the deepest inner activity of the mind, generated by ignorance and desire.

The practice of Mindfulness or vipassana meditation is essentially a practice of keeping the attention in the present moment, being aware of whatever the body and mind is doing in the present moment. We try not to let the mind get carried away with attraction or aversion or allow it to remain lost in thought. We tune the attention on the flow of impermanence as it arises and passes away through the six senses. We try to watch and let go of resistance to discomfort or pain, to open up and relax more and more into the Present.

When we can rest the mind (consciousness) more and more in the Present, then the past and future, desire and the ego all start dissolving. And with this suffering also vanishes. This is direct experience of the Dhamma, of the Four Noble Truths.

Dhamma Talk

The following is an extract from a talk on Dhamma by the Thai Meditation Teacher, Acariya Maha Boowa Nanasampanno, concerning these five aggregates of grasping.⁵

"All the time these Khandhas (the five aggregates) are changing, for they appear, remain for a time, then pass away and cease. By being Anicca, (impermanent) they are also Dukkha (a source of pain and frustration) and Anatta (having no self-nature). This is how they display and proclaim their true nature, but they never have time to stop and look at it. They never have time to become calm, not even for one moment. Internally and externally, everywhere they proclaim that they are Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta. They reject the longings and desires of beings..They act on their own accord, showing that none of these things has an owner. They proclaim that they are always independent and free to roam and do as they please. Whoever becomes attached to them only meets with suffering, depression and sorrow which fill his thoughts and heart until in the end his tears of misery are like an ever flooded river. It will continue to be thus as long as beings remain deluded and entangled in their kamma. It is easy to see that the five khandhas are the very well of tears of those who are steeped in delusion.

Investigating all the five khandhas with right Wisdom so as to know them clearly, is for the purpose of minimising one's tears and for diminishing the process of becoming and rebirth, for, cutting them away from the heart (mind) which is the owner of Dukkha, so that one may receive perfect happiness.

The khandhas are poisonous to one who is still sunk in delusion but one who truly knows all them as they are (in their true nature), cannot be harmed by them and may still obtain value from them in appropriate ways. It is like a place where thorny bushes grow, they are dangerous to anyone who does not know where they are and gets entangled in them. But someone who knows all about them can use them to make a fence or a boundary for a building site, thus obtaining value from them. Therefore, one who practices meditation must act skilfully in relation to the khandhas. All these things (the fivefold-mass) arise and die away based on the Citta (the tendencies of the mind) the whole time, and one must follow and know what is happening to them with an all-embracing Wisdom that will immediately know what they are up to. One must take this up as an important task to be done in all four postures (sitting, standing, walking or lying down) without being careless or forgetful.

The teaching of Dhamma which comes from (observing) the khandhas at this stage, will appear by way of unceasing mindfulness and Wisdom, and this teaching will not be lacking in eloquence of expression. All the time it will proclaim the facts of Anicca, Dukkha, and Anatta within one by day and night, and while standing, walking, sitting or lying down. This is the time when one's Wisdom should be ripe for listening, as though he were meditating on the Dhamma Sermon by the wisest of Bhikkhus.

The five khandhas and all Paramattha Dhamma (sense objects, sensations, perceptions etc.) everywhere, are not at fault and they are entirely free from all defilements or evil ways, but they are associated with them because the Citta (the mind) which is entirely under the power of Avijjà. (ignorance) does not itself know the answer to the question: `who is Avijjà'? Avijjà and the Citta are blended together as one, and it is the Citta which is completely deluded that goes about forming loves and hates which it buries in the elements and khandhas-that is, in forms,

sounds, smell, tastes, and bodily feeling, and in the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and heart etc., throughout the whole universe of elements. It is the things of nature (the five groups of phenomena) which are seized, and it is love and hate which come from the whole of this deluded heart that grasp and seize them.

Because of the power of grasping and seizing, which is the cause, this Avijjà heart wanders through birth, old-age, sickness, death etc. It goes round and round in this way through each and every life, traversing the rounds, of Samsara, regardless of whether it is higher or lower, good or, evil, through all the three realms of becoming.

One must understand clearly with Wisdom, that the five khandhas and the elements are not the main story nor the ones who started the story, but are only involved in the story. Avijjà is the one who wields the authority and power, compelling all these things to be of this nature (Anicca Dukkha Anatta). Then Wisdom searches for the source of it all, which is the CITTA THAT KNOWS, which is the well out of which all the stories of all things arise endlessly in all situations, and Wisdom has no confidence in this knowledge.

When mindfulness and Wisdom have been developed by training for a long time until they are fully proficient, they will be able to surround and penetrate straight through to the 'great center'. In other words, THE CITTA THAT KNOWS, when it is full of Avijjà, does not hesitate to fight against Wisdom. But when Avijjà can no longer stand against the Diamond Sword which is unshakeable mindfulness and Wisdom, it falls away from the Citta which has been its supreme throne for aeons.

