

MahaSatipatthana Sutta

The Great Discourse on the Four
Fold Establishment of Mindfulness



A handbook by Bro James Ong

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Dear Reader,

This book is given to you as a Dhamma gift.

The costs of publication and distribution of this book was borne by the generous contributions of those who wish to share the Buddha Dhamma with you.

Kindly consider handling this book with care; share and make it known; so that these wonderful teachings may continue to touch the lives of many others.

*Sabbādanam Dhammadānam jināti
The Gift of Dhamma Excels All Gifts*

Sadhu ! Sadhu ! Sadhu !

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Foreword

This is the second edition of Bro James' first Meditation Handbook. This Handbook is based on the talks delivered by Bro James Ong in his 9-Lessons Satipatthana Meditation Course for Beginners, which he has been conducting for over 45 years to-date.

Four years have lapsed since the first edition and I still find his explanation and guidance in this book as practical and insightful as when I first heard his talks many, many years ago. This is what I hope this book could be for you as it had for me, an incisive, well-used and seasoned reference.

Bro James' ability to explain the profound practice in simple words, and illuminating it with modern day scenarios is what distinguishes him and this handbook from many others. The ability to simplify is the mark of a skillful teacher with deep knowledge and experience. The Buddha said there are three rare persons in the world (1) the Buddha; (2) one who teaches the Dhamma; and (3) a grateful person. How blessed and lucky we are that we still have an experienced and skillful teacher today.

Let us in turn, be grateful to Bro James for teaching and explaining to us the practice taught by the Buddha, and also having dedicated more than half of his life to Dhammaduta.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!
Silena Shymiin

Acknowledgements

In my years of teaching I regularly encountered many meditators who had become confused after practising meditation under various styles of instructions and adopting different techniques. A reoccurring question was what did the Buddha actually teach? As a result, I started working on this publication in 2009.

The objective of this book is to rekindle the fundamentals of the four foundations of mindfulness as taught by the Buddha, in the orthodox way. As a result, I have sought to set out the orthodox teachings of the Buddha in its original form according to how the Mahasatipatthana Sutta was taught to the Kurus people before the Buddha's Parinibbana.

This, however, is not easy to understand when read directly from the Sutta and I have tried to explain the teachings as clearly as possible without departing from the original words of the Buddha.

In addition, I have supplemented my explanations by drawing references to my own experiences and insights. By doing so, I hope this book will clear doubt and misconceptions while bringing about a deeper un-

derstanding of the Buddha's teachings to beginners as well as to more experienced meditators. If there are any mistakes or discrepancies, it is entirely my own which I accept full responsibility.

I use this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to my first Dhamma teacher, Phra Dhammabarnchanvud, who inspired and led me to meditation at an early age.

Thanks and much merit also to Silena Shymiin who put in valuable time to sieve, compile and edit the talks I gave in the beginner's and intermediate courses at Buddhist Maha Vihara, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. I also wish to thank all my students for their continuous support and encouragements culminated to the publication of this book and who made the free distribution of this book possible. There are many others who have also helped in one way or another and I acknowledge and thank them all for their contribution.

May this merit accrued be shared by all beings and may their journey towards Nibbana be easy, smooth and fast!!

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu!!!
Bro James Ong

*Even as a fathomless lake,
a lake so calm and clear,
so dhammas having heard
serene the wise become.*



*Wisdom springs from meditation;
Without meditation wisdom wanes.*

*Knowing this two fold path one should conduct
onself so that wisdom grows.*



Lesson One

Introduction



Lesson One

Introduction

This is the first lesson of our 9 Lesson Satipatthana Meditation series. Welcome!

Differences between mindfulness meditation & other meditation

There are many types of meditation methods existing today which can be categorised into two broad categories, namely samatha (or tranquillity meditation) and Satipatthana meditation or known as mindfulness meditation.

The Buddha taught 40 types of samatha meditation. Some samatha meditations lead to mental absorption (or Jhana) acquiring psychic power. Some samatha meditations lead to access concentration and gain insight-wisdom. While the other samatha meditations lead to only access concentration and gain neither mental absorption nor insights.

In the case of mindfulness meditation, one builds up mindfulness of the mind and body base, gaining deep understanding and insight into the nature of this mind and body that is anicca, dukkha & anatta (impermanent, unsatisfactory & egoless).

In meditation you learn the nature of the mind and body which you can't learn from books. You can read books and gain knowledge from books but you cannot experience the book. You have to meditate to experience the nature of this mind and body – things as they really are – not just concepts, beliefs or thinking. Only then it arrives at the insight knowledge or known as experiential knowledge – the knowledge that is gained through experience & not through reading, listening, thinking or analyzing but through direct experience.

***Why Satipatthana?
Why practise the 4-fold Establishment of Mindfulness?***

The Mahasatipatthana Sutta, the Great Discourse on the 4 Fold Establishments of Mindfulness is considered one of the most important discourses of the Buddha. The Buddha has declared:

“Bhikkhus, this is the one and only way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the eradication of bodily pain and mental grief, for the gaining of the Right Method, for the realization of Nibbana, that is to say, the 4 Fold Establishments of Mindfulness.”

The Buddha covered all aspects that one could possibly encounter in practice – body, feelings, mind and reality objects which includes the 5 hindrances, 5 aggregates, 6 internal and 6 external sense bases, 7 enlightenment factors and 4 noble truths.

The Discourse ends with the Buddha's assurance that one who ardently practices the 4 fold Establishment of Mindfulness is certain to attain the ultimate goal of realization (the state of being free from all mental pollutants).

The Discourse has such great importance that the Buddha reiterated this Discourse at great length before his Parinibbana.

So in this and the following audio lessons, I will be explaining the Satipatthana or mindfulness practice by going directly and referring to this Discourse which the Buddha originally expounded to the people of Kurus. So here we return to the basic orthodox Discourse spoken by the Buddha as a guide. In this way you gain a complete understanding of what the Buddha really taught. You can also gauge whether you are on the right track or if there is any missing part in your practice that you might need to include.

Why must we meditate? In the opening of the Discourse, the Buddha said that there are 7 kinds of benefits that can be attained by this mindfulness meditation. I shall now go through the 7 benefits one by one.

Benefits of practicing the Satipatthana

*The 1st benefit is purification of
beings.*

By nature, the human mind is a mixture of wholesome and unwholesome minds.

Wholesome minds lead to a lot of peace and happiness for oneself and others while the unwholesome or impure mind causes a lot of conflict, disturbances, sadness, unhappiness & dissatisfaction.

There are 10 kinds of impurities named in the scriptures and they are rites & rituals, doubts, wrong views, sensual lust, aversion, attachment to material and immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness & ignorance. It is because of these defilements that a whole mass of suffering is caused.

Purifying one's mind gives rise to wholesome minds which, as you know gives rise to happiness.

The Buddha declared the 1st benefit of the Satipatthana meditation as purification of beings which is referring to purification of the mind.

*How does mindfulness
meditation purify the
mind?*

Satipatthana meditation is able to purify beings through continuous mindfulness. Continuous mindfulness develops concentration which in turn suppresses the defilements. In this way the mind becomes pure.

The defilements are the ones that agitate the mind, cause a lot of confusion, a lot of sadness, one person against another out of jealousy, sometimes brothers against sisters, brothers against brothers and sometimes even children against parents, fighting among each other between our loved ones and even one country against another.

*If everyone could learn
to purify one's mind,
there would be more
peace and happiness
at home, at work and
between countries in the
world. There would be
less suffering.*

*The 2nd and 3rd benefits
are overcoming of sorrow
(Soka) & lamentation.*

What is sorrow?

Sorrow is the intense worry and alarm that one experiences:

- through loss of loved ones or relative, burglary, robbery, epidemics, fire, flood, storm, accidents or any other calamity;
- through destruction or loss of property or precious possession by theft, fire, disaster etc...;
- through declining in health or inflicted by sicknesses or diseases.

Sorrowful is one who loses someone who is so dear and precious such as husband, wife, children, parent, brothers and sisters.

Sorrowful is one who loses all his wealth in bad investments.

Sorrowful is one who lives in poverty (such as those lacking in basic necessity, food, clothing & proper dwelling).

Long ago my uncle was very poor. When he had some money in his pocket he asked himself – should I buy rice or should I buy salt or should I buy vegetables because he couldn't afford to buy all. He only had enough to buy one. That is a lot of sorrow – don't you think so – if you go to sleep with an empty stomach without food.

Sorrowful is one who is afflicted with incurable diseases such as cancer. Nowadays there are many who are sick with cancer – you can imagine the amount of physical pain and sorrow they have to go through.

Sorrowful is one who feels unwanted. It is a common phenomenon that today's parents are, often so busy that their children feel unloved and lonely. Sometimes in retaliation or in their struggle for attention, they associate with bad characters, start smoking, use drugs, and create other social ills. That is sorrowful.

Sorrowful is he who is dying and forced to be separated with everything that he treasures and loves.

We cannot imagine what sorrow really is unless we experience it personally. Probably we say “Ya I understand...”

What is lamentation?

Lamentation is the crying, wailing, screaming due to intense mental pain or due to loss of loved-ones or precious property.

*How does mindfulness
overcome sorrow and
lamentation?*

Firstly through the development of detachment mental state (in Pali, Alobha Cetasika).

Mindfulness meditation can be said as a practice of noting mind and matter. You will learn how to practice mindfulness of mind and body (matter) as you progressively listen to our audio courses.

If you are practicing mindfulness correctly it would mean mind and body processes are mindfully noted as an object. As such, the meditator is not attached (and should not be getting attached) to any phenomenon that arises. In doing the practice correctly detachment mental state is developed.

For example, you may get carried away by thoughts for a while before returning to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Now if and when you start to note the mind when thinking has arisen then, thinking becomes an object. In this way, the mind is detached from those thoughts, hence, not getting carried away by thoughts.

Getting carried away by thoughts means you are not aware of the thoughts at all. For instance, when you got so angry that you start scolding, hitting and then perhaps regretting it later. There are children who end up in hospital after being caned

by parents because the parents got carried away by their thoughts - thinking it is for the good of their child. In other words they lost their mind, got carried away by their thoughts as they were not detached.

When the mind is not detached from objects, one cannot think properly, one becomes emotional, because one is absorbed in the thinking.

If the thoughts are negative or if a person is in sorrow and that person keeps thinking about those sorrowful thoughts. He is said to be absorbed in his thoughts.

Such is unwholesome absorption which brings out more sadness, sorrow and lamentation. One cannot sleep or eat and becomes dysfunctional because the mind is full of sorrow.

When the mind is trained to note mind and

body with detachment, disagreeable objects that touch the senses would not be able to find a foothold in the mind and therefore unable to build up mental disturbances and sorrow.

As the mind detaches from the object, suffering subsides and disappears. In this way, mindfulness can overcome sorrow and lamentation. Therefore mindfulness is the escape.

Secondly, sorrow and lamentation are overcome through strong and continuous mindfulness.

No two or more minds arise or coexist at the same time.

For example in eating, you see food on your plate and you taste it in your mouth. You think you see and taste at the same time. But this is not actually so. As the seeing mind arises, it ceases and the

tasting mind arises and then ceases – they arise and cease in alternate moments continuously and very quickly, so quick that you think it is all happening at the same time. But mind arises one at a time.

Therefore, if there is a wholesome mind existing there cannot be unwholesome ones arising or coexisting at that time.

The way to ensure that there are wholesome minds is to have strong and continuous mindfulness. When mindfulness is present, mind becomes wholesome. When mindfulness is sustained strongly and continuously wholesome minds are thereby sustained.

If and when you become unhappy or lonely or sad, I suggest you just sit down quietly and start noting your rising and falling movement on your abdomen or feelings whichever is strong at that time. You will find that after some time you become peaceful and those mental pain disappear because wholesome minds have arisen and have become strong.

When wholesome mind is strong, unwholesome mind is weak. They are the opposites just as when there is light, there can be no darkness only absence of light is darkness. Similarly absence of wholesome mind is the unwholesome mind.

If we continue to think a lot of negative thoughts, unwholesome minds would persist. Consequently, a lot of dissatisfaction, ill-will, discontentment, anger, frustration, sadness, lamentation, pain, grief and despair is produced.

On the other hand, continuous mindfulness produces wholesome mind that overcome sorrow and lamentation.

Thirdly sorrow and lamentation is overcome through calmness, tranquility and peacefulness.

*Strong mindfulness builds up
Samadhi, which is calmness.*

As a comparison, in the samatha meditation concentration is in the forefront while mindfulness is not cultivated.

*In mindfulness meditation
mindfulness is in the forefront
and when mindfulness is
strong only then
concentration is developed.*

When practicing samatha meditation the mind gets absorbed into objects. When concentration turns to wrong concentration it leads to hallucination and madness because such meditation perceives unreal objects as real. The danger is that the mind would not be able to distinguish hallucination from reality objects. Without mindfulness, one is not aware that the mind is experiencing hallucination – it thinks it is real.

In mindfulness meditation one notes body, feeling, mind and reality objects and does not lead to madness.

It leads to seeing more of reality. The more and more you practice mindfulness the more and more you understand your body, feeling, mind and reality and the more you know how to deal with such objects and overcome the whole mass of suffering, the whole mass of mental torture.

In this way mindfulness meditation is not dangerous at all if you practice it properly, following instructions, guidance and giving feedback during Q&A sessions instead of going about experimenting with your own mind. It is not dangerous because mindfulness meditation develops the wisdom to see the things as they really are not imagined or hallucinated.

Through the practice of mindfulness when calmness is achieved in various degrees, it overcomes and suppresses sorrow and lamentation.

*The 4th and 5th benefits
are eradication of bodily
pain & mental grief.*

There are 2 types of pain that can be experienced most of the time namely bodily and mental pain. Bodily pain includes cuts on the body, headaches, stomach aches. Cancer patients suffer strong internal pain. What is mental grief? Mental grief includes ill-will, displeasure, anxiety, misery, sadness, fear etc.

*Mind and body are interdependent.
Bodily pain affects the mind. Mind in
turn, affects the body.*

When there is bodily pain and if we are not mindful, the mind feels the pain. When mind feels the pain and if we are not mindful, the body feels the pain.

There are times when one is overworked he or she takes it out on others. Why?

It is because their body is stressed. When the body feels stressed, the mind is stressed too. Without mindfulness one tends to take it out on the persons near to them or on loved ones. Hence, it is good to have time in between work to rest the body.

When the mind is affected by the body it is like being shot twice by an arrow – once in the body and next in the mind.

However if you are mindful, you would only experience the body pain but there would be no pain in the mind. You may ask if that is possible. If you meditate you will know that it is indeed possible.

Different types of body pain can be experienced during meditation – hot burning pain, numb-

ness pain, tension pain, twisting pain – like your legs or arms or neck or back all twisted or being pulled apart, piercing pain and just unbearable pain.

If you were to watch the body pain mindfully the mind will not be affected by the pain because the mind is detached - observing pain as merely an object as if it is not yours. In this way the body does not affect the mind. Many meditators can attest to that.

Only when you practice that, you face the pain head-on otherwise you would always run away from it because the mind fears pain.

This is how in mindfulness meditation the mind is trained so strongly that even our body pains do not affect the mind.

It has also been documented that mindfulness mediation heals bodily pain, sickness and many types of diseases. When the mind is peaceful and free from agitation or negative emotions, the body immune system works better at repairing the body.

The 6th benefit is gaining the Right Path.

It is a norm in our society to perceive material gains and sensual pleasures as a way to happiness. Hence our efforts are directed at pursuits for such gains and pleasures. In our constant pursuits we encounter things that are undesirable, stressful, causing grief and dissatisfaction.

*We overlook the price we have to pay
to acquire such things.*

We are not aware of the stress, effort, frustration and disappointment involved in the process of renewing the sense pleasures.

As such how can sensual pursuits be true happiness? How can such pursuits be the right path when pleasures cannot be sustained and needs to be constantly replenished?

Example: It is like chasing our own shadow or like a dog chasing after its tail to get rid of its itch.

On the other hand, there are those who inflict pain upon themselves thinking that through pain one purifies oneself or redeems their sins, guilt and wrong doings.

Such extreme of causing harm and hurt to the body weakens the mind and body. It saps mental energy and physical strength.

A weak mind and weak body is unable to strive towards realization. Therefore it is not the right path.

The Buddha says the way of Satipatthana which is the middle way is the Right Path to the attainment of fruition that is, realisation. Right Path leads to Right Concentration and insight-wisdom. Wrong path leads to wrong concentration, confusion and suffering.

The 7th and the last benefit is the attainment of Nibbana.

Nibanna means:

- the total elimination of greed, hatred and delusion which are the root cause of all suffering;

- it also means the cessation of birth, old age, disease and dying (in other words, overcoming the pain of birth --- It is because of birth -- there is this suffering of old age, decay, diseases and dying);

- attainment of Nibbana also means the total cessation of lamentation, pain, grief & despair (that is to say -- overcoming the pain associated with the burning of mental defilements);

- and of course, it is the attainment of the highest supreme bliss which is the happiness beyond all happiness.

Even though Nibbana sounds lofty and abstract, we still experience a lot of benefits along the way.

One would experience less suffering by letting go and not holding on to negative states of mind such as remorse, jealousy, dissatisfaction and mental hurts of the past.

*By acquiring more wholesome minds,
we gain more calmness, contentment,
peacefulness, bliss and happiness,
and especially in the attainment of
insight-wisdom more intense joy and
happiness can be experienced.*

In this lesson, I have covered the 7 benefits declared by the Buddha in the beginning of the Mahasatipatthana Discourse which explains why it is important that we meditate. Next week I will talk about mindfulness of the body (in Pali, Kayanupassana).





*Without mindfulness one is as if dead
for knows not him what is doing good (cultiva-
tion).*

*With mindfulness one is as if living
for knowing there is still life in doing good.*

Lesson Two

Contemplation of Body
Part 1
(Kayanupassana)



Lesson Two

Contemplation of Body

Part 1

(Kayanupassana)

This is the second lesson of our 9 Lesson Satipatthana Meditation series.

Introduction

Welcome to our second lesson of the Satipatthana Meditation series. Previously, I have covered the 7 benefits declared by the Buddha in the Discourse. Today I shall explain a little on the practice of mindfulness of the body – Kayanupassana.

The Buddha expounded a few contemplations within Kayanupassana starting with Mindfulness on the Breath. For today I will cover Mindfulness on the Breath leaving the rest for the following talk.

I will firstly go through the Discourse on this section then explain the practice in accordance with the Discourse.

Mindfulness on Breath

The Buddha continued:

“O Monks, how does a monk live practising body contemplation on the body? Herein, a monk having gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to a vacant place, sits down in crossed legged posture keeping his body erect he establishes mindfulness before him.”

