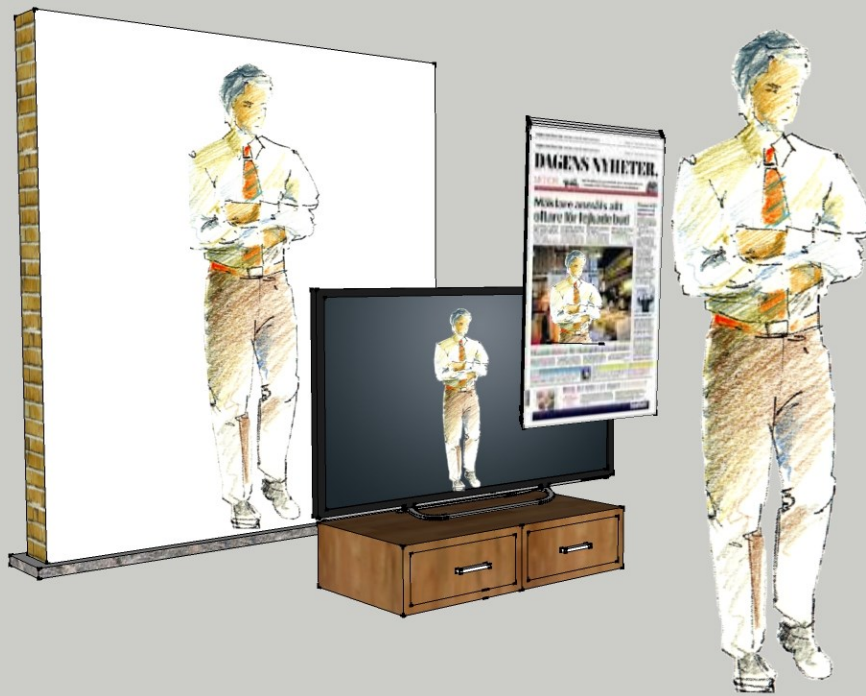


MINDFULNESS

MEDITATION



TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA AS ILLUMINATED BY
VENERABLE MANKADAWALA SUDASSANA THERO

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FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION ONLY



DHAMMA HADAYA GRANTHA PRAKASHANA KAMITUWA

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INTRODUCTION

Buddha's chief lay disciple Anathapindika¹ was gravely ill and he sent one of his men to Jeta Grove where Buddha was residing at the time to inform the Blessed One that he is severely ill and to invite Arhat Sariputta to come and visit him.

Arhat Sariputta visited Anathapindika at his home with Venerable Ananda and inquired about his health, "I trust you are getting better, householder? I trust you are comfortable? I trust that your pains are lessening and not increasing. Anathapindika reported that his pains are not lessening and his condition is getting much worse.

Arhat Sariputta has then said: **Householder, you should train yourself in this way: I will not cling to my eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and mind; I will not cling to form, sound, smells and tactile sensations, my consciousness will not associate or be dependent on these. Nor to the corresponding consciousnesses, contacts, or feelings arising from contact.**

You should further train this way; I will not cling to the earth, liquid, fire, space, or consciousness property. Nor to the infinitude of space dimension, infinitude of consciousness dimension, nothingness dimension, sphere of neither perception nor non-perception. Nor to this world, the world beyond. Nor to what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, pondered by the intellect. My consciousness will not be dependent on these.

Having listened to the Arhat's words Anathapindika wept and shed tears therefore Ven. Ananda inquired "are you in pain and are you anxious of leaving your possessions and the loved ones?" Anathapindika has responded: "No, I am not crying because of that but just that for a long time I have attended to the Teacher (Buddha), and to the monks who inspire my heart, but never before have I heard a talk on the Dhamma like this!" Arhat Sariputta has replied: this is only normally given to those who have gone forth, not to lay disciples. Anathapindika has politely requested that this sort of talk should be given to such lay folks as well, because some among them will understand.

Venrable Mankadawala Sudassana Thero refers to the above excerpt from *Anathapindikovada Sutra* in many of his recent talks to expound the Four

¹ Anathapindika ("feeder of the orphans or helpless") was the chief lay disciple of Gautama Buddha. His given name was Sudatta. He was extremely wealthy and a patron of the Buddha. He gave Jeta Park to the Buddha having purchased it from Prince Jeta. He honored the Buddha with laying out 1.8 million gold pieces in the grove. Anathapindika upon death entered Tusita heaven, or the heaven of the Bodhisattvas. Anathapindika was known as the "foremost disciple in generosity" as well as character.

Noble Truths elaborating on how we gather Kamma and embrace suffering due to positioning (or stationing)² of consciousness in the five clinging aggregates when conditioned by ignorance (or delusion).

In this booklet I am pleased to present several in depth discussions on this teaching by Venerable Sudassana with particular reference to mindfulness, the path to purification and cessation of suffering.