When Avijjà, the Lord who rules the rounds of death, has been destroyed by the weapon of Wisdom-Knowledge, Nibbana will be revealed to him who thus acts truly, knows truly, and sees truly. It cannot be otherwise.

So the whole story is that of Avijjà, which is just false knowing, which goes around molesting and obstructing natural conditions so that they are changed from their natural state. By the cessation of Avijjà, the world everywhere becomes normal and there is nothing left to blame or criticise it. It is as if a notorious killer had been killed by the police, after which the citizens of the town could live happily, and need no longer go about watchfully for fear of being attacked.

From the day that Avijjà is dispersed from the heart, it will be entirely set free in its thinking, meditating, knowing, and seeing into Dhamma which are associated with the heart. The heart is then possessed of Yathabhutanadassana, which means that it knows, sees, and follows the truth of all the Dhammas, and this knowledge is balanced and no longer inclines to one-sided views or opinions.

The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, and forms, sounds, , smells, tastes, touches, thoughts etc., then become free in their own natural spheres respectively, without being oppressed and forced, nor promoted and encouraged by the deluded heart as usually happens.

Because the heart is now in a state of Dhamma (its free state) it is impartial towards everything so that it will no longer have any enemies or foes. This means that the Citta and all Dhammas are mutually in a state of complete peace and calm by the virtue of the Perfect Truth.

One who has Opanayika Dhamma (looking into one's own body and mind), firmly planted in his heart will be able to free himself, because the Sasana Dhamma (the Buddha's teaching) teaches those who listen to make it Opanayika-in other words to bring the Dhamma into

oneself." (Do not try to find the Dhamma somewhere outside of oneself, otherwise it will never be appreciated or truly realised).

This concludes the talk on Dhamma by the Thai meditation teacher.

WHAT IS MOHA (IGNORANCE)? 6

"In order to understand the characteristic of moha we should, know what we are ignorant or unaware of when there is moha. There is the world of conventional terms expressed as words and ideas and there is the world of paramattha dhammas (absolute realities-things which are actually real in our experience before conceptualizing and proliferating thought has distorted, their true nature). When we think of the world we may think of people, animals, houses, cars, trees and so forth and give them different names. However, do we know them as they really are; as they are initially experienced through our senses, as being only elements or characteristics of material phenomena and mental phenomena which arise and pass away in our body and mind.

The material and mental phenomena which appear in our daily life can be directly experienced through the five physical sense-doors and through the mind-door, no matter how we name, them or organize them for our own use. This is the world which is real, the world of conditioned realities as they are initially encountered through the senses.

The Buddha has explained this 'world of conditioned realities' which he calls, 'The All':

"Monks, I will teach you the All. Listen to it, 'apply your minds and I will speak.

Now what is the All? It is just the eye and visible objects, the ear and sounds, the nose and odours, the tongue and tastes, the body and touch objects, the mind and mental-objects. This, monks, is called the All.

`Now whoever should speak thus: `Setting aside this All, I will proclaim another All', it would be mere talk on his part and on being questioned he would be unable to proceed and in addition, vexation would befall him. Why is this? Because it would be beyond his scope to do so." 7

The world in the sense of absolute realities is in fact, called `the World' in the Buddha's teaching. Those who develop the teachings of the Buddha, the Awakened One, develop the wisdom which sees things as they really are (before the mind interferes); He truly knows the world.

One of the Buddha's disciples said to the Buddha:

"The world ! The world !'is the saying, Lord. Pray how far, Lord, does this saying go?

'What is transitory by nature Ananda, is called 'the world' in the discipline of the Noble Ones. And what, Ananda, is transitory by nature? The eye, is transitory by nature, visual objects, visual consciousness are transitory by nature. The ear, sounds, ear-consciousness, nose, smells, odour consciousness, tongue, tastes, flavour consciousness, body, tactile sensations body consciousness, mind objects, mind-contact and mind consciousness are transitory by nature. Whatever pleasant or painful experiences. which arise on account of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind contact, that also is transitory by nature, of a nature to pass. What is thus transitory, Ananda, is called 'the world' in the Noble One's discipline." 8

Through the above suttas we can see what is meant by 'the world' the way it is perceived according to the Buddha. And we can see the truth of the world in our own experience, to confirm for ourselves the truths which the Buddha was teaching. The world of conditioned realities is real. When we see, there is only the world of colour, because in reality what we initially see is only colour experienced through the eyes (in a particular shape). When we hear there is the world of sound experienced through the ear. When we feel a touch on the body, there is the world of bodily feeling experienced through the body. When we think, there is the world of thought experienced through the mind. This holds true for the world of smell experienced through the nose and the world of taste experienced through the tongue.