As a householder or a layperson, a quiet place or being alone in your room would be sufficient to get into the practice. Sitting down in a cross-legged posture with the body erect is a stable posture and one would be able to maintain the practice for a relatively long time, therefore suitable for the purpose.

But on the other hand, sitting relaxed with one leg placed on the floor may be suitable for many people who are not used to the cross-legged posture. This alternative posture is less painful, less stiff and slightly more comfortable.

The beginners' mind might find it difficult to calm down when encountering too much pain, discomfort and difficulties. So a comfortable posture with the mind prepared for meditation would be a good start to the practice.

Stages of the practice

The Buddha continued:

【 *“Mindfully, he breathes in
and out.”* 】

This is the first phase of the practice.

In the beginning, the meditator should try to maintain the breathing in and out or, stay on his breath continuously for a certain time, to build up calmness or Samadhi.

At this point I would like to explain: Meditators who practise Anapanasati by just breathing in and out without going into the characteristics of the breath described by the Buddha in the second phase, one is then considered, a samatha or tranquility meditator.

When they get too deep into calmness, Samatha Nimittas (that is, calmness that brings out tranquility-sign-objects) will appear. Example of such Nimittas includes: the breath becomes smooth like silk, warm, or hot or cold, or perceiving the Nimittas like cotton wool or sewing thread or appears like a cloud etc.

Arriving at this stage, the meditator could experience joyful mental states or lightness of body. There is a likelihood that the meditator might get attached to this experience and not proceed onto the second phase of the mindfulness development.

When Samadhi is sufficiently established, the meditator should direct his attention to the second phase of mindfulness development without arriving at the Nimittas.

Now, the second phase, the Buddha continued

with the second phase of the mindfulness practice:

*“Alertly aware of the whole
breath body I shall breathe in,
the trains himself.
Alertly aware of the whole
breath body I shall breathe out
so he trains himself.”*

Now, the third phase, the Buddha said:

*“While breathing in a long breath, he
knows I am breathing in a long breath
or while breathing out a long breath
he knows I am breathing out a long
breath.*

*While breathing in a short breath he
knows I am breathing in a short breath
or while breathing out a short breath
he knows I am breathing out a short
breath.”*

The whole ‘breath body’ means, being aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the breath.

When the meditator can see clearly the beginning, middle, and end then, his concentration is said to have strongly developed. At this stage, the characteristic of impermanence on the breath body which is the air element is clearly experienced.

Then the Buddha continued with the fourth phase:

“Calming down the bodily formations I shall breathe in he trains himself. Calming down the bodily formations I shall breathe out so he trains himself.”

Arriving at this juncture, the mind is ready to experience the characteristic of ‘mind and body processes’ deeply and in due course, gaining insight-wisdom.

The direction of the practice

The Buddha continued:

*“Thus he lives practising,
internally body contempla-
tion in the body.”*

In practice, this means, the meditator should look internally to his breath body and nothing else, not allowing the mind to stray or be distracted by other non-meditation object such as intentional thinking, dreaming, imagining or allowing the mind to wander outward to external objects such as sound, music or chatter.

The Buddha continued:

*“...or practising externally body
contemplation in the body.”*

Now, why should we practise external body contemplation in the body?

Firstly, this practice trains the mind to view the external body as the same as the internal body – just the body breath or air element with the purpose of cutting out concepts of a being.

Secondly, if a meditator is able to practice internal as well as external body contemplation, then, the meditator will have the perception of elements even when dealing with external objects.

When mindfulness is directed on the external body, the meditator is able to maintain mental balance and harmony when perceiving loved ones and others. This is so because such persons are perceived as only body or external elements.

Usual habitual response of anger and frustrations do not arise when expectations are unfulfilled.

Only when they are perceived as ‘you and me’ then concept arises as ‘I am right and you are wrong’. Ego arouses ill-will and hatred leading to confrontations and fighting.

If there is no concept of ‘you and me’, but just elements which is the ultimate conditioned reality, there would be no problem at all.

The Buddha continued:

“...or practising both internally and externally body contemplation in the body.”

This is to say, mindfulness can be maintained and strengthened continuously without interruption.

Again the Buddha continued:

“...or he lives contemplating the arising of air element in the body;

or he contemplates the passing away of air element in the body;

or both arising and passing away of air element in the body;

or the mindfulness that there is only this body now clearly established in him just enough for knowledge into reality (insight) and just enough mindfulness and he remains detached.”

Note that the Buddha reminds the meditator to contemplate the arising and passing away in every section of the Discourse.

Why did the Buddha constantly emphasize the arising and passing away? Because it is important that the meditator is on the right direction in this development of insight-wisdom or mindfulness meditation.

Firstly, without this direction the meditator could easily fall for the craving of psychic power which when practiced wrongly could lead to hallucination and a lot of misery. That is not the way to insight-wisdom.

Secondly, without direction, meditators unknowingly divert into a concept of developing pure consciousness to merge and be one with another supreme consciousness. This again, magnifies and strengthens the 'ego' which is the source of suffering. The bigger the ego – the 'bigger' is the pain.

Thirdly, the meditator who is practicing on the rising and falling or other foundations without this direction could also get stuck in merely practicing calmness or tranquility meditation.

Fourthly, if meditators do not perceive the meditation object in arising and passing away, they may get caught up with their strong craving for attainment of Nibbana. They could mistake the by-products such lights, rainbows, hearing pleasant sound, seeing the Buddha-rupa or devas or getting into deep sleep as signs of attainment of Nibbana-enlightenment.

The arising and passing away is first applied as a direction for the practice. Not only is it used as a signpost but it is of utmost importance that this experience is attained as insight-wisdom before deeper insights-wisdom can be achieved.

It is necessary to emphasise the importance of observing the arising and passing away of meditation objects as this leads to the realization of the universal characteristics of impermanence – the reality of constant change.

I have mentioned only a few reasons which I deem sufficient but there are more.

In closing of this section on the Mindfulness of Breath, the Buddha said:

“Monks, thus indeed, a monk lives practising body-contemplation in the body.”

Comparing (the air element) breath through the nostrils and (the air element) rising and falling movements on the abdomen

In this course I will be using the rising and falling movement of the abdomen in the Contemplation of the Body instead of using the breathing through the nostrils (Anapanasati).

I shall give a few reasons why I prefer the rising and falling of the abdomen.

Firstly to note: the breathing through the nostrils is air element, so is the rising and falling of the abdomen.

Although both are air elements, breath through the nostrils is very subtle. As the area in the nostril is small, it is hard to detect the sensation of that air in-and-out.

In contrast, the area of the abdominal movement is larger and more prominent, therefore the air element here is easily detected especially, when the meditator puts one hand lightly on the abdomen to feel the rising and falling movements.

As such, mindfulness on the body air-element is more easily built up this way, compared to using the breath or air element through the nostrils.

Secondly, through feedback, those who practise Anapanasati, frequently encounter side effects such as headaches, giddiness, forehead tension, head pain, dizziness, vomiting sensation etc. This is because the object is subtle and the meditators find it hard to detect the air going through the nostrils, so greater concentration and effort is applied.

Such complications do not occur in those who use rising and falling movements of the abdomen as the area is larger and movements are noticeable.

Thirdly, when the meditator gets too deeply into Anapanasati the meditators could develop Samatha-Nimittas, thereby getting into tranquility meditation.

At this juncture, it becomes difficult for them to establish mindfulness on the other bases such as feelings, mind and dhamma. The mind tends to hold onto the Nimitta leading towards mental absorption, which is not the goal of mindfulness practice, in this Discourse.

For the above reasons, I will base Kayanupasana – Contemplation of the Body on the rising and falling of the abdomen.

How to practise establishing mindfulness on the rising and falling movements on the abdomen?

The approach is exactly the same as described in the Mindfulness on Breath – Anapanasati in the Discourse.

In the first phase, we establish mindfulness on the abdomen to gain Samadhi or calmness by staying on the rising and falling movements continuously for a certain time.

Secondly, when the Samadhi is established the meditator would be able to perceive clearly the characteristics of the air element on the abdomen – whether it is long or short.

Thirdly, when the mindfulness is further developed, concentration becomes strong and the meditator would be able to perceive the beginning,

middle and end of the rising of the abdomen. Same goes with the falling of the abdomen.

In the fourth phase, the mind becomes peaceful, clear and free from hindrances. At this point he begins to experience the characteristic of the mind and body processes deeply, gaining insight-wisdom. The rest is as mentioned above.

We do not object or stop those meditators who are familiar with and have long practiced Anapanasati. They are of course free to continue to use Anapanasati as the base bearing in mind the cautions mentioned above. For beginners who have yet to practise Anapanasati it would be easier for them to meditate using the rising and falling of the abdomen.

How do you begin the practice?

Before we do some practice, I will explain how the Buddha told the monks the way to prepare for practice in the opening of the Discourse.

The Buddha said:

“And monks, here a monk lives contemplating body contemplation in the body ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful having outgrown covetousness and grief about the world.”

Now, this preparation also applies to the practice of mindfulness on all other bases, which would be covered in the course later on.

Ardent...

Ardent means one should really put the mind to the meditation practice. In other words, one should be serious. One should bring out the energy and not be lazy or slack, or be half hearted. One should put effort and be enthused and earnest in the practice.

*Clearly comprehending
and mindful...*

Clearly comprehending and mindful means, clearly seeing and knowing the object of meditation – that is to say: to look and observe deeply into the object and to know its characteristics whether it is long or short or if it is smooth or choppy or the motion is hard or soft etc.

Having outgrown covetousness...

Having outgrown covetousness means detach or set aside the greediness of whatever that does not belong to us or the various attachments in the mind.

Anguish...

Anguish means grief, pain, sadness, disappointment including remorse, fear, hopelessness and such.

About the world...

About the world means worldly things.

Instructions for the practice

I will stop here for today and let us do a 15-minute practice. Please try not to move around.

*Look downward and then gently close
your eyes.*

Don't look straight because if you do that you will tend to see colours or lights so, look downwards.

Mental Preparation

Firstly you prepare your mind in this way: mentally put aside all the busyness, ambitions, business affairs, various concerns, worries, frustrations, sadness, anger, ill-will etc. Lay them aside for this duration so that you can concentrate and calm down.

Relaxation Process

Then go through the relaxation process: direct your attention to your forehead area, consciously just relax, go to your eyes area, then mouth area and put a gentle smile on your lips so that you feel relaxed in your face and jaws, then go towards the shoulder areas, arms and fingers, legs and your toes. Do this a couple of times if necessary.

Begin

Once you are relaxed, lightly put your left or right hand on your stomach. Take a deep breath and watch the rising of the abdomen, then stop. Then breathe out and stop.

Do it again a couple of times or until you can feel the rising and falling movements of the abdomen.

*When you can feel it, put your
mind there
and breathe normally.*

*Just observe the air element of
rising and falling.*

During the process

If your mind is thinking and it is not strong, just ignore your mind. Ignore the thinking unless it is strong, only then you watch your mind and note “thinking thinking thinking”.

When thinking stops or refuses to stop after 10 times of noting, return your attention to the rising and falling movements in the abdomen. Keep your mind steady, peaceful and calm and stay on the meditation object.

When the mind gains some concentration only then...

When the mind gains some concentration only then you may direct your mind to watch that stronger object which pulls the mind away from the rising and falling such as the agitated mind or thinking or pain. At this point, whenever a stronger object arises, take it as an object and observe it.

If you are agitated, watch that agitated mind. Do not do what your mind says just observe what the mind say. If the mind say move the leg – don't move, just watch that mind. When it goes away, go back to the meditation object. When pain arises, observe that pain – see the intensity of the arising and fading away of that pain.

*Just observe the internal
phenomena ...*

Just observe the internal phenomena unless there are stronger external objects that interrupt like hearing a sudden loud sound then you note “hearing hearing hearing” then return to the internal object like rising and falling movements. Whatever strong external objects attract the mind, note it, and then return to your internal base.

Now, time's up.

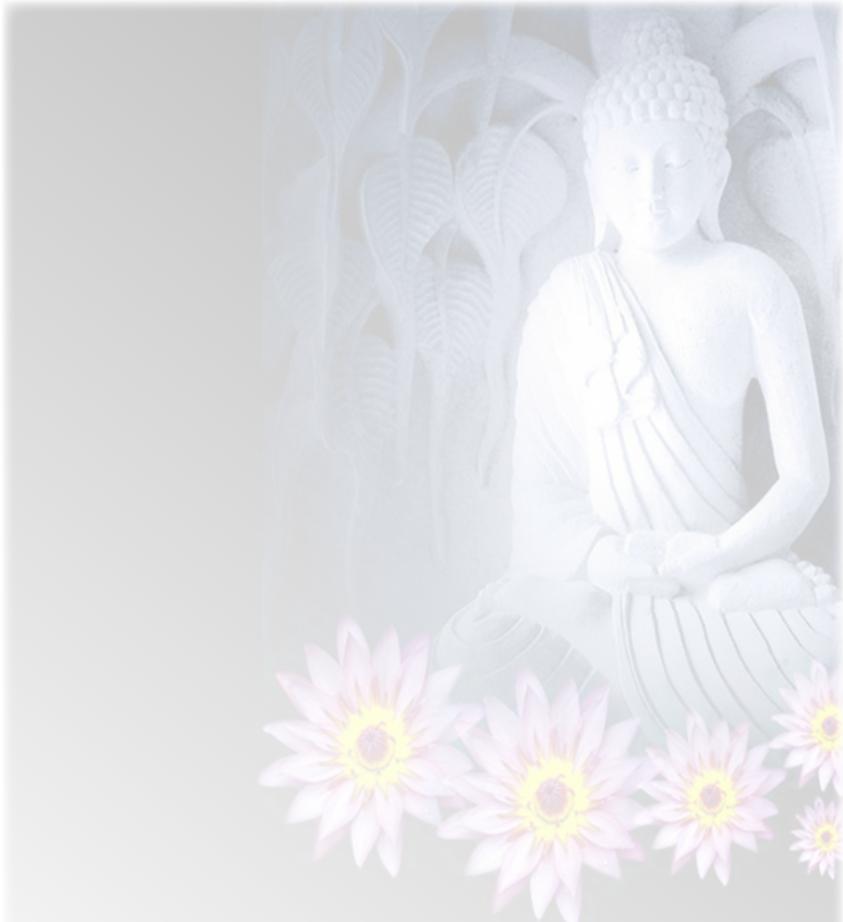
Meditation cultivates strong wholesome minds that generates merits. We shall now share our merits, repeat after me:

With this mindfulness meditation, having acquired great merits, I share these merits with my house protecting devas, and devas everywhere. I share these merits with my dear departed relatives. I share these merits with all beings seen and unseen, near and far, big and small, strong and weak. May all beings everywhere be well and happy sharing these merits! Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!





*There is no refuge here
Neither can it be found in friends or kins so dear
The true Dhamma is your only refuge
It can be found here too
The Dhamma is your shelter true
As protection and refuge
So wise men, anchor on Dhamma
For the attainment of Nibbana*



*The body in the body said the Buddha
consists of only the 4 great elements. If
one clearly comprehends such, freed is
one from the bondage of Mara.*

Lesson Three

Contemplation of Body
Part 2
(Kayanupassana)



Lesson Three
Contemplation of Body
Part 2
(Kayanupassana)

This is the third lesson of our 9 Lesson Satipatthana Meditation series.

Introduction

Welcome to our 3rd lesson of Satipatthana Meditation series. Today, I will cover the rest of the sections under Contemplation of Body starting with Bodily Postures.

In this section of Bodily Postures, the Buddha said:

“When walking, a monk knows I am walking or when standing he knows I am standing or when sitting he knows I am sitting, or when lying down, he knows I am lying down or in whatever position his body is in he knows that position of that body.”

“Again monks, in walking forward and backward, a monk practises clear comprehension, in looking elsewhere, he practises clear comprehension.”

Then Buddha continued and mentioned all other typical daily activities of a monk:

“...in bending and stretching his limbs, he practises clear comprehension”

*“in wearing the inner and outer robe,
and in carrying the bowl, he practises
clear comprehension”*

*“in eating, drinking, chewing
and tasting, he practises clear
comprehension”*

*“in answering calls of nature, in walk-
ing, standing, sitting, falling asleep,
waking, speaking
and being silent he practises
clear comprehension”*

How is continuous mindfulness with clear comprehension, practised throughout the day?

It is clear from the Discourse, that mindfulness meditation is not, practised exclusively in the sitting position.

Continuous mindfulness with clear comprehension should therefore, be applied throughout the day in all postures when suitable and in appropriate activities.

In a retreat centre, it is generally safe and all typical activities would be appropriate and suitable for a meditator to practise continuous mindfulness throughout the day.

If one is not in a retreat centre then appropriate activities in general, would normally include waking up, brushing your teeth, washing, bathing, ironing, dressing, preparing your meals, eating, drinking, chewing, sweeping, wiping or cleaning, speaking, keeping silent, falling asleep and other similar activities.

Activities which require careful attention to avoid harm such as, driving or crossing a road would be unsuitable to place your attention on your bodily postures or movements. For the safety of oneself and others, you should be aware of the external objects such as, other drivers, pedestrians or cars on the road.

So, in contemplation of the postures mentioned by the Buddha, the meditator will eventually experience the 4 great elements, such as the motion element which is more obvious.

Before I go further as to how continuous mindfulness with clear comprehension is applied in all the postures and appropriate activities, I will first go through what are the primary elements.

Reflection on the Primary Elements

The primary elements in Pali are known as Pathavi, Apo, Tejo and Vayo.

Pathavi – Element of Extension

Pathavi means the element of extension, simply known as earth element.

*It can be experienced
through the sensation of
hardness and softness in all
postures*

For instance, when remained seated for too long in one posture, you could experience the hardness on your buttock, or after standing for awhile, the feet that touch the floor would begin to feel hard, or other parts of the body begin to feel stiff all, which are manifestation of the earth element.

Apo – Element of Cohesiveness

Apo means the element of cohesiveness, simply known, as water element. It is the water element that binds all elements together. A way to explain this element would be like mixing water into flour, which then results in a dough. The dough without water would remain in its powdery form and is dry. Just as when a person dies, the body dries up and turns into dust because the cohesive element has become weak.

Tejo – Element of Temperature

Tejo is the temperature element simply known, as fire element.

The hot and cold feeling that we experience is the manifestation of temperature element.

Fire element has the function of maturing. When the elements are unbalanced and heat temperature becomes too strong then, the body is succumbed to fever. When the temperature of cold is strong, then the body is liable to catch a cold. It is this heat element that is the maturing and the decaying factor in the form in Pali called rupa.

Vayo – Element of Motion

Vayo is the element of motion or simply known as wind element.

Wind element is present in the whole body including the abdomen which can be experienced through the rising and falling movements.

The wind element is the support in the sitting and standing posture. Wind element is the motion in body movements such as walking, bending, stretching limbs, wearing or dressing, running, combing, swimming and all other bodily movements.

How to practise continuous mindfulness with clear comprehension in all postures and appropriate activities?

For continuity of mindfulness...

One of the ways to practise continuous mindfulness with clear comprehension, is to direct the mind attentively to all our postures and appropriate activities of the body.

In sitting, the meditator first pays attention to the rising and falling movements on the abdomen, which is, the wind element.

As the meditator's attention becomes keen, the meditator will notice other elements present in the rising and falling movements, such as tension, hardness, softness which are actually earth element.

When the meditator remains seated for a while, he or she begins to feel hardness on the buttock – that is, earth element.

In sitting posture too, one can experience strong heat element building up in the body and sweating profusely; or they could feel cold with air-cond (that is cool wind-element) blowing on the body. As for the water element in the sitting posture, it can be perceived as a lump of hardness, a lump of pain, a lump of heat which is the cohesive or water element.

In walking, what element are experienced? Basically, walking is the air element but when mindfulness is developed and has become strong, the other elements can also be clearly perceived. For instance, you can feel the heaviness of your body and feet when you walk – that is, earth element or the cold of the floor where your feet touch, or the body heat that could produce sweat and stickiness on the body etc.

However, if the mind goes towards too many elements in the beginning, it becomes dispersed and restless, thereby, concentration cannot be developed.

In the case when the mind becomes restless, disturbed and pulls the attention away from the air element, then the meditator should stand still and observe the mind for some time before he returns to continue on with his walking meditation - noting the air element.

It is beneficial to start noting the movements mentally with one-step noting - that is brisk walking. You may note it as (right leg)-stepping, (left leg)-stepping.

This brings the mind down to the object and prevents it from straying so much.

As calmness sets in, the meditator can proceed onto the two-steps movement by noting the lifting-movement and pushing-movement.

Once the concentration is developed, then, the meditator proceeds onto noting of the three-steps movement that is, lifting, pushing and putting. At this point, there should be clarity of mind and movements are clearly observed.

When clarity of mind and calmness sets in, then the meditator should drop the naming and just bare-experiencing the air element, without words or without concepts or without naming it.

Labels are useful in the beginning to help anchor the mind to the object but, at this juncture, it become a hindrance for further progress and prevents the meditator from experiencing the elements directly.

Therefore, it should be dropped when the mind is able to perceive clearly the air element.

If the meditator is able to maintain the clarity and sharpen his faculties, the meditator can experience the insight level into the arising and disappearing of the air element. In this way the meditator is said to have gone inside into the experiential level.

In the standing meditation, the meditator could direct his attention to the predominant object, which can be either, rising and falling of the abdomen, the hardness on the sole, the body stiffness, heat element when such elements manifest strongly, or the body sensations such as itchiness, pain, numbness, etc.

The body is not adapted to long periods of standing as it causes movement, vibration and shaking. Therefore, the meditator can note it for a little while and proceed onto the walking meditation. Standing too long is especially unsuitable for elderly meditators who would be more suited in the sitting posture.

*Walking is still important, as in walking, the objects are stronger and therefore, easier to build up concentration.
Walking also generates energy.*

As such, meditators do not fall into sloth and torpor or sleepiness. Whereas, in sitting, meditators

and especially elderly ones would succumb to sloth and torpor when they sit too long without moving the body.

Now, in the lying posture, the hardness and softness is predominant but one can also direct the attention to rising and falling of the abdomen. If one stays in the lying posture for a long time, one would feel the build up of strong heat element on the body parts that touch the mattress. If one cannot feel the change in the heat element but is merely stagnated, it is advisable to switch over to the other bases, where one could perceive the changing that is the arising and disappearing more distinctly such as, feelings, itchiness, numbness, pain or air element.

So, we have covered the basic 4 postures in which the 4 great elements can manifest.

A meditator should not presume that in the sitting – there is only rise and fall, or, in the walking, there is only motion. A meditator should also notice the other predominant elements as it arises.

Clear comprehension of directing the mind to the body in all the postures: walking, sitting, standing, lying down, and changing from one posture to another posture, can be applied continuously in retreats or in daily life (except when driving, crossing the road or other risky activities).

Here, are some examples of how mindfulness with clear comprehension can be applied in daily activities:

When brushing teeth, washing, bathing, preparing for your meals, eating, drinking, chewing, sweeping, wiping or cleaning, you can direct the mind to the movements of the hands or body with bare attention, noting the air element. Even when speaking or keeping silent, you can also practise mindfulness noting the mind, so, to ensure your speech is not harsh, hurtful or connected with ill-will but is pleasant and beneficial.

***Why should we train our mind to
perceive
body as elements or as an
ultimate conditioned reality?***

I shall give an example here: in one of the meditation classes I conducted, a yogi reported to me that he could not really meditate and so he opened his eyes to look around and he noticed there was another yogi sitting next to him and there was a mosquito that had just landed on his leg. The mosquito was poking in and sucking up the blood in the process it caused the mosquito's body to turn red.

He continued to be amazed and wondered if his neighbour felt pain. Then, I said "oh you can see it so well because it is not your leg and if it is your leg you would probably smash the poor mosquito. Since it is not your leg, you think it is quite alright".

*Now in the same way, if you are
able to cultivate mindfulness with
detachment, objects would not
easily affect your mind.*

The Buddha asked: “Monks, why is attachment to the body suffering – because monks, the body is painful by nature. Therefore, attachment to the body that is painful, brings suffering”.

How is it painful? How does attachment to the body results in pain?

There is suffering in birth, old age, decay, sickness and dying.

Why is birth suffering?

The mother’s womb is cramped and constricted. It is also painful to the foetus when the mother consumes food or drink, that is either too hot or too cold or which burns; like chilli, alcohol or smoking. It is also painful for the newborn to pass through the birth canal which is narrow. This is suffering of birth.

What is suffering of old age and decay?

Here, it is suffering to lose our vitality, strength and attractiveness as we age. It is suffering when our senses like seeing, hearing, tasting etc decay. In growing old, not only does one suffer from decaying senses, the body elements too are easily imbalanced. We suffer pain of all kinds related to old age such as arthritis, dementia, Alzheimer. Now, these are suffering of old age & decay.

Not only is there suffering in old age, there is suffering in sickness too. Sickness affects people of all ages like: cancer, diabetes, hyperthyroid and all others that produce painful body sensations.

There is also mental pain in dying due to the attachment to this body as “I, me and my”.

There is fear of not knowing what is happening to oneself and one's body. Strong clinging to the body creates immense fear of death. Attachment to the body as an ego intensifies that pain.

Example: the question that I have often received is: “Would the body feel the pain when cremated?” So the answer is in death, the body feels no pain as it no longer has consciousness arising. The body is like a piece of log the Buddha said.

There is another question posed many times in my Dhamma talks. They asked: “If we give our eyes away when we die, will we be reborn without eyes for example a blind ghost?” Of course I replied: If one performs generosity by giving their eyes, after death, surely in their next life, they would be reborn with a pair of beautiful eyes, as good begets good, meritorious actions begets happiness.

So you see, even after death, there are those who fear for their bodies. There is this suffering connected to the fear of what will happen to me when I die because of attachment to their body. The fear of dying brings great distress to the mind, because of the attachment to the body as “I me and my”.

During the Buddha’s time, there was a seeker of truth who approached the Buddha, and declared to the Buddha, that this body, is me, this is mine and this body is I.

In reply, the Buddha asked that seeker “this body – will it grow old, will the body get sick, will the body decay, will the body die?” The seeker answered “yes” to all the questions the Buddha put to him.

So, the Buddha asked again, “then is it happiness or sorrow?” The seeker then said, it is sorrowful when we are sick, when we age, when we suffer decay and it is sorrowful when dying. Then said the Buddha, why should you cling to the view that this body is “I, me and my”. Example – why should you put your hand into the fire when you know it burns?

Not only are we attached to our own body, we are also attached to external bodies. We recognise the external bodies as my parents, spouse, children, friends and enemies. If unfortunate events befall

our loved ones or when separated from them, our mind falls into confusion and distress because our mind is stuck in concepts, unable to see the ultimate reality that it is just the body.

For instance, in the case of a nasty accident where the bodies are burnt beyond recognition, they can no longer be identified. Therefore, the true nature of the body reveals itself as merely elements and nothing else.

Coming to back to the Discourse on the section of Reflection on the Primary Elements, the Buddha continued:

“Again monks, a monk reflects upon this very body, in whatever manner it is placed or disposed by way of its primary elements, there are in this body: the earth element, water element, fire element and wind element. Just as a skilled butcher or a butcher’s apprentice, having slaughtered a cow, separated into portions, were to be placed at the junction of 4 highways.”

Just as a clever butcher slaughters a cow and sells its meat in that four way junction, separating it into portions – at that point, the concept of a cow disappears. The head alone is not a cow, the liver is not a cow and the leg is not a cow.

In the same way, when a mediator is trained to contemplate the body to see the body in various elements that makes up the body, the concept of self breaks up.

As to how we practise contemplation of body as elements has been explained earlier.

As we constantly practise and reflect on the 4 portions of primary elements instructed by the Buddha in this Discourse, the concept of ego slowly weakens. Without the concept of ego generating craving and ill-will, unwholesome states of mind is weakened and does not manifest in gross unwholesome bodily actions such as harming, hurting or taking of life.

*Wrong views manipulated by
craving or ill-will are pernicious.
Wrong views associated with ego
could cause conflicts, disasters
and misery through wars in the
name of righteousness, justice or
even fear.*

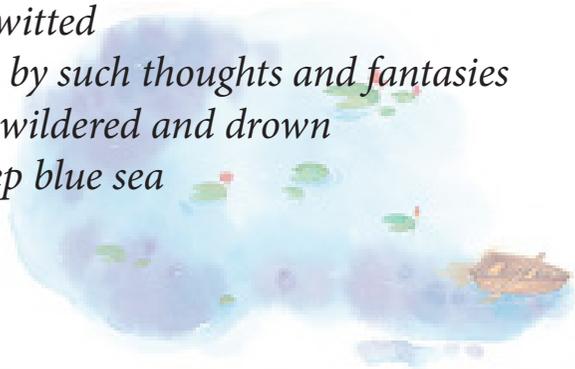
When the ego is checked, noted and kept in place, there will be less defilements arising, such as covetousness, greediness, ill-will, jealousy, fear, frustration, sadness and dissatisfaction. Consequently, more wholesome mental states will arise in the mind such as, wisdom, kindness, compassion, contentment, calmness, joy and happiness.

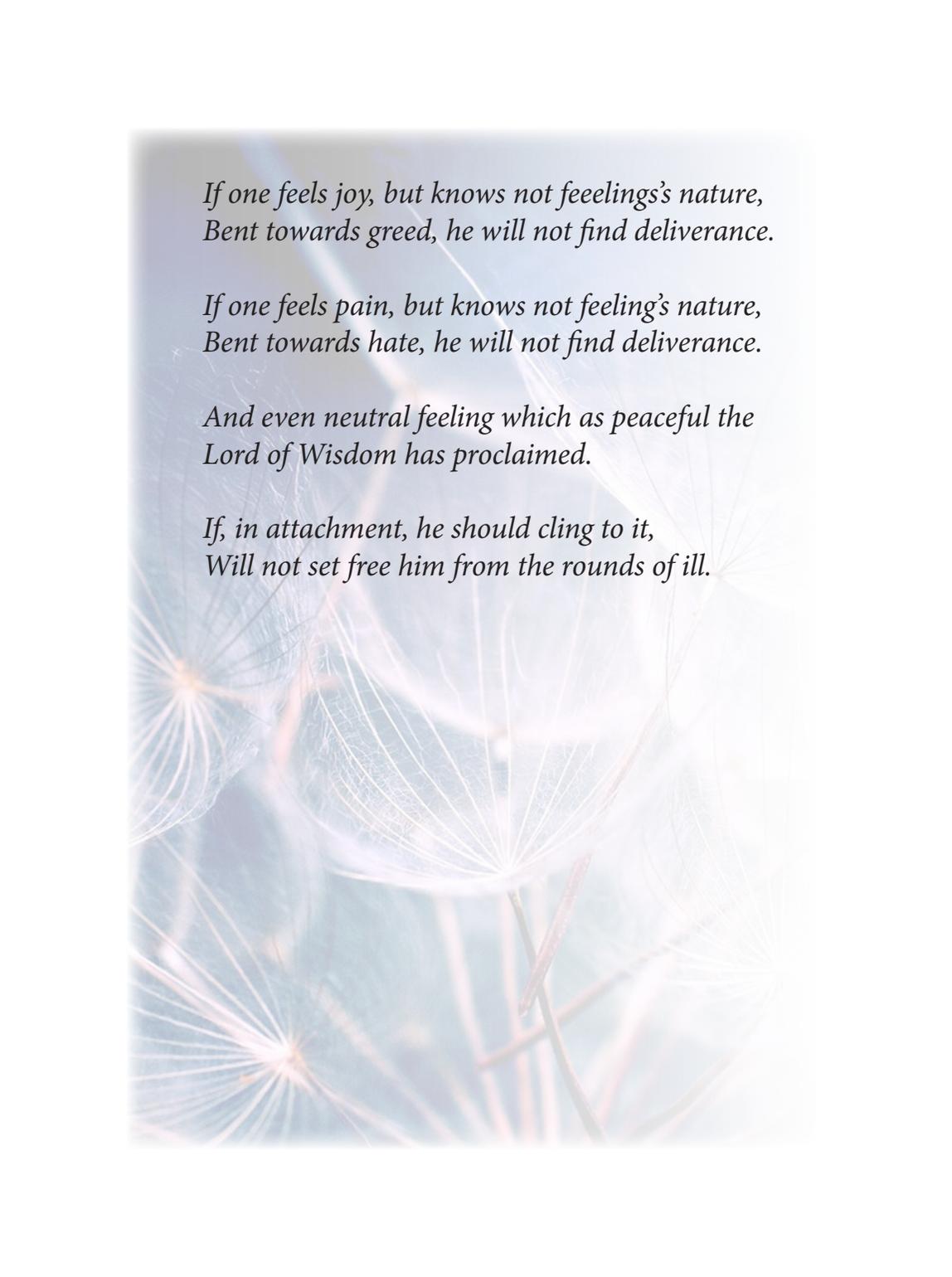
In this Discourse, the Buddha taught several methods of Contemplation of Body. Here, we have covered all the sections that would be applied in this meditation course, except Contemplation on the 32 Parts of the Body and Contemplation of the 9-Decaying Process of Corpse, as these two sections are very extensive and have a different approach altogether.

Next week, I will go to the next section of the Discourse, namely Contemplation of Feelings, in Pali Vedanupassana.



*The body is
a source for delights and joys
The body is
a beauty to behold
The body is
indeed a many splendorous thing.
The dull-witted
overcome by such thoughts and fantasies
Is thus bewildered and drown
in the deep blue sea*





*If one feels joy, but knows not feelings's nature,
Bent towards greed, he will not find deliverance.*

*If one feels pain, but knows not feeling's nature,
Bent towards hate, he will not find deliverance.*

*And even neutral feeling which as peaceful the
Lord of Wisdom has proclaimed.*

*If, in attachment, he should cling to it,
Will not set free him from the rounds of ill.*

Lesson Four

Contemplation of Feelings
Part 1
(Vedanupassana)



Lesson Four

Contemplation of Feelings

Part 1

(Vedanupassana)

This is the fourth lesson of our 9 Lesson Satipatthana Meditation series.

Introduction

Welcome to the fourth lesson of Satipatthana Meditation Series. Today, we move onto Contemplation of Feelings, in Pali – Vedanupassana.

Why do we need to practise mindfulness established on feelings (contemplation of feelings)?

Feelings are important because we measure happiness with feelings. If we don't feel, we are like a block of wood, so we want to feel all the time. In fact, all our actions are channelled to acquiring good feelings.

When feeling pleasant, we consider that as happiness. On the other hand, if we experience unpleasant feelings then we feel unhappy. So therefore feelings is an important subject for meditation.

We think feelings are always within us, residing somewhere in our body or in our mind... This perception gives rise to the idea that: “These are my feelings. It belongs to me.” So when someone says something which you don’t like to hear, you would probably say “You hurt me, you hurt my feelings.”

The truth is feelings do not belong to us. Feelings come about because there are conditions for its arising. It passes away due to conditions.

You may ask how do feelings arise? Feeling arises when there is object coming into contact with our 6 senses.

So the Buddha begins with the 3 basic types of feelings. The Buddha said:

“Again monks, how does a monk live practising feelings contemplation in feelings? Herein a monk, when experiencing pleasant feelings knows, I am experiencing pleasant feelings or when experiencing painful feelings, knows I am experiencing painful feelings or when experiencing neutral feelings knows, I am experiencing neutral feelings”

I would like to explain further on these 3 basic kinds of feelings: pleasant, painful and neutral.

Pleasant Feelings

What are pleasant feelings?

When we see something agreeable or something nice then pleasant feelings arise.

That is why, most people like to go window-shopping or sight-seeing or travelling. Seeing something strange, different, colourful, new, or certain shapes give rise to pleasant feeling.

There are people who like to move things around in the house and it makes them feel happy to see their things properly put in place. Some would frequently change the wall colour, pictures and flower pots. It makes them happy even though they can't keep switching new houses, they can still feel a different environment each time they change things around.

For those who are lucky, we say as a Buddhist, that owing to their good karma of the past, they now have pleasant objects appearing. They stay in a beautiful place with nice garden. They wake up in the morning look out of the window they see flow-

ers in a clean garden. They drive big cars, no traffic jam, reach the office and people say “good morning boss” and they feel happy about it because they feel being respected.

Then they would go out to lunch in a hotel with ambience and they are happy about it. Then when they go back home they see their children - well behaved, see their wife and feel happy to see them. Then, it is indeed a very happy life. All these pleasant objects give a lot of joy. Such types of people mostly feel very satisfied and find it hard to meditate as there is no urgency.

However, it does not mean that meditators are all sad people. There are meditators who are fortunate as well. There are those who have acquired great wealth but understand that there are things more meaningful in life besides worldly sense-enjoyment. So they come to meditate. There are also those who wish to seek for deeper meaning in life other than superficial worldly happiness.

Painful feelings

What are painful feelings?

The problem in life is we can't have everything we want. We can't expect everyone to speak nicely to us all the time. Strangers, colleagues or even dear ones might say things that you don't like to hear, which makes you unhappy and upset.

In life, we meet with these objects, pleasant and unpleasant all the time. So, our feelings are like a yoyo, going up and going down – one moment we feel happy, next moment we feel sad. The ups-and-downs create instability in our mind which is upsetting and not peaceful.

The Buddha taught us that feelings are just feelings. It has its causes of arising and when it arises, it passes away. But if we catch hold of unpleasant feelings then, it produces agitation, frustration or mental pain.