Why is it important to be mindful of the different conditioned realities as they appear one at a time? If there can be mindfulness of the conditioned realities as they appear one at a time through the six door-ways, the tendency to take them for permanent entities, or for 'self' will become less. When we think that we see a person, what is it that appears through the eyes? What appears through the eyes is only a visible object, not a person. 'Person' is a concept which we have added or construed to give meaning to the visible object, it is not 'self'.

A visible object can be experienced only through the eye door, not through any other door (sense-organ). A visible object cannot be touched.

When a visible object (rupa) appears, there is also seeing (nama) which experiences the visible object, otherwise the visible object cannot appear. The 'seeing' is merely a reflex action, a conditioned phenomena, it is not a person who sees, not a 'self', it can only experience the visible object. The same holds true for the other senses. A visible object should be realized and also 'seen'; and the experience of a visible object should be realized. A visible object is not the same as the experience of it, they are different conditioned phenomena. If 'seeing' is not known as it really is, we are bound to take seeing for self.

We may think we can touch a visible object, but when there is 'touching', what appears? It may be hardness, softness, heat, cold, motion or pressure. A visible object that appears through the eye door cannot be touched, it can only be seen. When a visible object is touched it becomes a tangible object appearing through the body, being a completely different experience from that of a visible object. 'Seeing' and 'touching' cannot appear at the same time; they appear one at a time, at different moments.

When we touch a table it is not the table which appears, but a tangible object or an experience of hardness. At the moment hardness appears there is only 'hardness' and the experience of 'hardness'; there is no table in hardness, there is no 'self' in hardness. If the object which appears is not realized as it is, (as not self) one is bound to cling to it as happening to him.

We may think of the concept table, but thinking and formulating concepts is a different conditioned phenomena altogether from that of hardness and the experience of hardness etc.

If there is not mindfulness of the characteristics of feeling, perception, thinking, mental moods, and consciousness (nama) as they arise one at a time, we fall into the delusion of a 'Self' who experiences. Materiality (rupa) arises through the body, eye, ear, nose, tongue. Mentality (nama) arise only through the mind-door. They are all conditioned and not 'Self'. If one still thinks it is 'I' who experiences these phenomena of matter and mind, he has still not developed any insight.

Sati, or mindfulness, is the conditioned mental factor which is aware or mindful of the different realities, appearing one at a time. Sati is aware of the characteristics of hardness, softness, heat,

cold, pressure, motion; it is aware of visible object, sound, odour, flavour, as they appear through the body-senses. Sati is aware of mental states such as greed, sense desire, ill-will, anger, excitement, depression, pride, stinginess, jealousy etc. as they arise through the mind door. Sati again is only a conditioned mental factor, conditioned by our hearing about right mindfulness. When one has listened to dhamma and heard about sati, there will be more remembrance of it. In this way sati can arise and it can be developed.

It is the conditioned mental factor panna, or wisdom, which, experiences or knows the objects of sati as not 'Self'. Sati has to be practised and accumulated for a long time before panna can experience the five aggregates of clinging as they arise, as being not 'self'. If sati, which is aware of the characteristics of rupas and namas, has not been greatly established so that it arises very frequently no matter where we are and what we are doing, we cannot expect that panna can realize the objects of Sati as being not self. If there is no sati, at that moment there can neither be panna.

These two, Sati and Panna, (mindfulness and wisdom) are mental factors which are not 'self', and they arise only because they have been cultivated and developed, not otherwise. If we confuse them for being 'self' or that we are doing these things, or if we think it is 'my mind', there is again no real wisdom, only thinking, and delusion. Only in the short moment of Sati does Panna, have the opportunity to know a rupa or nama more distinctly as they really are, as not 'self'. If we realize that this short moment of Sati is the only opportunity for wisdom to become keener, then there will be more Sati and it will be accumulated. Then the notion or feeling of a 'self' which is experiencing these phenomena will wear away and become eliminated from the consciousness; it will be understood that it is Sati and Panna, both mental factors, not a 'person' or I who is aware of and realizes the characteristics of rupas and namas as they arise, as impermanent, fleeting and not 'self'.

We must learn to be able to distinguish each characteristic of rupa and nama as they arise, but we should not look for them or try excessively to be 'aware'. When they arise we should just be aware of them. If there is searching out and waiting for them to arise with the desire to 'catch' them in order to gain insight, then this must also be realized as another type of conditioned mental activity.

Only in fully knowing and comprehending all these conditioned phenomena which present themselves now at the present moment through the six doorways, can ignorance and defilements be eradicated. We can only eradicate the cankers of greed, hatred and ignorance when they appear, and not allow them to overwhelm us and influence our thought, speech and actions.