If we hold on to pleasant feelings then the mind wants more and more of the delightful objects. It is like drinking sea water to quench thirst. It can never be satisfied.

So Mindfulness or Wisdom Meditation is about developing mindfulness to see things as they really are: “suchness”, no concept, no plus, no minus, just see its arising and its passing away. If you understand the phenomenon about feelings, you would understand that you cannot hold on to feelings.

People who suffer from depression or become neurotic, constantly replay the trauma inside their mind. They can not let go of feelings. Feelings generate more thoughts.

It is like 2 persons quarrelling. A shouts at B, B shouts back and A shouts louder and B begins to raise his voice also. Very soon comes the sticks and stones.

When there are unpleasant feelings, it condition more negative thoughts. The mind becomes revengeful and starts to think how to harm or hit back or becomes more depressed or frustrated. So feelings affect thinking. In turn, the negative thinking produces more unhappy feelings.

That is how one becomes depressed failing to see the nature of feelings. They cannot get out of the negative thinking and are trapped, in the world of suffering. One of the ways of not letting feelings take control of the mind is, by cultivating mindfulness in watching feelings as feelings, seeing its true nature of arising and passing away.

Neutral Feelings

What are neutral feeling?

Objects that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant produce neutral feelings. Example: when you walk along a road and there is nothing particularly nice or disgusting to see, so then, you just have neutral feelings. Or, if you are in your house, probably just sweeping the floor and it is neither exciting nor interesting so you would probably just have neutral feelings.

Neutral feelings constantly arises every day. We do not notice it because, neutral feelings are very subtle compared to the very strong type of pleasant or unpleasant feelings which are very noticeable.

Pleasant feelings connected with sensual things

The Buddha continued:

“When experiencing pleasant feelings connected with sensual things he knows, I am experiencing pleasant feelings connected with sensual things”

What are pleasant feelings connected to sensual things?

Examples of pleasant feelings connected to sensual things are feelings that we get when we enjoy seeing movies, shopping, tasting nice food, good company, interesting conversation, having pleasant body feelings like being in an air conditioned room. Even, day-dreaming or fantasising gives rise to pleasant feelings.

So if the day is pleasant without much disturbing objects then we consider it, a happy day – the day flows like a song. A meditator should be mindful that these are happy feelings connected to sensual things. They are, impermanent.

They should take note of the arising and disappearing of feeling so that they would not be controlled by ignorance and fall into the 2 extremes. One is the craving to regain the pleasant feelings connected to those sensual things. The other is the frustrations when unable to replenish the sense-enjoyment.

Anchoring on feelings that are connected to sensual things produces suffering when such feelings disappear. Therefore, sensual joy comes along with pain. The happiness connected to sensual things if gone un-noted, or being made aware of, produces encumbrances.

Here I like to relate this story of Kisagotami in the scripture. She married very young and was very happy when she had her first-born son. Unfortunately, after a couple of months her son died due to sickness and she could not accept it. She could not accept that the son had passed away so young - just a few months old.

So she wrapped the son around and went to the medicine shop and asked “could you please give me some medicine for my son?” But the doctor said the son is dead and said he is turning cold. There is no medicine for the dead. “No no” she said “he is just sleeping, not dead”.

Then the doctor said please go away I have no time for you. So she goes on to the next and the next and she is chased away from all, until, she came to this one shop, where a man took pity on her and said, perhaps the Enlightened one, the Buddha, could help. He is here in our town if you could go and see him perhaps he has the medicine for your son.

She quickly took the baby, rushed to the Buddha kneeled down, paid respect and said “Lord Lord please give me medicine for my son. He is sleeping”. The Buddha looked at the baby and knew that the baby was dead but the Buddha said “could you bring me some mustard seeds?”

She was very happy now that there is this medicine for the baby and so she replied “Yes yes Lord I will get mustard seeds”. The Buddha added “but...it must be from the household where no one

has died”. She said “yes yes” and off she went to ask for mustard seeds. They gave it to her as most household have mustard seeds. Then she said “oh wait...I have to ask, has anybody in the house died?” “Yes of course my father has died”.

“Oh then I cannot use this. I can only have mustard seeds from a family where no one has died” and she went onto the next family and next family and next.

As she went on, the realisation comes upon her. So she took her baby to the forest and cried and cried, dug a hole carefully wrapped the baby and buried him.

Then she returned to see the Buddha. The Buddha looked at her “Kisagotami have you found the mustard seeds?” She said “Lord, I understand now”.

The baby that had given her so much happiness, so much pleasure, produced so much pain in her, which I always say, the one you love the most, normally gives you the most pain. If you don't care for that person you don't feel for that person. It is only those you care that give you the most pain.

These are sensual pleasurable feelings but it comes with encumbrances. It gives you lots of pain once the joyful object is no longer there.

In contrast, spiritual happiness does not result in pain. It is different. It gives rise to concentration. When the mind acquires spiritual joy, concentration develops. The mind becomes peaceful and wisdom becomes deep.

Feelings that are happy are not necessarily wholesome. There are happy feelings which are also unwholesome. This contrast would become clear once you meditate.

Pleasant feelings connected with spiritual things

Coming to the pleasant feeling connected with spiritual things. Now, these pleasant feelings are, wholesome.

The Buddha again continued with the following:

“When experiencing pleasant feelings connected with spiritual things he knows, I am experiencing pleasant feelings connected with spiritual things”

Spiritual things are not connected to sensual things. Feelings connected to spiritual things are considered as wholesome feelings.

Example: the pleasant feeling that arises from listening to the dhamma. Now some of you may have pleasant feelings while listening to this talk. I

suppose if you are unhappy about it you probably would not come back next week. If I see you next week then I presume you were happy.

Perhaps some people like chanting and they feel very happy when they chant. They chant early in the morning, they chant at night and have good sleep. They feel very peaceful. They have good dreams. Chanting is a form of concentration but there are those who don't like chanting the Sutta. That is quite alright because it is an individual preference. Now these are spiritual things.

Or services: Some help out in the temple, some go to the old folks home or children's home. They are not paid. Some even bring food to cheer. It gives them joy and they feel happy about it, not because of sensual enjoyment but because of services in trying to make those unfortunate people's lives, more bearable and happier. Doing simple things sometimes can give you great happiness that is spiritual.

I wish to give an example that happened to me a long time ago. One day in Penang there was a blind man trying to cross the road. Each time he stepped out, a motorbike or a car would honk at him. So he stepped back and when he felt it was alright he

stepped forward and he would get honked again. I was already late for an appointment but I decided to walk up to him and asked: “Are you trying to cross the road?” He said “yes”. “Can I help you?” He said “yes” and I said again “I will hold your hand can you just follow me?”

So, I brought him across and I asked again: “Where do you want to go?” He said “no need, now I know my way once I am across I know my way”. I asked “sure?” “Sure”. “Ok” then I moved along.

Even though I was late there was so much spiritual joy arising in me. I was so happy and when my friend saw my huge smile and asked if I struck a lottery to which I replied “not so lucky”. But he was puzzled why I was be so happy. Well, that is because there is spiritual joy. It is just a simple act and I don’t have to pay one cent. All I did was to take a blind man across the road but the joy lasted a long time. This is spiritual joy.

One must also not assume that when you meditate you would become like a stone with no feelings.

Meditators used to ask me: “Bro James, does it mean that people who meditate on mindfulness and equanimity have no more feelings of joy? In that case I do not wish to become like a block of wood with equanimity feelings all the time. I want to have pleasant feelings”. It is not so.

*There are spiritual joys
which are, more subtle and
sublime, long lasting and do
not produce encumbrances.*

Balance of spiritual joy and sensual joy

Meditators should be mindful of wholesome spiritual joy which they should cultivate. The Buddha said it leads to happiness not only in this life but also in the future lives.

In the absence of spiritual joy, it is essential to have sensual joy, otherwise one would feel deprived, and become agitated, sad, angry and jealous at those who have it. As one cultivates and experi-

ences more spiritual joy, then the need for worldly joy becomes less.

As a Buddhist we must remember that in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures we should not cause harm to ourselves and other beings. For instance we should not steal or cheat in order to satisfy our enjoyment. One should not consume nor distribute drugs.

Meditators without keeping precepts will find it difficult to progress in meditation because morality is the foundation for attaining concentration, peacefulness and wisdom.

I have explained in this talk the 3 basic kinds of feelings – pleasant, painful and neutral. I have also explained the pleasant feelings connected to sensual things and pleasant feelings connected to spiritual things.

How to practice contemplation of feelings?

In the practice of meditation, how do we cultivate mindfulness on the feelings? In the beginning of the sitting, we normally start with rising and falling of the abdomen as the preliminary starting point so that we do not have to go searching for an object and also to build up concentration.

After some time, a meditator may find that the sensations or feelings in the body become more dominant and obvious. A meditator could then switch over to the body feelings such as itchiness, numbness, painful sensations, tension etc.

The meditator should observe the feelings the way one should be mindful of the body as instructed by the Buddha. That is, ardent, clearly comprehending and being mindful.

One should look deeply into the feelings and see the building up of intensity of that feeling whether it is itchiness or painful sensations that is being built up gradually.

So it is essential to practise equanimity and mindfulness so that the mind can be detached from those painful feelings.

Only when the feelings become unbearable should the meditator change his posture. Mindfully “changing, changing” by putting down one foot on the floor or both feet relaxed on the floor without interlocking. In this way the meditator then observes the painful sensations disappearing from the leg.

Sometimes a meditator could see the arising and disappearing of the sensation even without moving the legs or releasing the posture. As for itchiness which is bearable a meditator should not scratch it but observe the itchiness which is sometimes moving, or becoming stronger or gradually disappearing.

A meditator should refrain from moving the body once he has settled into a comfortable posture so that feelings that are built up and become prominent can be observed.

A meditator therefore, can switch to other feelings arising from the body instead of coming back to the rising and falling of the abdomen which is the air element if the feeling object is clearer and predominant.

Feeling is a very strong object compared to the rising and falling which is very subtle. Therefore, it is a very suitable object to build up your concentration because it pulls the mind there. The mind is compelled to anchor on the painful feeling which then builds up strong concentration.

I shall end my talk here today and will now deal with the frequently asked question with regard to contemplation of feeling.

Questions and Answers

(Question 1) Can we stay on the feeling for a whole hour or must we return to rising and falling of the abdomen?

Answer to question 1:

If the feeling object is very dominant and strong and when it has disappeared and another dominant feeling object appears such as after itchiness there is pain. You may still stay on the feeling object even if it is for the whole hour except when the feeling object is no longer noticeable and there is no other prominent object then a meditator needs to come back to the preliminary object which is the rising and falling of the abdomen.

When pain is appearing like a block of pain or block of numbness and the meditator cannot see the change in that feeling object – it is advisable for the meditator to go to another object or return back to the rising and falling where the change is more easier perceived.

(Question 2) How long or how much are we supposed to bear the pain?

Answer to question 2:

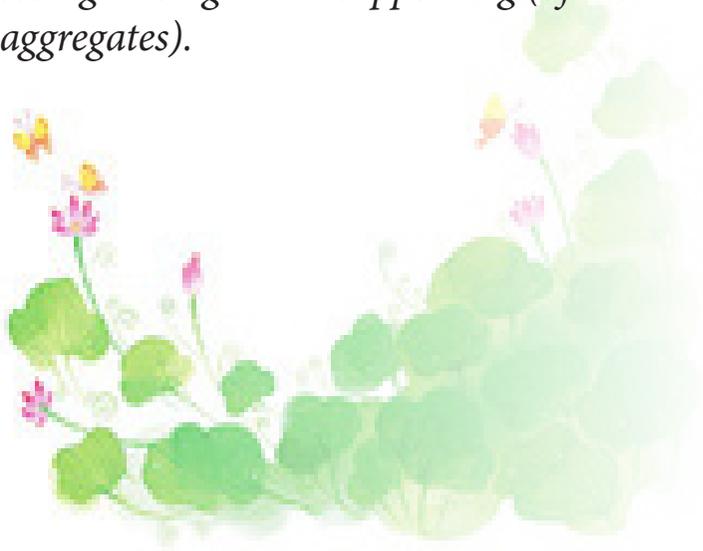
You should try to bear the pain as long as you can. If you find the pain too excruciating then you slowly change your posture mindfully.

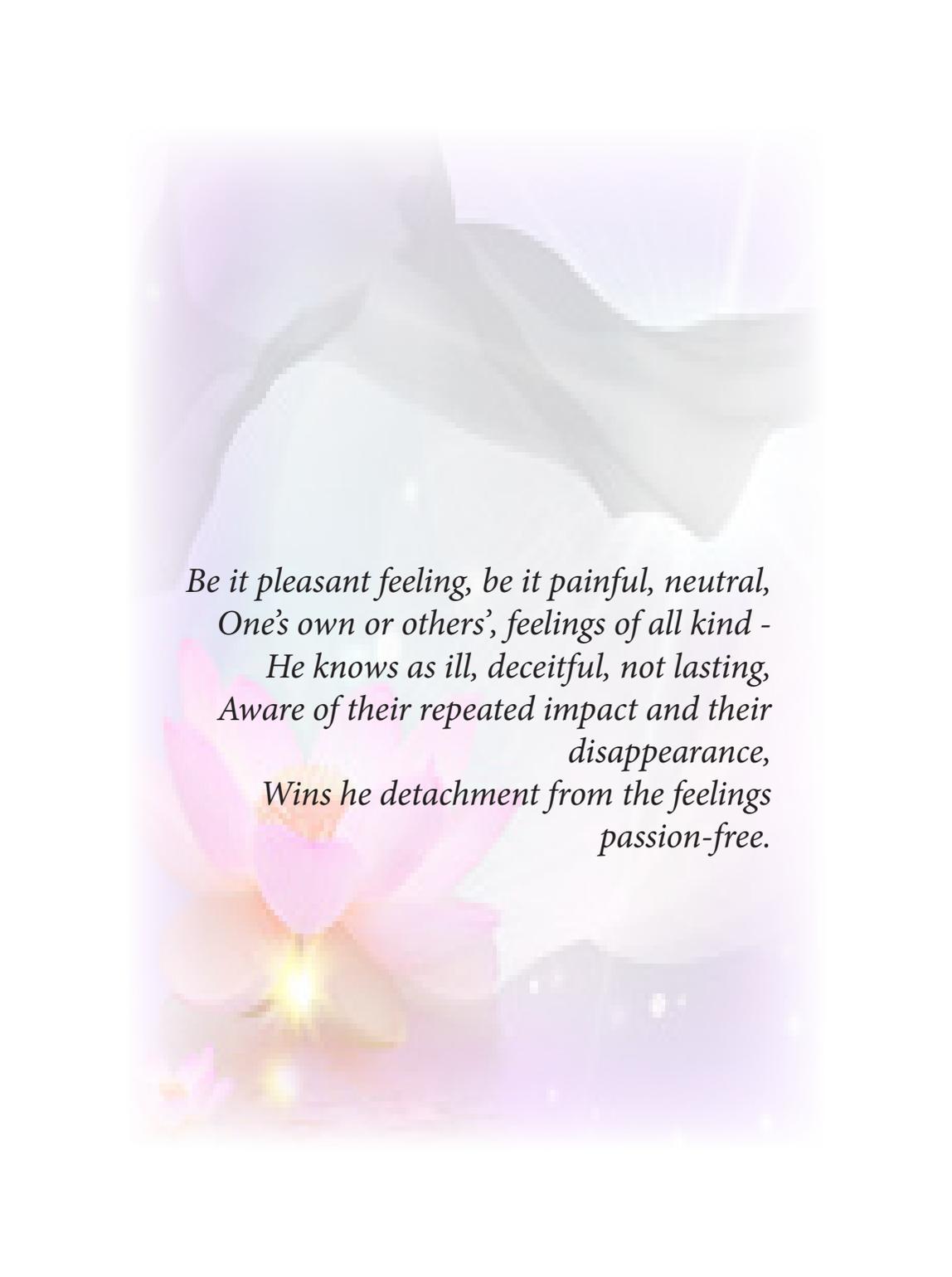
I will continue with other types of feelings next week mentioned in the Discourse concerning painful feelings and equanimity feelings connected to sensual and spiritual things. I will also cover methods of how to deal with pain in the following talk and with more Q&A.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!



*Though one should live a hundred years
not seeing arising and disappearing (of
the aggregates),
yet better is life for a single day
seeing arising and disappearing (of the
aggregates).*





*Be it pleasant feeling, be it painful, neutral,
One's own or others', feelings of all kind -
He knows as ill, deceitful, not lasting,
Aware of their repeated impact and their
disappearance,
Wins he detachment from the feelings
passion-free.*

Lesson Five

Contemplation of Feelings
Part 2
(Vedanupassana)



Lesson Five
Contemplation of Feelings
Part 2
(Vedanupassana)

This is the fifth lesson of our 9 Lesson Satipatthana Meditation series.

Introduction

Welcome back. Last week, I explained what is: pleasant, painful and neutral feelings which are the 3 basic types of feelings taught by the Buddha in the Section of Contemplation of Feelings. Further, I explained pleasant feelings that are connected to sensual things and pleasant feelings that are connected with spiritual things.

Today I will continue with the remaining part of the Section on painful feelings and equanimity feelings connected to sensual and spiritual things.

Painful feelings connected with sensual things

The Buddha continued:

“When experiencing painful feelings connected with sensual things he knows”

What is this painful feeling connected to sensual things?

In this world we live in, we have so much worldly things, sensual things, belongings, ambitions, longings for things which we cannot have. Those objects that come into contact with our senses which, we dislike produces pain.

For example: meeting with unpleasant or disagreeable persons, growing old, being sick, decaying, dying, being separated from loved ones or precious belongings or even being fearful thinking of unpleasant things that might happen to us or loved ones.

These are some of the experiences of painful feelings connected to sensual things that are sorrowful, unprofitable and do not lead to spiritual growth.

The Buddha says he knows, the painful feelings connected with sensual things.

One should let go of painful feelings. How does one let go? A meditator notes the painful or unpleasant worldly feelings until it fades away.

But if you are unaware of it, the painful sensual feelings stay on for a long, long time.

I was in India long ago and I stayed in an Indian temple for a few days. There was one lady who looked about 50 years old, sat in a corner crying. After a long while I went past that corner and she was still there, crying. So I asked the caretaker of the temple why was she crying? He said her wedding ring was stolen. She looked so pitiful crying for long, so I offered to buy one and give her back but he said she does not want any other. She recognised that only one, which was her wedding ring. This went on for a few days. I felt sorry for her and tried to talk to her but she refused to talk to me.

I carried on with my journey to other places. I found out from a friend after some time that she died shortly after from a broken heart. Painful it is to have feelings that are hard to bear – she could not bear the painful feelings and so the mind just came to a ‘full stop’. She has no more ‘will’ to live so she just died...all because of a ring.

Now a meditator would not do that. A meditator would just watch that feeling, see arising and passing away and would not die of a broken heart. Painful feelings would become weaker and weaker and then disappear.

Clinging to disagreeable feelings cause pain. One could spend a great part of life suffering if he or she does not release that feeling. One would feel so sad and unhappy all the time, and most times won't even know why.

Once dissatisfied, they just blame other people because he does not understand what that feeling is, and could not see the nature of feelings.

Painful feelings connected with spiritual things

Coming to painful feelings connected with spiritual things, the Buddha said:

“When experiencing painful feelings connected with spiritual things he knows”

What is this spiritual painful feeling? Spiritual pain means painful feelings that arise in the process of spiritual development.

For example, in an intensive retreat a meditator has to wake up very early in the morning. One has to endure the heaviness and drowsiness from lack of sleep or other discomfort as one is deprived of his or her comfortable bed or when one has to share the room with someone who snores all night or someone who wants to have strong fan or no fan and so one has to bear the heat element that is connected to the heat or cold.

One may experience pain due to stomach upset from unsuitable food. In sitting for a long duration one would also experience a lot of pain such as aches, itchiness, numbness, stiffness, hardness, body stress and various types of bodily pain such like burning pain, twisting pain, pulling pain etc. Some even find it very painful to abstain from talking. So there is a variety of painful feelings connected to our spiritual endeavours.

Spiritual pain leads to non-pain while the worldly sensual pain leads to more pain. That is the big difference between the 2 types of pain and one must clearly understand this difference.

One should continue to cultivate mindfulness and knowing – to see the nature of this mind and body, the feeling that arises within so that we are not so attached to the feeling. When the mind is detached from the painful feeling, and with mindfulness, one would be able to observe the arising and disappearing of that painful feeling as an object.

In daily life we normally just scratch the itch away. But in meditation we learn to observe the nature of feelings. By staying still, and not moving we can experience the various intensity of feelings arising and disappearing.

When the mind is trained in such way, then whenever one encounters painful feelings the trained mind is able to stay balanced, and take note of the painful feeling as merely one of the meditation objects so that, the mind will not be affected or be dragged into dissatisfaction, anger, frustration, etc.

Neutral feelings connected with sensual things

Moving onto neutral feelings, the Buddha continued:

*“When experiencing neutral
feelings connected with sensual
things he knows”*

Neutral feelings are those which are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. We have a lot of neutral feelings throughout the day and sometimes we complain of boredom especially if one has a lot of routines for example, one goes to the office, work, comes back home, bath, eat, and when tired – drop to sleep. Next day, the same things repeats itself.

Another common example is a housewife. Some feel bored by the repeated uninteresting routine of cooking, washing, ironing or cleaning.

These are examples of worldly equanimity feelings. Some people divert their attention to pleasant activities so that they do not fall into depression, dissatisfaction, anger, frustration, etc. But as a meditator, feeling is an object of meditation. Therefore we do not need to divert from these feelings towards other pleasurable activities to overcome the equanimity feelings.

Instead the meditator should take the equanimity feeling as an object of mindfulness, noting the arising and disappearing of the equanimity feelings. In that way the strength and momentum of that equanimity loses its intensity and will fade away.

In this manner, we are going directly to the object, dealing with it at its root and overcoming it by way of mindfulness.

In this way, the neutral feelings when it arises will not grip the mind. Otherwise the neutral feelings that have gripped the mind would make the person restless and disturbed.

Neutral feelings connected with spiritual things

The Buddha continued:

“When experiencing neutral feelings connected with spiritual things he knows”

What about spiritual neutral feelings?

These are neutral feelings that are wholesome which are opposite of the neutral feelings connected to sensual things as explained before.

(a) One could have neutral feelings when performing wholesome actions like giving, services, etc.

Example, one may give a dollar to a beggar

along the street with neutral feelings. One may be cleaning up the temple or visit the old folks in a welfare home with neutral feeling.

Another example, one would bring to the mind the intention to keep his precepts with neutral feelings every morning. The precept-abstinence could also arise with neutral feelings. In other words, the meditator should recognise the neutral feelings that are wholesome.

(b) There are also wholesome spiritual feelings that are highly developed in the 5th Jhana or mental absorption. When the developed mind has gone beyond the pleasant and painful, it stays on the neutral feeling at its apex with stillness and peacefulness. These equanimity feelings are lofty and wholesome.

(c) One could also experience neutral feelings in observing the rising and falling of the abdomen or even in walking meditation – in the lifting, pushing or putting movements.

One could also experience neutral feelings arise with the noting of sounds, smell, taste or noting any external objects with neutral feelings.

Neutral feelings that are connected with spiritual things do not lead to unwholesomeness like boredom and restlessness because it is connected to the wholesome mental states such as mental balance, mindfulness, tranquillity and peacefulness.

Practising internally

The Buddha continued:

“Thus, he lives practising, internally, feeling-contemplation in feelings”

This means the meditator contemplates on one’s internal feelings that arise. The more we look into feelings internally, the more we understand the nature of feelings that come and go which is not controlled by anyone. They arise due to certain conditions.

The more we understand the nature of feelings, the more we are able to let go of those feelings that are unprofitable and which cause a lot of emotional pain.

The more mindful we are of feelings the better we are at managing our emotions.

*Therefore, we should
take note and let go of
negative feelings so that
we have more room for
pleasant feelings to arise
and have a happier life.*

Practising externally

The Buddha said further:

“...or practising externally, feeling-contemplation in feelings, or practising, internally and externally, feeling-contemplation in feelings, or he lives contemplating the arising of feelings or he lives contemplating the passing away of feelings or he lives contemplating the arising and passing away of feelings or the mindfulness that there is only this feeling that is clearly established in him.”

This means, the meditator not only contemplates on own feelings that arise but also contemplates feelings that arise from external objects as well. In practising so, the meditator also becomes sensitive feelings from external objects. He becomes more mindful and thoughtful of whatever he says or does, so that it is not harmful or hurtful to oneself or others.

Practising external feeling-contemplation is especially useful when you are living with your spouse or family. These people are always near, quarrels come about for many reasons perhaps because of different ideas, different perceptions or because one of them is in a bad mood and is unaware of feelings or fails to see its nature.

In practising external feeling-contemplation, one should note them as just merely feelings arising from external objects. Such external feelings are also of the same nature in that it arises and would pass away.

With mindfulness we are prevented from being affected by such feelings internally or externally. If not, when others are angry it will make us angry, when others are depressed it will make us depressed because we are not mindful that it is merely an external object that influence our internal feelings. It becomes 'contagious'.

By frequently noting feelings arising externally, the meditator is unaffected by them and he can maintain this balance of mind and peacefulness.

In other words, one should practise contemplating one's own feelings arising internally from mental objects and also, feelings arising from external 5 sense objects. One sees and understands the nature of feelings internally or externally being conditioned – it arises and will cease in the same way until such knowledge is clearly established in the meditator.

Conclusion

So in ending the Section on Contemplation of Feelings: what are the feelings that need to be cultivated and maintained?

Those feelings that are the spiritual feelings should be cultivated and maintained.

Those sensual or worldly feelings that are causing more pain, sadness, frustrations, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are the ones that must be let go.

Only when one lets go of such negative feelings then one has room for more positive feelings. It is like having a lot of dirty water in your glass – there is no more room for clean water. But if one were to pour away the dirty water only then could clean water fill it up.

Now such positive feelings would include the painful spiritual feelings like the pain that a meditator would have to endure in the practice of meditation such as discomfort, itchiness and numbness. One should not fear pain, one should continue to note it because this spiritual pain can be a good friend. It can be a suitable object to develop strong concentration and insight-wisdom.

I will end my talk here today and will continue with contemplation of mind in the next lesson. For now I will answer some common questions with regard to the practice of contemplation of feelings.

Questions and Answers

(Question 1) If I cannot see the rising and falling or feelings what should I do?

Answer to question 1:

You can observe the touching points of the sitting posture such as the sensations where the feet touch the floor or each other, and locate 3 or 4 points which can be clearly perceived. You can also note the sitting posture itself that is the upright tension at the back. Try to experience the element of hardness, softness or heat element. Is it warm or hot? Or, sometimes there are vibrations in the leg area and buttock area.

Once you note an area for some time (probably 20 to 30 counts) and you still cannot perceive the object with the characteristic of change, then you move onto the next area and stay again for probably another 20 to 30 counts in the same way.

(Answer to question 1 - continuing from previous page)

The second alternative is to mindfully stand up and proceed with walking meditation which is more obvious and gross.

(Question 2) How can we develop and maintain wholesome feelings?

Answer to question 2:

By cultivating mindfulness we are able to maintain and develop wholesome feelings. In other words when we bring our mind to meditation, dana and sila or in assisting others in wholesome works we are more able to bring out wholesome spiritual feelings.

Question (3) How do we let go of unwholesome feelings?

Answer to question 3:

If one habitually directs the mind to watch feelings as an object of meditation the meditator learns to recognise feelings including negative feelings. Once we are able to recognise negative feelings that are unwholesome, then, one simply let go. How? By noting feelings as an object with detachment the feelings will then cease by itself when it is not held onto It is like fire been put out when there is no more gas.

Question (4) Must we learn to contemplate on feeling instead of just rising and falling?

Answer to question 4:

Firstly, feelings are an important object because we feel all the time. If we are not aware, we could prolong the negative feelings which produce emotional pain.

Secondly, one could also easily get lost in sensuous feelings if we are not trained to watch feelings.

Thirdly, feelings can be very strong and a 'gross' object compared to rising and falling which is more subtle and sometimes undetectable.

In the absence of rising and falling, we must take the next object that is clear and prominent so that we can maintain mindfulness. Rising and falling is not the only object for mindfulness cultivation - it also involves the other 3 foundations: feelings, mind and dhamma which will be discussed later on.

(Answer to question 4 - continuing from previous page)

Based on these 4 foundations of mindfulness, we build up the continuation of mindfulness that gives rise to concentration and wisdom.



*Not by rain of golden coins
is found desires' satiety,
desires are dukkha, of little joy,
thus a wise one understands.*



*Irrigators lead the water;
Fletchers fashion the shaft;
Carpenters carve the wood
Meditators purify their mind*



Lesson Six

Contemplation of Mind

Part 1

(Cittanupassana)



Lesson Six

Contemplation of Mind

Part 1

(Cittanupassana)

This is the sixth lesson of our 9 Lesson Satipatthana Meditation series.

Introduction

Lesson 5 wraps up the discourse on Contemplation of Feelings. We will talk about Contemplation of the Mind in today's lesson. In Pali, meaning Cittanupassana.

Mind... What is mind? Where is the mind?

I came across the following descriptions by the Buddha in the scripture:

Mind is like a river current, never at a standstill, constantly moving.

It is like a monkey jumping from tree to tree (like mind jumping from object to object).

Mind is like a flash of lightning that in a moment comes to an end.

The untrained mind is like our worst enemy that can harm us and causes us great pain.

Therefore, it is of great importance that we develop awareness of the mind and understand its nature so that we have a choice. We can choose either to make ourselves happy or sad. When we know how the mind works we know the way to handle the mind, so that we don't get carried away by the mind. It is not by prayers and mere faith that we become happy.

Happiness comes from within our mind and if we learn to manage it properly, our problems would not take control of our mind and make us miserable. To do that we must understand how the mind works.

In this Discourse, Buddha named 16 types of mind. Some are very common, in that we experience it all the time except we may not be aware of it. Apart from the common ones, there are also very lofty ones which we can only experience only if we train our mind to reach up to that mental state.

I will now go through each of them briefly as set out in the Discourse.

Attachment Affected Mind and Attachment-Free Mind

The Buddha continued:

“...and monks, how does a monk live practising mind-contemplation in the mind? Herein a monk knows as attachment affected mind or he knows the attachment-free mind as attachment-free mind...”

The 1st type of mind is attachment-affected mind. What is attachment affected mind?

Attachment mind includes greediness, cravings, selfishness, desires, longings, covetousness, clinging etc. Like glue – it sticks onto the pleasing object experienced through seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and through thoughts, and refuses to let go.

To explain this type of mind, I wish to give a few illustrations. Here I repeat a story.

There was a crowd watching a big fire burning some houses and one man said to another standing next to him “This is awesome. I have never seen such a big fire before”. The other man replied “But brother, that one is my house!” To this man the fire is not awesome. It is painful to watch his house and his possessions being burnt away.

Another example –our attachment to our children – Most people love their children very much even though some may not show it. Children give us much pleasure and happiness when we see them grow up and become fine adults. Yet sometimes they can make their parents sad and troubled especially when they are naughty or don’t live up to their parents’ expectations.

Once there was this friend who asked me - “We are like slaves to our children serving them day and night looking after them, saving every dollar to provide for them and stingy on our own wants – am I being stupid?”

I replied – No, you are not stupid. You love your children very much. Attachment brings much happiness but also comes with pain, anxiety and worries as well – like a coin that has 2 sides. You can't have one, without the other.

Now, what is attachment-free mind?

There are those who after taking up meditation for some time they start to feel less disturbed and stressed – things don't bother them as much as it used to.

They used to be so attached to their children, grandchildren that it kept them very busy and they have no peace of mind. Slowly they learnt to delegate what they could not do. They become more peaceful, contented and had more time for spiritual life.

If you are attached to lots of things you will not have time for a spiritual life. Especially elderly people should be encouraged to spend more time for spiritual life and learn to be detached.

If you think about it – there are a lot of things which are not necessary for us to be involved in. So, we ought to learn to be detached and let go. When your mind becomes free from too much-activities, it becomes relaxed and peaceful. In other words, free from attachment.

The word detachment is often confused and misunderstood as selfishness or couldn't care less.

It is not so. Detachment can arise with kindness, compassion, wisdom, generosity etc. An example of kindness with detachment is like being kind and helping others but be detached from expectations of rewards or returns.

Another example of detachment with knowledge or wisdom is, when one can maintain one's car with the knowledge that it needs to be properly maintained like changing the engine-oil without being attached to the car.

One can also do one's household daily chores of cleaning, wiping, etc, with the knowledge that we need to keep the house livable without being attached to the house.

Hate Affected Mind and Hate-Free Mind

The Buddha continued and spoke of the 3rd and 4th type of mind:

“...or he knows the hate-affected mind as hate-affected mind or he knows the hate-free mind as hate-free mind...”

The hateful mind is like a forest fire that burns everything in its path. It hurts everyone even loved or dear ones and destroys everything that stands in its way.

Just like when someone is annoyed even though you may not be the cause of his annoyance, but he may still lash out at you when you are with him. This is the nature of the hateful mind.

Hateful mind includes ill-will, anger, frustration, anxiety, irritation, resentment, animosity, annoyance, remorse, loneliness, sadness, fear and many other negative mental states.

The hateful mind is not there all the time. Don't think "I am so hateful that people don't like me or, I am so jealous that people don't like me". Don't associate mind with "me or I or my".

It is just a mental state that arises and disappears. Mind is not you. It is not yours it does not belong to you. It is not me. It is just a mind.

It arises due to certain conditions and then it passes away. So, we should not think of oneself as a hateful person. It is only a mind with hate.

What are the conditions that give rise to an angry mind?

An unpleasant or offensive object – whether internal or external – sight, sound, smell, taste, a tangible object or a mind-object. Unwise attention toward an unpleasant object gives rise to an angry mind. It increases and grows when mindfulness is absent. When sadness, remorse or dissatisfaction arises and left to grow and become strong, it leads to an unstable and depressed mental state.

Next we come to hate-free mind.

With mindfulness and wise reflections, anger or other negative mental states that have arisen will decrease and subside.

The power of mindfulness is the detachment from the object.

Once you detach your mind from the offensive object the angry mind dies off by itself.

If you don't have mindfulness, the mind would continue thinking of the unpleasant object and would be pulled down, get sucked to the very bottom like a very heavy weight. Such people lose their self-esteem and become very emotional.

Not only that, negative mind states also produce loss of bodily immunity causing other bodily sicknesses such as, gastritis, thyroid, migraines, hypertension and others. The mind affects the body just as in return, the body affects the mind.

It is true that when we meditate we have peace and wholesome minds. Our body immunity becomes strong and that makes the body healthy.

We have to stop here for today and continue with more types of mind in the next lesson. Before we go into the practice lets go deeper into subject by Q&A so that we can clear our doubts and clarify certain points on this subject.

Question and Answer

I shall now go through some common question regarding the mind before I give instructions with regard to the practice of mindfulness in watching the mind.

Question (1) Can we go straight into watching the mind instead of starting with rising and falling?

Answer to question 1:

At first, it may not be so beneficial. It is difficult to cultivate mindfulness of the mind when mindfulness is still weak and you cannot see the mind clearly. Mind is delicate and subtle.

(Answer to question 1 - continuing from previous page)

It is more beneficial to begin the practice with mindfulness of the body because the body is gross.

In that way, mindfulness is more easily built up and then directed to watch the mind, then, the mind becomes clear. It is easier to establish mindfulness of the mind in this way.

However, there are meditators who have already cultivated strong mindfulness and they can go directly to watch the mind as they can perceive their mind clearly whether in their formal or informal meditation in their daily life. Having said that, there are times when their mindfulness weakens or is weak. In such times, they should return to the body base to establish mindfulness.

When meditators are experiencing deeper insights the mind appears very clear to them.

Question (2) If it is so hard why must we watch the mind?

Answer to question 2:

The Buddha said the untrained mind is like an enemy because it brings about all kinds of misery and vexation. It can cause one to take birth in the suffering realm. It is therefore, essential to watch the mind. The untrained mind creates defilements causing mental pain without one being aware of it.

Question (3) Must we cultivate mindfulness of the mind - I am aware of the sadness, anger, frustration without having to cultivate mindfulness of the mind?

Answer to question 3:

There is a difference between mindfulness and consciousness. It is the nature of the mind to be conscious of an object but not necessary mindful. Mindfulness arises with a detached mental state therefore the pain will subside if one keeps noting, whereas, consciousness has no detachment but merely conscious of the object. As such, pain continues for a long time without subsiding even if one is conscious of it. That is the big difference between being conscious and being mindful.

Question (4) How to deal with mind when it has sadness, remorse, illwill and etc...?

Answer to question 4:

Firstly, recognise the mind and then, be detached from it. If one is able to quickly catch it in the beginning or when it arises, then the mind does not gain momentum. If not, the unwholesome mind having gained strong momentum will take a longer time to subside when being noted.

If mindfulness is strong it usually disappears the moment it is being noted or it disappears after a few notings. Example - it is like pulling out a small plant compared to chopping a huge tree.

If it persists or if one's mindfulness is not so strong yet, one can switch base - return to rising and falling or feelings - One can note the type of feeling that is being experienced at that time - like how depression feels like. The negative mind should disappear once the meditator switches to other bases.

Question (5) Must we only note the unwholesome mind (sadness, craving, etc)?