We may know the truth in theory, but until wisdom is developed to the degree that it can realize directly, intuitively, the Truth of not 'self', we will never be able to fully understand and appreciate the Buddha's teaching, nor gain the fruits therefrom which is the reason for practising the Buddha Dhamma. If mindfulness and wisdom can realize the arising and passing away of matter and mind which appear here and now through the six doors from moment to moment, there would be more detachment from these conditioned phenomena. We would not erroneously see and regard them as 'mine' or 'myself being 'in them'. In this way we could free ourselves from their intoxicating and overpowering binding influence in our daily lives. If we listen to the teachings of the Awakened One without awareness, there will only be intellectual knowledge but no detachment. Disenchantment, dispassion and detachment from these five aggregates of clinging; and grasping here and now is for the destruction of suffering and for the realisation of the unconditioned reality, NIBBANA."

INSIGHT KNOWLEDGES 9

In the traditional development of insight which leads to the realisation of Nibbana, there are eight knowledges or stages which are cultivated and developed, one leading to the next. The last stage is then followed by what is called conformity and change of lineage, which is the actual experience of Nibbana.

The eight are: 1.) knowledge of rise and fall; 2.) knowledge of dissolution; 3.) appearance as terror; 4.) appearance as danger; 5.) knowledge of dispassion; 6.) desire for deliverance; 7.) contemplation of reflection; 8.) equanimity of formations.

The first insight knowledge is developed by tuning one's awareness into the rise and fall of the material (rupa) and mental phenomena (nama) happening in each moment of sense experience. The meditator discerns the arising of the material sense stimulus (sight, sound, odour, flavour, touch) and also the consciousness that is aware of it. He perceives them arising simultaneously as it were, and he perceives the immediate falling away or vanishing of both the material stimulus and the consciousness.

At first seeing the arising and falling away of the material stimulus will be the most apparent because it is more gross. To see consciousness arise and vanish is more subtle and more difficult. But by giving special attention to it and at least trying to see it happening like this, gradually it becomes clearer and clearer as our attention and awareness (sati) becomes quicker and keener.

The meditator repeatedly cultivates awareness of rise and fall in this way and discerns the five aggregates in their three characteristic marks of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not self.

When he continually observes in this way with a concentrated mind, with insight free from disturbances, the rising and falling formations quickly become apparent. **This is called the knowledge of rise and fall.**

Once his knowledge works keenly and formations quickly become apparent, he no longer extends his mindfulness to their arising or presence, occurrence or sign, but he brings his acute awareness to bear only on their falling or disappearance, their vanishing. He sees how the whole field of formations are continuously vanishing, ceasing and dissolving. The meditator continues contemplating the dissolution of the formations from moment to moment and the three characteristics at this stage become quite apparent. They appear vividly as continually changing and fleeting away, not lasting more than a brief moment and he abandons the perception of permanence and solidity. They are evident as being unsatisfactory and painful and he abandons the perception of satisfactoriness and pleasantness. And seeing their conditioned and uncontrollable nature he abandons the perception of a 'Self' that owns them. He becomes dispassionate, he abandons delight in these formations, he abandons greed, he abandons originating, he abandons grasping.

While he is contemplating dissolution in this way, he succeeds in making formations (the five aggregates) appear as void, as empty as vain. Hence the ancients said.

`Aggregates cease and nothing else exists

Break-up of them (at each moment) is known as death,

He watches their destruction (vanishing) steadfastly,

As one who with a diamond drills a gem.'

He views them with detachment as they keep on breaking up, like fragile pottery being smashed, like sesame seeds being roasted, like bubbles rising to the surface of water, only to burst as soon as they appear. **This is called the knowledge of dissolution.**

As the meditator develops this contemplation of dissolution, he sees how past formations have ceased, present ones are ceasing, and those that will arise in the future will also cease, in just the same way. Then what is called the knowledge of appearance as terror arises in him at that stage. But this appearance as terror itself, does not fear, for it is simply the mere judgement or acknowledgement that past formations have ceased, present ones are ceasing and future ones will also cease, that is just their nature. Just as a man with eyes looking at three glowing red charcoal pits at a city gate is not himself afraid, since he only forms the mere judgement that all who fall into them will suffer great pain or death. But it is called appearance as terror because formations in all kinds of becoming, generation, destiny, station, or abode are fearful in being bound for destruction, there is nothing to hold on to, and so they appear as terror or unsatisfactory. It is merely a skilful means in order to get the mind to relinquish attachment and grasping. **This is called the knowledge of appearance as terror.**

As he continues he begins to realise that is no asylum, no shelter, no place to go, no refuge in any kind of becoming. There is not a single formation including his 'I' or ego that he can place his hopes in or hold onto. And just as a man is frightened and horrified and his hair stands up when he comes upon a thicket infested by wild beasts etc., and he sees it as nothing but danger; so too, when all the formations have appeared as terror by contemplation of dissolution, this meditator sees them utterly destitute of any core or any satisfaction and as nothing but danger. **This is called the knowledge of appearance as danger.**

When the knowledge's of dissolution, terror and danger have become strong then the meditator should reflect in the following way. The state of peace, Nibbana, is this: Arising is danger, non-arising is safety; occurrence is danger, non-occurrence is safety; despair is danger, non-despair is safety; becoming is danger, non-becoming is safety; grasping is danger, non-grasping is safety; craving is danger, non-craving is safety; ignorance is danger, wisdom is safety and so forth. When skilled in contemplating the nature of peace in this way he becomes dispassionate towards, is dissatisfied with, and takes no delight in the manifold field of formations belonging to any kind of becoming.

Just as a golden swan that loves the foothills of the snowclad mountains and loves to swim in the crystal clear waters of the seven lakes, delights not in a filthy mud-puddle at the gate of a village of outcasts; Or just as a lion, king of beasts, finds delight at roaming free in the Himalaya with its three thousand leagues extent, but delights not when put into a gold cage in the zoo; so too this meditator finds delight not in any formation, but only in the state of peace seen as: Non-arising is safety..... and his mind tends, inclines, and leans towards that. **This is the knowledge of contemplation of dispassion.**

Now as this is developed, the mind of the meditator no longer is attracted to, or fastens onto them and he becomes desirous of being delivered or free from the whole field of formations and escaping from it. Just as a fish in a net, a frog in a snake's jaws, a deer caught in a snare, a jungle fowl shut in a cage, an elephant stuck fast in a great bog etc., are desirous of being delivered from, of being free from these traps, these dangers; so too, this meditator's mind is desirous of

being free of the whole field of formations. This is called the knowledge of the desire for deliverance.

Being thus desirous of deliverance the meditator again reflects on those formations which are still dissolving in front of his detached awareness, in their three characteristics. He sees all formations as impermanent, fleeting away, unstable, limited, disintegrating etc. Because of this he sees them as unsatisfactory, painful, unreliable, a source of confusion and frustration, hard to bear, Mara's bait, subject to birth and death etc. He sees them as not self because they are alien, empty, ownerless, uncontrollable, vain, void, and insubstantial. But why does he discern them in this way? In order to contrive the means to deliverance. For if one is still taking them for permanent, pleasurable and substantial, with attachment/craving from an ego-centred standpoint then he will continue to be oppressed by them, forever in bondage. **This is called the knowledge of contemplation of reflection.**

When he has discerned the five aggregates by attributing the three characteristics to them and seeing them void in this way, he abandons both terror and delight, he becomes indifferent to them and neutral. He neither takes them as 'I' nor as 'mine'. He is like a man who has divorced his wife. When he knows and sees thus, his heart retreats, retracts and recoils from the three kinds of becoming, the four kinds of generation, the five kinds of destiny, the seven stations of consciousness and the nine abodes of beings, his heart no longer goes out to them. In this way there arises in him a total equanimity towards formations. **This is called knowledge of equanimity of formations.**

As he repeats, cultivates and develops that equanimity of formations his faith becomes more resolute, his energy better balanced and exerted, his mindfulness better established, his mind better concentrated and composed, while his equanimity about formations grows more refined.

Now when the meditator has reached this stage his insight has reached its culmination and leads to conformity, change of lineage and emergence (the experience of Nibbana). If this knowledge sees Nibbana as peaceful, it rejects the occurrence of all formations (conformity knowledge) and enters only into Nibbana (change of lineage and emergence). If it does not see Nibbana as peaceful, if it is not mature enough, then it occurs again and again with the dissolving formations as its object. It is like the land-finding crow used in the old days to find land. Sailors would let the bird go from the ship and if it sighted land it would fly straight in that direction; if not it returns to the ship and alights on the masthead. So too, if equanimity of formations sees Nibbana as peaceful, it rejects the formations and enters only into Nibbana. If it does not see it, it occurs again and again with formations as its object until it is ready.

Here is a simile to explain this insight leading to emergence and the kinds of knowledge that precede and follow it.

There was a bat it seems and she had alighted on a madhuka tree with five branches, thinking: 'I shall find flowers or fruits here'. She investigated one branch but saw no flowers or fruits there worth taking. And as with the first so too, she tried the second, the third, the fourth and the fifth, but saw nothing. She thought: 'This tree is barren, there is nothing worth taking here.' So she lost interest in the tree. She climbed up on a straight branch and poking her head through a gap in the foliage, she looked upwards and flew into the air and alighted on another tree.

Herein, the meditator should be regarded as like the bat. The five aggregates are like the madhuka tree with the five branches. Taking them for self or 'I' is like the bat's alighting on the

tree. His comprehending the aggregates and finding them empty and void of self, seeing the three characteristic marks, is like the bat's investigating the branches and finding nothing there worth taking. His triple knowledge of dispassion, desire for deliverance and equanimity towards the five aggregates is like the bat thinking: 'This tree is barren, nothing worth taking here, a waste of time' and losing interest. His conformity knowledge is like her climbing up the straight branch. His change-of-lineage knowledge is like her poking her head out and looking upwards. His path or emergence knowledge is like her flying up into the air. His fruition knowledge is like her alighting on a different tree.