Answer to question 5:

No, you should equally note the positive ones for balance. If a meditator only notes the unwholesome mind, he would become disgusted and turn away from meditation. Therefore, it is essential that the meditator also equally notes the positive ones such as calmness, happiness, joy and so forth.

The benefit of noting the wholesome mind is that it gives encouragement. As we meditate or progress, our mind becomes more wholesome. Noting this, we become more encouraged and become sure of the direction of our practice. It gives us the conviction to cultivate more of wholesomeness or to go deeper into the practice.

How does one practise contemplating mind?

In order to get a feel of how to take the mind as an object of meditation, we will start off today's practice by just watching the mind.

In the beginning, it is difficult to put thoughts into the various types of mind as mentioned in the Discourse as this will cause a lot of distraction and confusion to arise.

So, it is easier to begin by just naming the thoughts as it appears. You can name the thoughts that are clear and the ones you are aware of. The thoughts that are subtle, unclear or cannot be detected - you just let it pass noting it as "unclear, unclear".

How do you name the thoughts in the beginning?

Example, you are thinking of the house – just note house. If you are thinking of the process of marketing or things involving marketing or buying groceries – just name the word that comes to the mind like “buying, buying” or “groceries”. If you are thinking of your car parked outside the temple just note “car car”.

In this way it is easier to note directly what arises in the mind rather than to classify them whether they are attachment or ill-will or ignorance mind, etc.

In the later stages of your practice as the mind become clearer and you become familiar with watching the mind, you will be able to classify them without much effort.

So, for this session, you may sit to watch your mind and see how many times you are able to note it.

If you can't see the mind, it is alright, just note that you are not seeing or perceiving the thoughts.

When the thoughts become clear, try to recognize the arising and disappearing of thoughts – a new thought arises and passes away – different thoughts arise and pass away.

Don't try to add further thoughts or stop the thinking. Just observe thoughts as thoughts - it is coming together and it is disappearing.

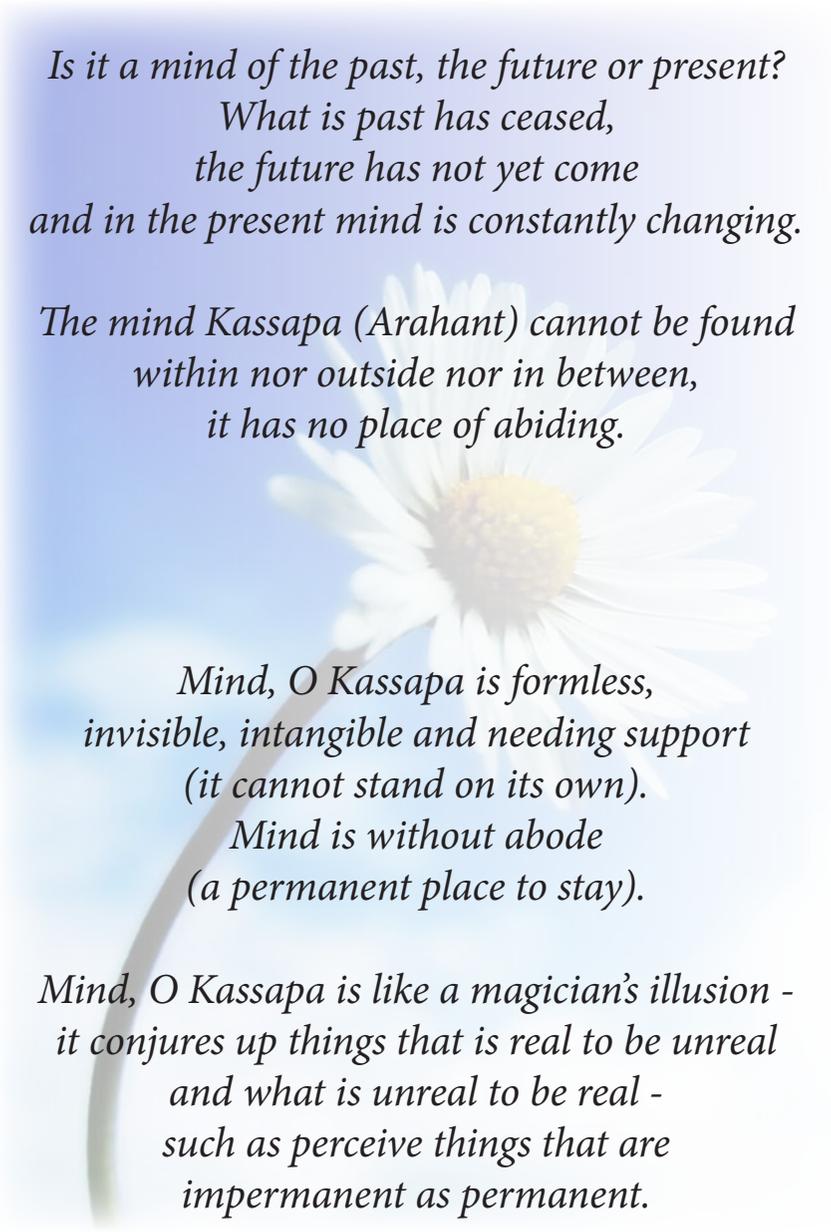
Just watch them as they really are. You can gain a certain level of calmness by just perceiving the thoughts coming and going and not getting involved or interfering in its process. So there is no likes or dislikes.

Let us begin sitting for 20 minutes and after the sitting session, we will have a feedback session.



*The mind is very hard to check
and swift, it falls on what it wants.
The training of the mind is good,
a mind so tamed brings happiness*





*Is it a mind of the past, the future or present?
What is past has ceased,
the future has not yet come
and in the present mind is constantly changing.*

*The mind Kassapa (Arahant) cannot be found
within nor outside nor in between,
it has no place of abiding.*

*Mind, O Kassapa is formless,
invisible, intangible and needing support
(it cannot stand on its own).*

*Mind is without abode
(a permanent place to stay).*

*Mind, O Kassapa is like a magician's illusion -
it conjures up things that is real to be unreal
and what is unreal to be real -
such as perceive things that are
impermanent as permanent.*

Lesson Seven

Contemplation of Mind
Part 2
(Cittanupassana)



Lesson Seven

Contemplation of Mind

Part 2

(Cittanupassana)

This is the seventh lesson of our 9 Lesson Sati-patthana Meditation series.

Deluded Mind and Delusion-Free Mind

The Buddha continued with the 5th and 6th type of mind:

“...or he knows the deluded mind as deluded mind or he knows the delusion mind as delusion free mind...”

What is a deluded mind?

It is ignorance, confusion, not knowing or mental blindness. The mind whirls around like a merry go round. Just like a confused mind when it goes round and round and not knowing what to do.

The deluded mind can also arise as a doubtful or dispersed mind. It is because of a deluded mind, there arises the doubt about enlightenment (Nibbana), the way of enlightenment – which is the Noble 8 Fold Path and those who have attained enlightenment. The dispersed mind is like grasping for happiness but not knowing what or like a drowning man splashing wildly and reaching in all directions to grasp onto something to be saved or like a ship in the stormy sea, swept by the wind, without heading in any direction.

It is ignorance that covers up our mind and that causes suffering. It conceals the reality of the 4 Noble Truths – it conceals suffering, cause of suffering, cessation of suffering and the way out of suffering.

The deluded mind is like mental blindness.

Example, sometimes a meditator can experience this in their practice – just not being aware of feelings, mind state, body or anything at all – don't even know if they are meditating or sleeping.

Delusion is like a cataract covering the eyes. One is unable to see deeper into reality - only anchoring on the surface with concepts - which is just conventional reality. Concepts lead to more concepts and hence one can argue to no end because no one is really right. One can think that one's concept is right and the other person thinks likewise.

The near-cause of ignorance is unwise attention in perceiving the impermanent as permanent, suffering as happiness and egoless as self.

For example when things start to change, one becomes disturbed, distraught, not knowing that things are actually changing all the time. One gets into intense pain and suffering when the changes are not in our favour like when what is precious to us is lost or when we dislike or fear.

Often we think if we can attain or have certain things in life we will be the happiest person in the world. When we do achieve that, we realize that our expectation have changed, the fascination of external objects has also changed.

In this ever-changing world we live in, no true lasting happiness, that we yearn for, can be found.

By seeing the egoless as ego, we build up fantasy or view it as ‘I am rich, I am great or I am famous, etc.’ then this view is inflated with greediness or desire like ‘I want this or I want that..’ or with aversion to painful objects like ‘I don’t want this or that’. Thereby, we intensify the mental pain by holding onto the ego or self.

The 6th type of mind – is the mind that is free from delusion.

In order to keep our mind free from delusion, we develop the 4 kinds of clear comprehension (sampajanna) as mentioned in the Discourse that is clearly-knowing the purpose, suitability, domain and the reality.

I would like to explain clearly that knowing the ‘purpose’ means whatever activities we do should be conducive for our spiritual growth, such as Dana (which is giving, performing charity), Sila (which is morals) and Samadhi (that is developing concentration).

Clearly knowing the ‘suitability’ includes knowing (example):

- (a) suitable time to meditate
- (b) suitable time to eat, suitable food

- (c) suitable place
(quiet, peaceful and free from danger)
- (d) suitable and proper guide or
experienced teacher
- (e) suitable climate (not too hot or not too
cold)
- (f) suitable meditation method, etc

Clearly knowing the ‘domain’ means cultivating mindfulness in whatever we are doing in the present moment like walking, bathing, cleaning, eating, and even while working, etc.

Clearly comprehending the ‘reality’ means looking deeply into the realities of the mind and body and, not just superficially. It means perceiving its characteristics of constant change, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness.

Contracted Mind and Distracted Mind

Moving on to the 7th and 8th type of mind, the Buddha continued:

“...or he knows the contracted state of mind as contracted state of mind or he knows the distracted state of mind as distracted state of mind...”

What is this contracted mind?

It is a mind that is sort of constricted, shrunken, unworkable, stuck or stagnant. We may even experience this mental state during meditation sometimes. You feel that the mind is just stuck, refuses to work or move.

You may want to direct the attention to watch rise and fall but it just won't oblige. It just wants to sleep, feeling drowsy, everything is unclear – the mind is blur and unworkable. It refuses to watch feelings, mind – nothing works and this state is a form of shrunken mind.

So what do we do with the shrunken mind?

Firstly you ought to note the shrunken mind – try to experience what a shrunken mind is like – try to see the change.

If this does not work, one should go to the stronger object such as standing or walking meditation. It will surely disappear if one induces more effort.

Next is the distracted mind...

The distracted mind is the restless, wandering or scattered mind. This is when our mind does not stay on the object – it runs all over the place.

Why are we distracted?

It is because there are things done not to our satisfaction or things not done such as marketing, fetching children from tuition centre, etc. The mind may also be busy trying to solve problems. This mind comes with worry – it is distracted.

When experiencing this type of mind the meditator should know it as a distracted mind and what can we do with the distracted mind?

One should try to bring it back to the meditation object such as rising, falling or feelings ... otherwise one is no longer meditating even though he may be sitting still and not moving – he is actually not cultivating mindfulness.

By not recognising the distracted mind, the mind can become very restless and even cause insomnia. One may not sleep well or have bad dreams.

The mind is like a strong current. If the unwholesome mind gets caught in the current then it will be pulled to the bottom – meaning one can be dragged into sadness and unhappiness where one finds it difficult to get out. So, one should develop mindfulness to watch the mind so that one is not be dragged down by the strong current.

If you are not mindful and get dragged by the current, then the mind could be in that suffering state for a long-long time.

Now, moving on to the next that is... the great minds...

Great Mind and Undeveloped Mind

The 9th and 10th type of mind is the great mind and undeveloped mind. The Buddha continued as follows:

“...or he knows the great state of mind as great state of mind or he knows the undeveloped state of mind as undeveloped state of mind...”

When we talk about a great mind we may probably find it quite abstract or difficult to comprehend what a great mind is unless we experience it. Example: like the Bodhisatta who had to undergo immense suffering and pain for incalculable rebirths for his perfection for Buddhahood in order to save all beings from suffering. That is indeed a great mind – a mind full of great kindness and compassion.

As for the undeveloped mind – it is easier to understand.

The undeveloped mind is weak. Fear arises easily in a weak mind. It gets agitated easily and quickly. It is superstitious and is easily influenced.

A weak mind finds it difficult to keep their morals and must be trained in concentration because they find it very difficult to concentrate. These are the signs of a weak mind which can easily be possessed or influenced by another being! Others can easily manipulate or cheat a weak mind. They only need to instill fear in them and they would obey what he says.

As a meditator, one should note such a mind state – tell yourself that fear is just a state of mind – it arise and it will disappear very quickly if you do not hold on to that state of mind.

Each time you watch that mind you become stronger and detached. If one does not practice watching such mental state, fear grips and weakens the intellect. One becomes more and more dependent on others for protection and salvation.

We shall deal with a few Q & A for clarity.

Question and Answer

Question (1) With regard to the earlier talk, the question, why is the mind contracted or unworkable?

Answer to question 1:

(a) Well, the mind is probably fatigued or tired from work that requires either a lot of thinking or bodily strength. When these people come for the meditation class they experience strong unworkable, stuck, contracted state of mind; or

(b) When a mind experiences great stress, remorse or sadness the mind also becomes unworkable; or

(c) When the mind or body is sick one may also experience unworkable mind; or

(d) If the Meditator experiences too much discomfort, tension or pain, the mind could become stuck and unworkable.

Question (2) Do parents have great mind?

Answer to question 2:

Parents are great to their children but a really great mind extends beyond their close and dear ones. It recognises all beings in great pain and suffering. They would help to alleviate their pain and suffering with impartiality.

Question (3) What is the mind? Is mind thinking?

Answer to question 3:

Mind is mental formation.

Question (4) Then is mental formation thinking?

Answer to question 4:

Firstly, let us define what is thinking.

Thinking usually means solving problems, generating words mentally, thinking what to do, planning, likes, dislikes, etc.

Mental formation is part of that process but there is also thinking without thoughts. For example, when we are aware of rising and falling, we do not have to think, we just need to note or be aware of the motion of the air element - and that is all.

Another example, when we hear certain sounds and may not know what type of sound or where it comes from or who is making the sound, then, there is only hearing consciousness without thinking (so this can be defined as the hearing mind without thinking) - likewise, the smelling consciousness, tasting consciousness, seeing consciousness, etc.

(Answer to question 4 - continuing from previous page)

There is continuous arising and disappearing of mind arising by way of 6 types of consciousness.

This explains the other part of formation - one with thinking and the other without thinking.

Question (5) If the mind is continuously arising why am I not able to perceive the mind?

Answer to question 5:

The mind is very subtle, fleeting and quick. Only a meditator trained in habitually watching the mind is able to detect with awareness the subtle mind arising through the external 5 sense-doors or directly through the mind door.

On the other hand, when the mind has become strong with anger, hatred, fear

(Answer to question 5 - continuing from previous page)

or sensuous-desire, etc..., even a non-mediator can be conscious of such mental-states except they are not aware and therefore cannot detach from the object. They are thereby pulled and controlled by the current of the unwholesome mind, experiencing pain and sorrow.

Question (6) Are we thinking all the time?

Answer to question 6:

The mind arises and passes away continuously but we may not be thinking all the time.

Question (7) I can't see the mind. Where do we look for the mind? Where is it?

Answer to question 7:

You can't see the mind with your eyes. It is intangible and formless. You can perceive the mind with your mind (mind watching mind). Mind arises by 2 ways - from the mind door or from the 5 sense doors.

Question (8) Is the mind, the brain? Is it in the brain?

Answer to question 8:

The brain is just a form aggregate – Rupa. Mind is formless. The mind is not residing inside or outside or in-between. It arises only when there is external or internal objects coming into contact with the senses.

(Answer to question 8 - continuing from previous page)

Therefore, the mind arises through the sense-door.

When the mind comes into contact with the ear, then it arises the ear consciousness which is the hearing mind or the object coming into contact with the eye – eye consciousness which is the seeing mind.

So, with this question we wrap up today's talk on the Mind. We will continue with more types of minds from the scripture next week. Let us begin sitting for half an hour.

Feedback

Now I will deal with the feedback from the practical session:

Feedback (1) Why do I feel like falling to the front?

Guidance to feedback 1:

The sitting posture should be equally balanced at the 3 points – the 2 points in front, (the left and right leg, in the half lotus posture) and one on the backside. If the body is leaning towards the front, then the body feels like falling forward after some time.

It is good for the beginner to use a cushion 3-4 inches higher on the buttock so that they would have a more upright back with stable posture and less pressure on the front legs.

Feedback (2) What to do when I am sleepy?

Guidance to feedback 2:

Give more work to the mind – go to the touching points as mentioned in my previous lessons. If it does not work, then stand up and do the walking meditation.

Feedback (3) If I feel intense pain what should I do?

Guidance to feedback 3:

If you can bear the pain, try to separate the mind from the object – in other words, be detached. Look deeper into the painful feeling and try to see the change in intensity. When the meditator finds it is unbearable he can change his posture mindfully or do standing or walking meditation.

Feedback (4) Can I do walking meditation for the whole half an hour because I don't feel like sitting?

Guidance to feedback 4:

In fact, it is good to do walking first before sitting. Walking meditation has great benefits. The object is more gross and clear so it is easier to cultivate and maintain continuous mindfulness.

Feedback (5) I am sweating why do I feel so hot?

Guidance to feedback 5:

Well, it is quite alright – perhaps it may be due to the many meditators in the hall or it may be due to strong concentration of the mind which builds up heat in the body.

That will be all for this week, see you again next week. Take good care of yourself, practice at home.