As soon as conformity knowledge has arisen and dispels the thick murk that hides the truth, change-of-lineage knowledge arises in him which takes as its object the signless, no-occurrence, cessation, Nibbana. This passes out of the lineage, the category, the plane of the ordinary and enters the lineage, the category, the plane of the Noble Ones, which is the, culminating peak of insight, which is irrevocable. It overcomes the arising, the occurrence, the sign of formations externally and internally, thus it is change-of-lineage. It enters into non-arising, non-occurrence, and non-despair, thus it is change-of-lineage. It enters into the signless, cessation, Nibbana. **This is called change-of-lineage.**"

INSIGHT MEDITATION EXERCISE

The following meditation exercise is given for those who may not already be practising a form of meditation, or do not have the guidance of a teacher, or for those who may just want to see what this is all about. For it is only through actually tuning one's awareness to the present moment of experience that insight and direct knowledge gradually unfolds. Re-Read and become familiar with the previous section on insight knowledges.

For beginners it is helpful to find a place to sit where it is fairly quiet and comfortable. Sit with the back and head straight but relaxed, not rigid. Place the hands comfortably in the lap and gently close the eyes.

You can begin by taking a few rounds of deep, slow in and, out breaths, feeling the movement. Then discontinue the controlled breathing and let it come to its natural rhythm.

Let go of desiring to experience or identify with anything in the world. Cast out all habitual thinking about events concerning the past, present or future. Abandon all anger and ill-will over which you may have been brooding, which might still be festering inside.

Now develop and feel a genuine lovingkindness and compassion for all living beings, wishing them happiness and freedom from their sorrows. Wish that people could live in harmony without contention and desire to dominate, to abide happily and peacefully in the 'blissful wisdom-knowledge' of our true nature.

These are preparatory reflections which are helpful so that the mind feels what it is about to do and to quiet the 'monkey-mind' to some extent by setting it free from the day's activities and the pent-up emotions which may be boiling inside.

You can take a few more deeper slower breaths if you like but then let it come back to its natural course. Now just bring the awareness to feel the sitting posture, how the body is placed. Spend a few minutes just letting the awareness move through the body starting where the buttocks are

touching the floor, just feeling the hardness or softness of that contact. Then just let the awareness move through the legs, feeling the way they are bent, where they touch the floor, the touch of the clothes on the skin etc. And slowly let the awareness come all the way up through the body, just feeling all of it, letting the different sensations come and go. When you arrive up in the face area feel where the lips are touching together, feel the wetness or the dryness, the softness; feel the tongue resting in the mouth; feel the air going in and out of the nostrils; feel the eyelids resting on the eyeballs, feel the eyes in the sockets and the muscles around them. Really experience these sensations. Feel the hair on the head, where it may touch the ears or back of the neck or shoulders.

Now from this point on the top of the head let the awareness just drift down through the body and become aware of the general outline of the entire sitting posture with 'onlooking awareness', as if the awareness were resting slightly behind the body. Just be aware of this, 'breathing body'.

Now become aware of the area in the abdomen/stomach or in the chest and feel the expanding and contracting or rising and falling movements of the in-breathing and out-breathing. Keep the mind focused in this area. This is important as these expanding and contracting movements/sensations will be the training device for initially cultivating an attentive and precise mindful awareness. Just feel the expanding or rising movement of the in breath from beginning to end, be aware of a pause if any and then feel the contracting or falling movement of the out-breath from beginning to end. Know it by feeling it. Sometimes it is helpful in the beginning to make a mental note of 'in, in' while the breath is coming in, and a mental note of 'out, out' while the breath is going out. But if you can keep the awareness close to the movement without the noting, then don't bother with it. Just be aware of the arising, brief duration, and ceasing of the in-breath, and the arising, brief duration, and ceasing of the out-breath, and try to keep the outline of the sitting posture in the background.

If the mind wanders away or thinking intrudes, just notice it with bare attention as, soon as possible. You can make a note of 'thinking, thinking' if this helps the mind stay more alert, and then simply bring awareness back to the rising / falling and sitting. Don't get uptight if the mind wanders a lot or thinking turns into thunder, this will happen. Just do your best to keep a detached distance and non-personal identification to it, letting it arise with awareness, but letting it go also as best you can. Keep the awareness close to the rising/falling movements and the posture in the background, not grasping at anything, not pushing away anything. Keeping the whole body soft, eyes relaxed, back erect, head balanced, shoulders loose, a state of 'restful alertness', with no holding anywhere. The breathing body here and now should be made the tethering post or anchor to always come back to when the mind wanders away.

Different sensations will be felt arising and passing away in the body, they come and go like water bubbles. Some may persist a little and if they take your attention try and, feel them changing even while they seem to be lasting. If they cause discomfort or pain, be aware how it affects your mind, and create a gentle, allowing space for it to happen. Don't fight it, don't tense up, say to yourself 'relax, relax', keep the awareness detached and come back to the breathing body, noting, 'in, in, sitting, out, out, sitting'.

Sounds may be heard from outside—just note them as, 'hearing, hearing', its only sound, no object in the sound. Just let the sound and the hearing blow in and out of the mind like through

an open window-no grasping, no pushing away. Gently returning to the basic present moment attention to, 'in, in, sitting, out, out,sitting'. Just sense-stimuli and the awareness of them arising and vanishing through the body and mind . Try and discern the pair-wise or simultaneous arising of the material stimulus and the consciousness of it and their vanishing. Develop the first insight knowledge of rise and fall (re-read previous section).

Let the mind lose the identification and reaction to the sensory impingements, knowing that in reality there is no `I' to which these experiences belong. Just open up and allow the feeling of `I' and separation fade out of the awareness, the whole process simply occurring by itself.

From time to time check the posture to straighten the back and lift the chin if it is starting to slouch and droop downwards and take a few deep slow breaths if the mind is sluggish or sleepy.

Be aware of the mind's comings and goings—thoughts, ideas, planning, scheming, daydreaming, restlessness, worrying, boredom, tiredness, sleepiness, doubts etc. Note them with bare attention knowing that they are merely transient, empty, conditioned habit activities of mind; do not get involved with them. If they are not quickly and precisely noted for what they are, you will get lost in them. Come back to the breathing body for balance.

Only the unstained awareness of the sequential moments of sense experience arising/vanishing, arising/vanishing, arising/ vanishing, grounded on this breathing body with its sense organs as the base for the whole show.

Become like an empty house with nobody at home to answer the call knocking at the sense-doors; only sensitive, detached registering of each visiting stimulus as it arrives, finding no one at home; uninvited it comes, uninvited it goes.

When this contemplation becomes strong then tune the awareness to viewing just the dissolution of the formations, and experience the moments of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking as vanishing, vanishing, vanishing into the void of mind.

See them as just crumbling away at incredible speed.

Do not allow the body to slump or the mind to fall into a reverie, but maintain an erect and relaxed posture and an alert 'detached onlooking awareness'.

Develop the insight knowledge's of appearance as terror, and appearance as danger.

See how the clinging mind tries to cling and prevent the vanishing of the sensory vibrations and thoughts and how the clinging builds up our whole world of subject-object experience out of them. Realise that all these formations and our whole. objectified world, even the individual `I' consciousness is merely, a projection of the deluded mind; it has no concrete separate, reality beyond the mind, merely a grand illusion, Mara's net; chuckle at it, don't let it scare you or make you sad.

Then reflect on the knowledge of the state of peace: non-arising, non-attachment etc. is safety, Nibbana. Cultivate the knowledge's of dispassion, desire for deliverance, reflection and, equanimity.

At this point or any point along the way great peace and bliss may arise, or coloured spots or brilliant light or ideas that you've made progress. They are merely signs that a certain degree of concentration and insight has developed. Actually they are called the corruptions of insight because if you are attracted and try and hold onto them, then they become like attachment to anything else and disappointment will arise because they will not last long anyway. You must observe them with detachment knowing what they are, and let them take their natural course; you don't have to try and make them go away either, they will just fade away on their own and keep the mind anchored in the breathing body.

Another method or skilful means to help get the feeling of no-self or emptiness is to view all of the sense-experiences as happening in the sky or space, not having a body involved at all. View all of the moments of hearing, seeing, touching, thinking, smelling, tasting, like shooting stars vanishing into the void of space.

Although the goal in meditation practice is to transcend the mind beyond the thinking and conceptualising process, this is accomplished by 'talking itself out of itself' so to speak.

Let the mind expand into the ocean of awareness, the state before 'I' consciousness and attachment gave birth to the reflex habit patterns of the mind. Let this state of sublime bliss and peace grow and permeate the whole experience.

These contemplation's should be practised over and over again, at least once or twice a day, preferably in the morning and evening. In this way over time, you will be able to develop this awareness and bring it in to the activities of your daily life. T

Also whenever possible during the day, ideally once an hour, stop whatever you were doing and pause, come back to the present moment to feel the body and take a few deep breaths, letting go of the future. Do a minute of meditation., then continue what you need to do. Practising these M&Ms (minute meditations) every hour will help bring the other reflections to mind. All of this will help to strengthen the periods of sitting meditation and that will in turn enable you to keep this up in your daily activities. These two types of practice mutually help to strengthen each other.

You might think this is a difficult thing to do. In the beginning it may be so and it may even seem a bit strange. But effort is grounded on faith in knowing it can be done, why you are doing it, and the advantages or benefits it will bring. Then the initial resistance and strangeness of it is overcome. Then the whole practice of present moment awareness will gradually unfold and flow freely and effortlessly. In this way, one can break through the self-delusion and then one's actions and thoughts will manifest from a selfless base grounded in Wisdom and Compassion. Also many of the body's aches, and pains and other things which used to bother you will be less intense and you will experience a sense of ease and calm pervading your whole being/life. You will experience the peace and happiness of the spiritual realm of the mind in which none of the passing trials and tribulations of the phenomenal world can greatly disrupt, and a whole new attitude towards life will, develop.