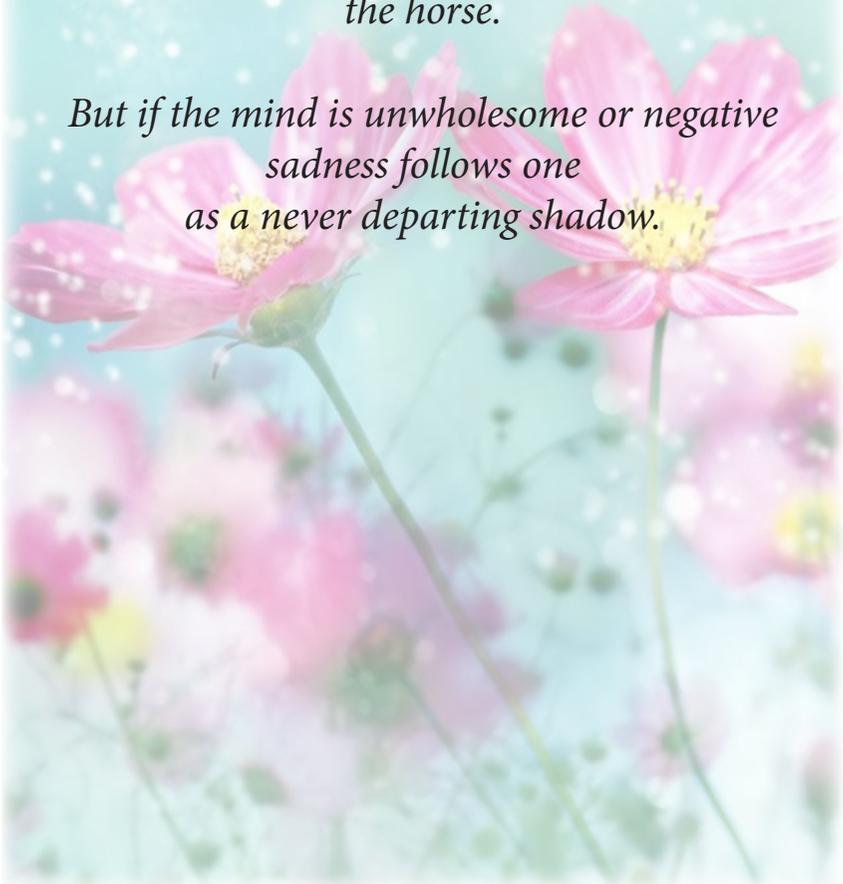
Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu!!!



Mind is the forerunner of actions.

*If mind is wholesome or positive,
happiness follows one
as the wheel of the cart follows the hoofs of
the horse.*

*But if the mind is unwholesome or negative
sadness follows one
as a never departing shadow.*



Lesson Eight

Contemplation of Mind
Part 3
(Cittanupassana)



Lesson Eight

Contemplation of Mind

Part 3

(Cittanupassana)

This is the eighth lesson of our 9 Lesson Sati-patthana Meditation series.

Surpassable Mind and Unsurpassable Mind

The Buddha continued with the 11th and 12th type of mind in the Discourse that is the surpassable mind and unsurpassable mind. He said:

“...or he knows the surpassable state of mind as surpassable state of mind or he knows the unsurpassable state of mind as unsurpassable state of mind...”

What is the surpassable and unsurpassable state of mind?

Surpassable mind refers to the “absorption-mind” or the form-sphere consciousness while the unsurpassable mind refers to the formless-sphere consciousness.

These minds are lofty, sublime, pure, and the mental defilements are temporarily suppressed. These mental states were mentioned by the Buddha in the Discourse because the Buddha, Arahants and some of his disciples at that time have experienced such minds. If we practise such ways, we too, can experience these minds as did the Buddha and his disciples in the past.

Concentrated state of mind

The concentrated state of mind is the 13th type of mind mentioned by the Buddha in the Discourse. He said:

“...or he knows the concentrated state of mind as concentrated state of mind...”

What is concentrated mind?

It is the one-pointedness of mind whereby the mind is fixed to the object.

Occasionally in your meditation practice, you may experience peacefulness and calmness when the mind stays with the meditation object and it is not distracted or restless.

However, one must not forget, that the mind is constantly changing – different states of mind arising and disappearing all the time. Sometimes the mind is concentrated, next moment it runs all over the place – the mind won't stay on the object. Today's meditation may be peaceful but tomorrow's meditation may be restless. It arises and passes away due to conditions. If one is not aware of the mind he will be disturbed by negative thoughts and emotions like tension, stress, ill-will, frustrations, attachment, etc. He then finds it very difficult to settle the mind in the evening when he tries to meditate.

So, we should note that the mind is impermanent and one should not attach to any mind state or be depressed, angry or frustrated, thinking that one's meditation is getting worse. Instead, we should know that the mind can be a meditation object for the mind itself.

What are the factors that must be developed to make the mind concentrated?

First Factor - Initial Application of Mind

For a concentrated mind, there are 5 factors that must be developed starting with the 1st factor called initial application of mind (Vitaka).

I will explain initial application of mind and how it can be developed in daily life and also in formal meditation.

Initial application of mind means that the mind is always directed towards an object.

In daily life, if the mind is constantly directed towards objects that are unpleasant through seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching, it can give rise to irritation, anger, ill-will, discontentment and such other mental disturbances. For instance, being scolded or seeing unpleasant sights like rubbish in front of your house.

On the other hand, if the mind is constantly directed towards pleasant objects it can give rise to a strong craving. If this is not fulfilled, it leads to disappointment, frustration, despair, sadness. Sensual desire or craving in itself, produces discomfort and agitates the mind.

In order to develop concentration, the mind needs to be directed with mindfulness towards the meditation objects as frequently as possible.

For example, if one is doing housework, the mind should be anchored to the bodily actions at that present moment like washing car, mopping, bathing, so on and so forth.

Second Factor - Sustained Application of Mind

When the mind is constantly directed to meditation objects in daily life, it gives rise to the 2nd factor which is the sustained application of mind (Vicara).

As the mind stays with the object it does not give opportunity or loopholes for defilements to surface which troubles the mind.

The sustained mind produces a certain degree of calmness depending on how strong the mind is sustained in the mindfulness practice.

Third Factor - Joy

After some time, the peaceful mind produces joy, which is the 3rd factor of concentration. Joy which is known in Pali as Piti.

This joy is borne out of wholesomeness and peacefulness which is not the same happiness derived from sense-enjoyment.

When such joy arises it becomes easier to stay with whatever one is doing with mindfulness as the mind finds joy and peacefulness in doing so.

Fourth Factor - Happiness

When joy is intensified with sustained mindfulness, happiness, which is the 4th factor of concentration, arises, in Pali known as Sukha. When happiness arises, the mind is at ease and stays contented with whatever one is doing.

*What is the difference between
joy and happiness?*

Joy is like a thirsty traveller seeing a pool of clear, clean and fresh water. Happiness is the quenching of the thirst. Joy can also be compared to a hungry person who finds a nice restaurant and happiness is the fulfilling of his hunger.

Fifth Factor - One Pointedness of Mind

*With happiness, the mind becomes
focussed and concentrated, which is
the 5th factor.*

In Pali, known as Ekagatta.

In other words, the mind is not wandering, not restless, thinking of past or future or worried about other things (like family, etc) or solving problems. The mind remains fixed, calm and concentrated in that present moment.

When concentration factor is developed in daily life, the hindrances become inactive and weaken, this helps greatly in the formal meditation.

The mind can easily focus on the meditation objects, clearly comprehending it.

How do we develop these 5 mental factors in the formal sitting meditation?

First the meditator needs to apply initial application of mind to one of the meditation objects. That means when the mind strays away from it, in the form of thinking, dreaming or sleeping then the meditator should be mindful that he is not meditating any more. He should then bring his attention back to the meditation object. By such repeated action, the mind begins to stay closely to it. When it stays long enough the sustaining mind arises.

Here, I would like to give a simile.

Initial application is like the bird taking flight.

Sustained application is like the bird gliding in the air after it has reached a certain height. Another one, initial application is like a bee flying in the direction of a flower, while sustained application is the circling around that flower.

When sustained application stays long enough, peacefulness and calmness of mind occurs and spiritual joy is borne out of this calmness of mind.

Normally, joy that arises in the formal meditation can be experienced by the meditator in greater intensity, compared to the daily life practice. Why? Because the mind is less distracted and more focussed during the formal meditation, as other activities are set aside.

Such spiritual joy can manifest in many ways such as lightness of mind and body, coolness sensations, floating sensations, pleasant feelings that come like ocean waves, deep contentment or fulfillment, feeling at ease and comfortable, etc. If the meditator is not attached to the joyful experiences and maintains his continuous mindfulness, then joy intensifies leading to the arising of happiness.

Happiness can be experienced as buoyancy of mind and body or the very blissful state of mind like free from all worldly burdens or cooling sensations that permeates the whole body and the mind, as if sitting under a waterfall, the happy feeling that prompts constant smiling and laughing, the feeling of lightness like a feather blown by the wind especially when walking.

The happiness mental state is more intense and has longer lasting effect than the joyful mental state. During that period of happiness that lasts for hours there is no desire for sense-enjoyment. There is also no feeling of hunger. There are meditators who have similar experiences and there are also some who experience happiness in different forms.

If one is not attached to the happiness, mind-

fulness further develops and the mind becomes focussed and one-pointed.

One-pointedness is the anchoring of mind onto the object like being stuck to it and being unmovable. The mind appears solid, stable, still and not dispersed.

*With one-pointedness of mind,
the hindrances are suppressed
and the mind becomes sharp,
clear and bright just like sedi-
ment sinking to the bottom
and water becomes clear.*

In the case of Samatha meditation, the mind can gain access to absorption. But the concentrated mind developed through mindfulness is different. In the practice of mindfulness meditation the mind clearly comprehends the object. Its characteristics are revealed and wisdom arises.

Example – when noting the arising and disappearing of mind one can see the different types of

thoughts arising and disappearing in sequence one after another like a row of marching ants or various sensations arising and disappearing throughout the body.

In the case of noting the rising and falling of the abdomen which is the air element, the meditator can perceive in one breath, many arising and disappearing of the air element or the breaking apart of the air element.

Owing to the strength of one-pointedness that is developed, it holds the mind to the object and such phenomena can be perceived and maintained for some time not just for a brief moment. So the characteristic of impermanence is clearly perceived and experienced.

Un-concentrated state of mind

The Buddha continued with the 14th type of mind:

“...or he knows the un-concentrated state of mind as un-concentrated state of mind...”

The un-concentrated mind is restless, dispersed, scattered and lacks focus. The un-concentrated mind is unable to achieve much because it is not focused on any given task and is easily distracted. It can't stay put to finish any job. In that sense an un-concentrated mind is similar to a disabled-mind – a mind that is not useful at all.

A mind that is untrained and un-concentrated is also a danger to oneself and others. For example, accidents may occur when the mind wanders off to other things and pays no attention to the road when driving. One may cut one's finger if he does not pay attention to the simple chore of cutting vegetables. An un-concentrated mind is unprofitable in the spiritual and material world and is regressive in those respects.

So how does one deal with the un-concentrated mind in formal practice and daily life?

They should first, recognise this type of mind. Seeing the danger in such a mind, they should put more effort in their practice to develop concentration as mentioned above.

Freed mind

Continuing on with the 15th type of mind, the Buddha said:

“...or he knows the freed mind as freed mind...”

What is the freed mind?

Freed mind is the consciousness that is free – being freed from defilements. Freed mind can be divided into 3 levels.

(1) Momentary freedom

When mindfulness is present during meditation practice, defilements are temporarily inhibited. In every moment one notes rising, falling, feelings, mind etc., mindfulness is present and defilements cannot enter the mind and the mind is momentarily freed. In other words, the purity is only from moment to moment.

However, you may not be able to see that the mind is pure because the mind arises and passes away very fast, unless one experiences a stretch of moments with mindfulness. In this instant, you are able to perceive the momentary freed-mind, that is the mind which is pure and wholesome devoid of defilements. This is only possible if mindfulness is built up and stays on the vipassana objects from moment to moment for some period of time.

(2) Temporary freedom

This is more intense. When concentration is strong, the unwholesome mind cannot arise for some time. If you are very consistent with your meditation practice, you will gain good concentration.

You will find that even in daily life you become peaceful and mindful. In whatever you do, you are mindful. When concentration is thus built-up, there is calmness and peacefulness of mind and defilements are suppressed.

Sometimes this peacefulness and calmness lasts a long time even for days and you may think that you have attained Arahantship or enlightenment and that you are really pure. You could see objects clearly with certain brightness. You could even smile when being scolded as anger does not arise in that instant. This is just temporary freedom and many meditators have experienced this.

In this case of strong concentration but not attaining absorption, when concentration weakens defilements can still arise. When they do arise, it is weak and disappears fast.

Now in the case of those who practise tranquillity meditation (Samatha Bhavana) and gained absorption (Jhana), the temporary freedom of mind could last from 1 day up to 7 days without a break, where defilements are temporarily blocked and find no entry into the mind – like a well thatched hut where rain finds no entry.

(3) *Permanent freedom*

This is the best of course and this mind can only arise in those who are completely enlightened. When one gains the various stages of sainthood from the practice of this wisdom meditation, various defilements are cut-off. Upon attaining Arahantship all defilements are completely cut-off. The Arahant's mind is permanently freed, meaning, there will be no further arising of negative mental states anymore such as attachment, sensual-craving, sorrow, distress, fear, anger, discontentment, jealousy, grief, and the whole mass of mental sorrow or pain.

Some may say "I do not want to have any religion" or "I am a free-thinker". By this, he thinks he is free to think whatever he likes. But he is not free – neither is he free to think what he wants to think. Thoughts arise due to past conditioning and if he has an angry disposition, he will constantly have angry thoughts, if he has fearful disposition, fearful thoughts will constantly arise, if he has strong craving, he will have many attachment or craving thoughts arising. These thoughts regularly surface and hence the mind is constantly harassed by men-

tal suffering although he calls himself a free-thinker.

Un-freed mind

Continuing on with the 16th and the last type of mind mentioned in the Discourse, the Buddha said:

“...or he knows the un-freed mind as un-freed mind...”

What is the un-freed mind? The un-freed mind is bound by the 10 fetters and these fetters are:

- (1) rites and rituals
- (2) doubts
- (3) wrong view of a personality or ego
- (4) sensual-craving
- (5) ill-will
- (6) attachment to form sphere
- (7) attachment to formless spheres
- (8) conceit
- (9) restlessness
- (10) ignorance

I will briefly explain the fetters that bind the mind to suffering.

(1) Rites and rituals are repeated unwholesome actions based on wrong views. They are fetters because it leads to more suffering and not liberation.

(2) Doubts that are not followed by mindfulness and investigation lead to non-action – there is no cultivation of the Noble 8 Fold Path. Therefore it is a fetter. However, doubt can be overcome by knowledge and faith.

(3) Wrong view of personality or ego is a fetter because ego strengthens defilements such as craving, hatred and confusion. Wrong views produce strong attachment. So, it leads to unwholesome mental and physical actions resulting in further suffering.

However, wrong views can be discarded when insight-knowledge arises perceiving that there is no entity, ego or personality abiding in the ever changing mind and body.

When these first 3 fetters are overcome by the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness cultivation, the 1st stage of sainthood is attained. There are 4 stages of sainthood as mentioned in the scriptures.

(4) The 4th fetter is indulgence in sensual-craving. It is the characteristic of sensual-craving to enjoy objects through the sense-fulfilment even at the expense of harming or hurting other beings. In such way it does not lead to wholesomeness, purity of mind, wisdom or realisation. Therefore, it is a fetter.

(5) Ill-will is the 5th fetter. It has the characteristic of revenge, hatred and causing harm like a forest fire that burns everything in its path. Ill-will produces suffering. Obviously, this does not lead to wisdom, peace or happiness. However this can be overcome by the mental development of loving-kindness.

*In the second stage of sainthood,
the intensity of sensual-craving and
ill-will is greatly reduced.*

*In the third stage of sainthood,
sensual-craving and ill-will are to-
tally eliminated and one will never
get angry anymore.*

(6&7) Attachment to form and formless spheres are fetters. These are more refined and subtle attachments compared to the gross sensual-craving eliminated in 3rd stage of sainthood.

(8) Conceit is the 8th fetter. Conceit is the pride of achievement like for instance when the mind compares to those things that makes one more superior or better than the other.

(9) The 9th fetter is restlessness. It is a fetter because the mind that is constantly moving produces distortion and the object cannot be clearly perceived in its true nature. This however can be overcome by strong concentration.

(10) Ignorance is a fetter because it blinds the mind and makes the mind confused. It covers up the true nature of objects. This is finally destroyed by full enlightenment.

The Arahant would have gotten rid of all the remaining 5 fetters (no: 6-10).

I have just explained how an un-freed mind is bound by the 10 fetters and how the un-freed mind is liberated by the 4 stages of sainthood.

Every meditator who seeks enlightenment needs to overcome all these 10 fetters in order to gain full enlightenment and this process is undertaken gradually step by step.

When a meditator cultivates mindfulness to see things as they really are, he becomes more detached and defilements gradually weaken. This process is automatic and not to be forced upon oneself.

In one of the discourses, the Buddha told a group of monks that the ocean slopes gradually and does not deepens suddenly, just as wisdom is matured gradually and cannot be forced upon. Otherwise, it is like plucking an unripe fruit that cannot be eaten.

A thousand mile journey begins with the 1st step. The meditator should not lose faith as he keeps on moving. With every step taken, they are closer to the goal.

Questions & Answers

Question (1) What if I have no time to attend the regular sitting in the temple – can I do the sitting at home by myself?

Answer to question 1:

For beginners, group sittings are encouraged because a group of persons having the same intention, reinforces the strength and faith in each other.

If the meditator stays away from a group sitting for some time the mind can easily become influenced by sensual craving or

(Answer to question 1 - continuing from previous page)

encounter various problems and misfortunes and the mind can be pulled away from the meditation practice. Regular group sittings can help the meditator to anchor the mind back on the Right Path.

In the regular group sittings, there are also discussions on the finer and deeper points of meditation. Different approaches are also introduced to help meditators in their practice. New topics are also regularly introduced to the meditators. Also, meditators are in need of new instructions and motivations as he progresses. In regular sittings, there is also Q & A session where the teacher clarifies the meditator's doubts. Some strong doubts that are not clarified can obstruct and stop the meditator from further cultivation.

Without proper guidance, instructions and Q&A, one could go off from the Right Path without knowing it. If they continue deeper into wrong practices, it could result in serious consequences.

(Answer to question 1 - continuing from previous page)

Therefore it is useful and essential for meditators to avail themselves for regular sittings until they have sufficient knowledge and experience to be on their own.

Question (2) I am so busy I can hardly find time to sit and meditate – what can I do?

Answer to question 2:

Most people think meditation is only to be practiced sitting down at a temple or retreat centre. It is not so. It is essential to maintain our mindfulness in daily life (as spoken before) as much as possible throughout the day: noting the mind, feelings and body at the present moment.