This is the benefit and advantage of transcending the identification and clinging to the five aggregates and **Breaking through the Self-Delusion.**

**MAY ALL BEINGS ENTER THE PATH TO
LIBERATION, ENLIGHTENMENT, NIBBANA**

End Notes

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Part 1

1. Dhammapada, verse 239.

**2. B.P.S. Wheel series #208-211, Anguttara Anthology, pp.
60-61**

3. Dhammapada, verse 165

4. Digest of M. 26; (Vol.1, pp.203-209)

5. S. LVI (ch 56); (Vol.V. pp. 352-400)

6. The space element is not one of the four primary elements (Mahabhutas), but as it is often an object of cognition and grasping, the Buddha included it in this discourse.
7. M. 62; Vol.II, pp.92-94.

8. S. XXII, 56; (Vol. 3, p. 52)⁹ ~~Quoted and Numbered~~ Sources

9. *The Four Nutriments of Life*, The Wheel Publications nos. 1051106, p.9. For a complete list of

Buddhist Publications write: Buddhist Publications Society, Box 61, Kandy, Sri Lanka..

10. M. 38; (Vol. 1, pp.314-315).
11. Digest of S. XXXV, 193; (Vol IV, pp.103-104).
12. Precis of the *Questions of King Milinda*, Book III, 7, 15; (Vol. 1, pp.132-133). The Sacred Books of the East Series, Edited by Max Mueller; Dist. by Motilal Barasidass Co. New Delhi, India.
13. Extract from M. 28; (Vol. I, pp. 237-238)
14. S. XXII, 2; (Vol. III, pp. 156-157)
15. Exerpted from S. XXII, 79; (Vol.III,pp.72-74
16. Precis of Visuddhimagga, Vol.III , 213, (p.542)
- 17 Extract from and dilation upon Visuddhimagga, Vol. III, 220-221, (p.544)
18. Rewording of a poem from S. XXII, 95; (Vol. III, pp. 120-121)
19. S. XXII, 93; (Vol. III, pp. 116)
20. Extract from S. XXII, 7; (Vol. III, pp. 16-17)
21. S. XXII, 1; (Vol. III, pp.1-2)
22. Synopsis of S. XXII, 59; (Vol. III, pp.59-60)
23. Synopsis of S. XXII, 18; (Vol. III, p. 22)
24. S. XII, 61; (Vol. II, pp.65-66)
25. Paraphrase of S. XXII, 22; (Vol. III, pp. 24-25)
26. S. XXII, 33; (Vol. III, p. 32)
27. Adapted from S. XXII, 26; (Vol. 3, pp. 27-28)
28. Precis of S. XXII, 28; (Vol. III, pp. 29-30)
29. S. XXII, 53; (Vol. III, pp. 45-46)
30. S. XXII, 1; (Vol. III, pp. 155-156)
31. V. Part III, ch. XVIII, 32; (pp.689-690)
32. V. Part III, ch. XVIII, 35; (p.691)
33. V. Part III, ch. XVIII, 36, (p.691)
34. V. Part III, ch. XVIII, 31, (p.689)
35. V. Part III, ch. XVIII, 28; (p.688)
36. S. Vol. IV, ch. XXXV, 205; (pp. 129-130)
37. I.B. Horner, *Buddhist Poetry*, Colombo, Sri Lanka
38. V. Part III, ch XVIII, 29, 30; (pp. 688-689)

Part 2

1. Bogoda Premaratne, *The World View of the Buddhist*, "All is Impermanent", Buddhist Information Center, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
2. S. XXII, 5; (Vol. III, p. 15)
3. Ibid.
4. Extract from S. XXII, 102; (Vol. III, p.132)
5. *Forest Dhamma*, Wisdom Develops Samadhi; Phra Maha Boowa Nanasampanno; Nagapradipa Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand, 1973, p. 26-32.
6. *Abhidhamma in Daily Life*, Nina Van Gorkam; Dhamma Study Gp., Bangkok, Thailand ch. 7, p. 59. Much of this material is also taken from, 'The Letters From Tokyo and New York' by Nina Van Gorkham of Holland. For more of this kind of material write to: Dhamma Study Group, 165/1 So. Thien Sieng, South Sathorn Road. Bangkok, Thailand.
7. S. XXXV, 23; (Vol. IV, p.8)
8. S. XXXV, 84; (Vol. IV, pp. 28-29)
9. *Vissudimagga*, Bhikkhu Nanamoli's translation; Pub. by Buddhist Pub. Soc., t975. The remainder of this section is taken from chapters XXI and XXII, selected and rearranged to make it short and concise.