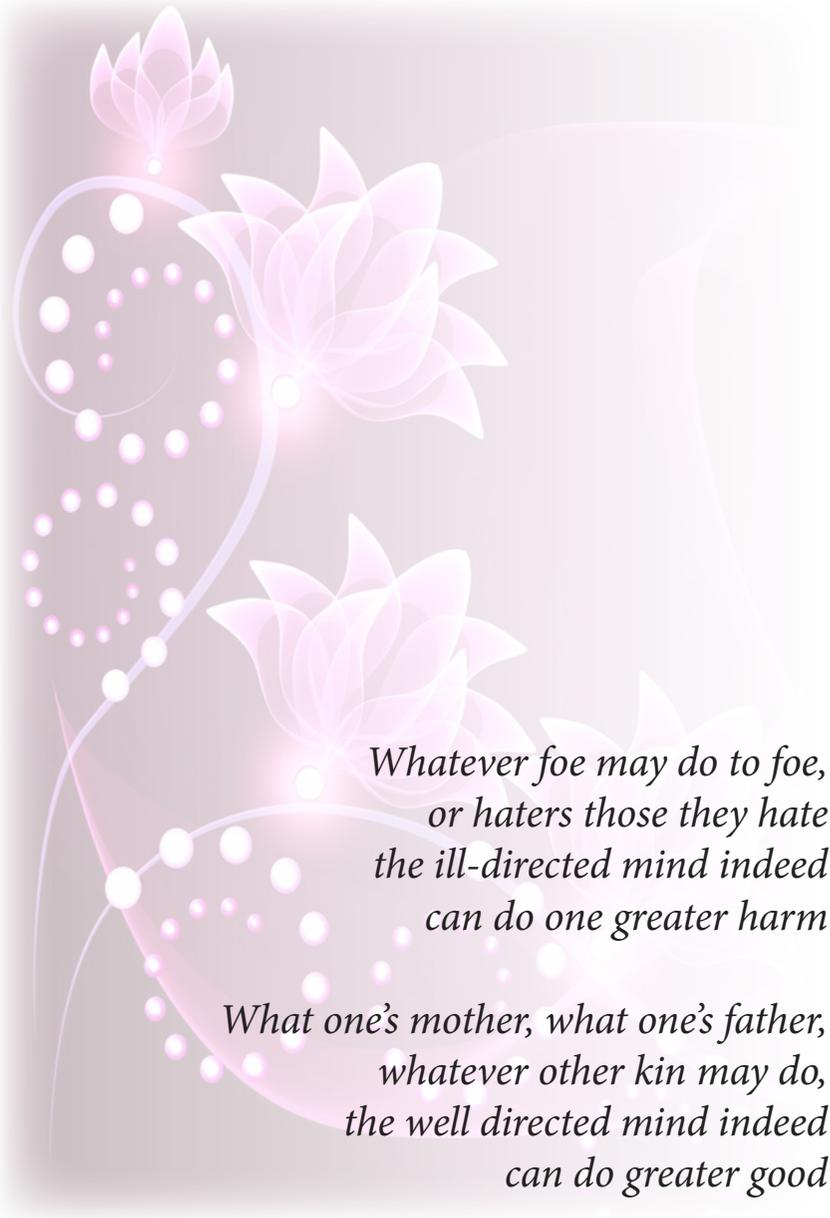
Next week – will be the final part of Contemplation of Mind.



*The mind that is detached is always giving
The mind with kindness is always helping
The mind with wisdom is so knowing.
The wholesome mind is so profiting.*

*The deluded mind is shrouded in darkness
and confusing.
The greedy mind is selfish
and demanding
The mind that hates is explosive
always destroying.
The unwholesome mind is so unprofiting.*





*Whatever foe may do to foe,
or haters those they hate
the ill-directed mind indeed
can do one greater harm*

*What one's mother, what one's father,
whatever other kin may do,
the well directed mind indeed
can do greater good*

Lesson Nine

Contemplation of Mind
Part 4 (final)
(Cittanupassana)



Lesson Nine

Contemplation of Mind

Part 4

(Cittanupassana)
(final)

This is the final lesson of our 9 Lesson Satipatthana Meditation series and also the closing talk on the mind-contemplation.

After classifying the various minds, the Buddha continued and gave instructions on how mind-contemplation is to be practised.

Internal mind-contemplation

The Buddha says:

*“Thus he lives practising internally
mind-contemplation in the mind...”*

How does he practise internal mind-contemplation, or in other words, practice establishing mindfulness of mind, internally?

Here is an example of how mindfulness on the mind can be practised with regard to an arisen greedy mind.

When a greedy mind arises, the meditator ought to be mindful of that greedy mind. He notes it as just another object of mindfulness and detaches from it. By doing so, the greedy mind does not find footing in one's mind.

Greediness causes trouble and disturbances as it agitates the mind. Being unaware of its presence, it takes hold of the mind and magnifies it.

Clinging is the intensified mental state of greediness which could result in unskilled actions like killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct or taking of drugs to divert from mental sufferings.

However, a meditator with mindfulness and detachment can let go of the thought that may cause harmful consequences. In doing so, the greedy mind ceases hence, he lets go of the thoughts that are causing pain and suffering.

Awareness of the mind prevents hasty decisions or actions. One who practises mindfulness on the mind does not become a slave, victim or a puppet of the mind controlled by its whims and fancy.

Here is an illustration of how greedy thoughts are interjected. If there is a thought that says: “Suppose if I were to steal...” (and the meditator becomes aware of the greedy mind and the potential consequences, then another thought follows...) “but what if I am caught? That would be shameful and blamed by the wise – I can even be punished or cast into prison.”

Mindfulness intervenes such unwholesome thoughts and allows negative mental states to become positive.

Hence, a meditator needs to be aware of strong desires that lead to clinging. If not, it obstructs and prevents the growth of concentration, calmness and wisdom.

There are many kinds of greedy minds – some yearn for self gratification which causes no harm to others, like the desire for tasty food, listening to nice music, enjoying bodily comfort like air conditioning, etc. If one can afford it with money rightly earned and if it is inoffensive and legal, one can enjoy such comfort and happiness through the senses. That is one's privilege.

Although relatively less harmful, one must still be reminded that these are still unwholesome mental states. Enjoyment in excess or causes nuisance, hurt or harm to oneself or others, mentally or physically, should be refrained.

Here is another illustration of how mindful-

ness on the mind can be practised with regard to an arisen angry mind.

When an angry mind arises, it takes hold of the mind and gains momentum in the absence of awareness. It gets out of control, resulting in unkind speech, shouting, screaming and even violence. It is in the nature of an angry mind to harm and hurt another just like a forest fire that burns everything in its path.

On the other hand, a meditator who is mindful, is able to detach from it and abandon such harmful thoughts. Mindfulness brings out wholesome mind to intervene and replace these un-beneficial mental states. One without mindfulness may not gain such benefits.

This is how mindfulness on the mind can be practised internally.

External mind-contemplation

The Buddha continued:

“...or practising externally mind contemplation in the mind...”

Why must we also practise externally as instructed by the Buddha?

In daily life we will not be able to maintain continuous mindfulness all the time internally as we are also constantly coming into contact with strong external objects.

In order to maintain continuous mindfulness, we need to be mindful externally as well.

How does one practise establishing mindfulness of the mind externally?

Externally means, 5 sense objects that are constantly conditioning our mind. Here is an example of how practising external mind-contemplation becomes helpful and beneficial.

In family gatherings the exchanging of views often gives rise to arguments and quarrels. If one does not practise mindfulness externally one could easily be sucked into the heated discussions, arguments or quarrels. Thereby ill-will arises and the mind becomes agitated and upset. This creates tension, dissatisfaction and hatred that may last for some time. Therefore, it is essential to be mindful, noting externally. Only then can one remain detached noting the external as merely another object for establishing mindfulness. One could then clearly comprehend the apparent reality of the changing minds – the various mental states that arise and disappear. So one of the many benefits that can be derived from this external contemplation is that one can remain calm and peaceful among those who are hostile.

Another benefit of establishing mindfulness externally is this - meditators who often go for long retreats experience calmness and peacefulness while meditating in the centre, but upon return to

their usual surroundings and conditions, they fall back to their usual mental habits. They become easily affected by external objects.

This is so because they fail to apply mindfulness externally or do not know how to handle or cope with external objects. They become bewildered and confused. This is why peace and calmness acquired through months of intensive striving could easily vanish within just a week or 2 upon returning to their usual householder-life.

Internal and external mind-contemplation in the mind

The Buddha continued further and he said:

“...or practising internally and externally mind contemplation in the mind...”

A meditator can note, whether the internal mind objects is influencing his mind or external objects by way of the 5 senses are influencing his mind. Sometimes, when the mind is cultivated or

become strong in Samadhi (calmness), kindness, compassion or even joyful, unpleasant or repulsive external objects is unable to influence the mind i.e. makes the mind disturbed or angry.

An example is when being blamed, criticised, scolded, abused. These are all unpleasant objects. An unpleasant object usually condition the unwholesome mental states to arise.

But when wisdom and compassion is strong in the mind, forgiveness and positive acceptance could arise instead of ill will.

Where a meditator has gained deep concentration, various degrees of joy and happiness arise in the mind even during daily activities. When coming into contact with unpleasant external objects, such as abusive words, unpleasant sight, smell, taste or experience hot-body sensations, the meditator does not react with anger and displeasure does not arise. His joyful and peaceful mind overrides the external

objects or the external objects are not strong enough to influence the internal mind.

An unpleasant object that is usually the condition for the unwholesome mental states to arise have different reactions in the mind that is strong and developed.

Conversely, an object which is beneficial to mature insight wisdom could have adverse effect causing great fear in the untrained mind.

Example, of an elderly lady who unfortunately witnessed a gruesome accident where a man was ran-over and killed by a car. His body was severely smashed and blood was splashed everywhere on the road. That seeing-object or visual object (perception) had a strong impact on her mind. She hurried home, locked herself in as she was stricken with fear. She became imprisoned in her own home for a long time thereafter. Caring neighbours upon hearing her situation helped out with running errands for her such as buying provisions for her and money collection from the post office.

But she lived in fear and mental pain for the rest of her life because of the strong unpleasant ob-

ject that she saw. In truth, it reminded her of her death, which can arrive at any moment of our lives.

A wisdom-meditator who constantly cultivate mindfulness of both internally and externally, with detachment will not be that greatly affected by strong external objects.

The wisdom-meditator's mental states would be perceiving things as they really are. The mind would not be so shocked by fear and confusion that the meditator loses his or her mental balance.

Noting both internally and externally (how strong the mind is internally, and noting how strong the object is externally and the interaction of both internally and externally as a consequence) makes the mind stable with right attention and detachment. Thereby it would not be dragged down by unpleasant strong objects that might cause mental imbalance, phobia and insanity.

By practising internally and externally a med-

itator clearly comprehends the mechanics of the mind - how the mind works, those that are important, which needed more cultivation and also the unwholesome minds, which are unprofitable and should be checked so that it will not become strong that it takes control of the mind.

A meditator must established mindfulness and detachment of external objects so that undesirable external objects would not penetrate the mind constantly causing nuisance, disturbances and mental problems that obstruct calmness, peacefulness and happiness in the mind.

Through constant observation of both internally and externally, a meditator comes to realise that internal objects and external objects have the same nature-characteristics of:

- (a) impermanence - continuous arising and disappearing;
- (b) it is dissatisfactory because it could not be held onto, or controlled; and
- (c) there is no-one controlling the objects externally and no-one controlling the objects internally.

It arises and ceases due to various conditioning. When a meditator perceives this distinctly, clearly comprehending it with mindfulness and deep insight, he becomes detached from the imperfect mind and objects (Nama-Rupa).

Realising the futility of grasping, clinging onto the objects internally and externally for senses gratification which is forever eluding and dissatisfactory, the meditator let-go of that craving in the mind. By letting-go, free from grasping and clinging, a wisdom-meditator is completely free from all mental sufferings, liberated and enlightened.

And in this way, a meditator practises “internally and externally mind contemplation in the mind” constantly. In doing so the meditator would be able to perceive clearly the same phenomena of mind objects both internally and externally, disappearing continuously without someone controlling it.

Contemplation the arising phenomena in the mind

The Buddha continued:

“...or he lives contemplating the arising phenomena in the mind...”

How does a meditator practise establishing mindfulness on the arising of mind?

Here, a meditator directs his attention to the mind to observe the arising of thoughts especially the strong ones. Normally, a meditator who does not have strong mindfulness is unable to perceive the actual moment of its arising but they would be able to see the thoughts that have arisen or are growing in the mind.

As the meditator becomes constantly aware and observant of thoughts, he begins to recognise the various types of mind arising or some of the 16 types of mind mentioned by the Buddha in the Discourse. If he continues with his practice of establishing mindfulness on the mind, the thoughts be-

come clearer. When mindfulness becomes strong, the meditator will be able to note the actual moment of its arising.

Why is it beneficial to identify different types of mind?

If one is able to identify the various types of mind, one is also able to know the particular and distinctive behaviour of each type of mind. This is especially important when the meditator proceeds onto Dhammanupassana in managing the mind.

Contemplation the passing away phenomena in the mind

The Buddha continued:

“...or he lives contemplating the passing away phenomena in the mind...”

By watching the mind constantly passing, the meditator would then notice that all wholesome or unwholesome minds, whenever it arises, will also cease. One should understand that whenever there is arising, there will be passing as this is one of the universal characteristics of all that is conditioned.

If a meditator is unable to note the mind or thoughts at the point when it arises, he can note the passing away of such thoughts. The meditator should not be dragged into so much thinking otherwise he will not be able to notice the passing away of different kinds of thoughts. Example: like a person sitting at the riverbank watching the flow of the water without jumping into the river.

By doing this, the meditator is also allowing the unwholesome mind to constantly cease since he is not anchoring on it and making it strong. He prompts wholesome minds to arise. Wholesome minds gradually increase and unwholesome minds decrease. The mind becomes balanced, peaceful, joyful and contented as a wholesome mind does not agitate or disturb but brings happiness. Happiness is conducive to the development of concentration whereas an unhappy mind hinders calmness or concentration.

Contemplation the arising & passing away phenomena in the mind

The Buddha also continued:

“..he lives contemplating the arising and passing away of phenomena in the mind...”

This instruction deals with the strong foundation of insight.

By constantly being mindful of the arising and passing away of the mind, the meditator becomes detached and does not actively participate in thinking.

As such the thinking or the talking minds slowly subside or lessen. Consequently, the meditator can experience various degrees of calmness.

Also, as the movement of thoughts slow down, the arising and passing away of each thought will be clearly comprehended. For example, one cannot see the blades of the fan when it is turning at full speed – one sees only the movement or colour. But, if the speed is lowered, the blades can be seen.

In the same way when the mind slows down by way of calmness, one can then note clearly, each mind that arises and passes away. Now, if a meditator can maintain the perception of such phenomena for a length of time then insight-knowledge (or wisdom) is established.

Perceiving arising and passing away is important in establishing insight-wisdom. It is a landmark or signpost of the Right Path or right direction towards Path and Fruition (Magga and Phala).

There is only this, the mind...

The Buddha continued further:

“..or mindfulness that ‘There is only this, the mind’ is now clearly established in him...”

Here, it means the meditator should not be attached to the mind as a permanent entity, ego or personality. He should observe that mind as only a mind which changes all the time. He will understand that a mind is merely due to conditioning and there is no one who controls the mind.

Therefore a meditator should practise watching the mind as just, mind internally or externally. This is how covetousness and grief can be overcome. He would experience mental balance, peacefulness, calmness and increased happiness in this very life.

Closing statement

Finally, in the closing statement of this section, the Buddha says:

“.....just enough for knowledge into reality (insight), and just enough for mindfulness, and he remains completely detached, clinging to nothing in the world. Monks, thus indeed, a monk lives practising mind-contemplation in the mind.”

So with the knowledge of perceiving the arising and passing away of phenomena, a meditator would have sufficient knowledge into reality and he would not deviate from the Right Path or right practices.

The accomplishment of this experience builds a strong insight-foundation and the meditator acquires confidence and faith in the Path cultivating mindfulness and detachment according to the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness taught by the Buddha.

Now, I wish to answer a few questions.

Questions and Answers

Question (1) Is the mind more difficult than the other objects to practise? Must one be of a good meditator before he can note the mind?

Answer to question 1:

| *Yes and no.*

Cont' (Answer to Question1)

Yes – because the mind is immaterial, more subtle than the body and it is swift. If one has not developed sufficient mindfulness, he finds it more difficult to watch the mind than the rising and falling of the abdomen which is the air element.

No – because there are times when the mind or thoughts are strong such as anger, frustration, sadness, despair, fear or excitement. As such they become a grosser object compared to rising and falling. Now in these instances, it is easier to take mind as the object compared the body.

Question (2) Is it easier to attain by way of mindfulness on the mind?

Answer to question 2:

Some meditators prefer to take mind as the primary object as they find it more interesting compared to rising and falling which they find dull and boring.

Cont' (Answer to Question 2)

Generally, most meditators would find it very difficult to take mind as the primary object. The mind as an object is very blur to them. Therefore they would not be able to build up continuous mindfulness for insight to arise.

Question (3) In watching the body one may get attached to the tranquillity aspect of watching the air element, so, is it better to watch the mind instead?

Answer to question 3:

A meditator who practises mindfulness on the mind, can get attached to Samadhi/tranquillity as they watch the mind. When the thoughts gradually subside they feel a sense of calmness, tranquillity and pleasant sensations. They become attached to this kind of mental state and can also dwell in Samadhi for a long time. That is when the investigating factor of the mind is weak or absent.

Question (4) I have experienced this blankness and emptiness of mind? How can I relate this to any of the 16 types of mind mentioned by the Buddha?

Answer to question 4:

Yes, it can be related to the deluded mind which cannot perceive mind, feelings or body objects – it is shrouded in darkness as experienced by other meditators too.

Question (5) Are we watching the mind to stop the thinking?

Answer to question 5:

The purpose of meditation is not to stop thinking. The slowing down of thinking is the result of concentration being developed. Calmness is not the end itself but a stepping stone for insight to arise.

Question (6) Do we meditate to control the mind?

Answer to question 6:

The mind cannot be ordered about to do this or that. But the mind can be directed by way of developing mindfulness to acquire the right concentration for insight.

Question (7) Is it so difficult to practise mindfulness on the mind compared to other bases (as we need to follow the 8-points of instructions mentioned in the Discourse)?

Answer to question 7:

In the earlier bases too (body and feelings), the 8 points of instructions to be practised are also given by Buddha.

With this we have finished the last lesson of Satipatthana Meditation Series for Beginners. We will continue further to cover the remaining sections of the discourse in the Intermediate Course that is: Dhammanupassana, meaning Mindfulness of the Dhamma.



Lesson Nine - Contemplation of Mind Part 4



*A poem of gratitude dedicated to
Bro James*

*High and low I looked
Here, there and every nook
Not just for any bloke
And not one who reads from a book*

*A teacher so he's named
So you think all's the same
Some wish for fame
Several have a cane
A few fancy some gains
While others couldn't light the path aflame*

*And so high and low I looked
For that one special bloke
Among ordinary folks*

*Here is one in a gazillion
Whose virtues scent his trails
From Penang he hails
A mammoth task he travails*

(cont.' next page)

*With compassion he embraces all who comes to seek
With kindness he speaks and gentle hands he leads
With endless patience he sows the Dhamma seed
In all those who came to seek*

*Behold, his knowledge is profound and experience deep
Such is rare indeed*

*An immaculate gem I have found
Inspirational Dhamma he expounds
In clarity
In enthuse
At profound depths it resounds...*

...an meditator-student who wishes to remain anonymous



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