I extend my gratitude to most Venerable Sudassana Thero for his invaluable, tireless efforts and his compassion in expounding such sublime teachings of the Buddha to us lay people and to the devoted followers of dhamma who provide access to such rare sermons via the internet and finally to my family and friends for their support and encouragement in completing this task. May the merits gained, be bestowed upon all of you!

Lalith Mallawarachchi
Sydney
Wesak 2016

² Both positioning and/or stationing are commonly used words for the Pali word Patit̥hāti. (According to Pali – English dictionary it means; is established; stands firmly; finds a support , www.budsas.org)

1. KAMMA, ITS ENDING and PATH LEADING TO ITS ENDING

We need to know what kamma³ is in order to end it. The Buddha has preached,

*kammana waththathi loko - kammana waththathi paja
kamma nibandanaa saththa - rathassa'neeva yayathe*

The world exists due to kamma and the worldly beings exist due to kamma. Beings that are caught up in kamma, exist in the world just as a cart keeps moving supported by its wheels.

Cart is in motion as long as the linchpin holds its wheel in place and likewise beings continue in samsara as long as they are entrapped by kamma. If the linchpin is removed the cart that carries birth, decay and death cannot move anymore and similarly when one discards kamma his (or her) Samsaric journey ends there freeing the person from suffering due to birth, decay and death.

Teachings further define kamma as old kamma and new Kamma.

Addressing his disciples one day, the Buddha announced, '*Bhikshus, I will teach you new and old karma, the ending of karma, and the way to the ending of karma. Listen, pay close attention to it, I will speak.*'

And what, bhikshus, is old karma?

The eye, bhikshus, is to be regarded as old karma, put together, thought out, something to be felt.

The ear, bhikshus, is to be regarded as old karma, put together, thought out, something to be felt.

The nose, bhikshus, is to be regarded as old karma, put together, thought out, something to be felt.

The tongue, bhikshus, is to be regarded as old karma, put together, thought out, something to be felt.

The body, bhikshus, is to be regarded as old karma, put together, thought out, something to be felt.

The mind, bhikshus, is to be regarded as old karma, put together, thought out, something to be felt. —This, bhikshus, is called old karma.

And what, bhikshus, is new karma?

Whatever deed, bhikshus, one does now through the body, through speech, through the mind—this, bhikshus, is called new karma.⁴

³ Also known as Karma in Sanskrit, meaning Deeds in English

Let us examine what is referred to as old kamma

The eye is to be regarded as old kamma put together (or rooted on) by volition as an object for feeling. The eye creates eye consciousness when met with an external object causing contact that lead to a sense experience. The visual experience ends as soon as it arises and hence Buddha preached to Bahiya, *'in the seen will be merely what is seen'*.⁵

This is similar to what a toddler in a cradle experiences looking at the colourful mobile hanging above him. He (or she) only sees a trace of a visible form and is unable to differentiate the colour variations, say as red, blue etc., like an adult does. An adult's experience is identical to that of the toddler seeing a trace of an object created by the eye. The resultant contact leading to sensation makes the adult to think upon it and form opinion about what is seen which occur at mind consciousness level. The two occurrences take place in isolation of each other but we combine them together due to delusion (or ignorance) letting the latter (our conceptions) to land on the former (contact bases).

Consider two banks of a river. A person walking on one bank sees an attractive object or a scenery on the other bank and begins to think upon it but he cannot have any interaction with that object other than the visual experience, *'What is seen is merely what is seen.'* Whatever action that results from his thinking upon what he sees, whether its verbal, physical or mental remains on this bank and has no connection to the object on the other bank. The person could get attached to the object mentally but not physically.

'The visual experience is old kamma and the person's response to it from this side of the river is new kamma' says Ven Sudassana.

If the two occurrences are considered to be linked, what occur on one bank persist due to that which occur on the other bank. In other words, our responses in form of mental, verbal or bodily action are retained due to what's seen on the other bank or we can say what is seen there continue to exist due to our responses that occur on this side of the river. The occurrences that take place on the opposite bank arise and cease on the same side while those that arise on this side arise and cease on this bank. One cannot see the two occurrences apart as delusions come into play. In other words if one believes that the responses he makes on this side of the bank bears upon the object on the opposite bank that's due to his delusion.

⁴ The Discourse on (New and Old) Karma , (Nava- Purana) Kamma Sutra (SN)- Translation by Piya Tan 2003

⁵ *'in the seen will be merely what is seen; in the heard will be merely what is heard; in the sensed will be merely what is sensed; in the cognised will be merely what is cognised.'* – Bahiya Sutra

Sense experiences create Name-Matter (Name and Form) as a result of sense contact as sensation, perception and formation. Our responses through mind, speech and bodily action on the above, forms our consciousness. Name-Matter belongs to the bank on the opposite side of the river and our responses belong to the bank on this side.

As we let our consciousness to position on the Name-Matter, i.e. either on form, sensation, perception or formation, conditioned by delusion, we gather kamma. The two in this context are said to be interdependent Name-Matter conditioning Consciousness and vice versa. If we can discard delusion we can comprehend the two states apart and thus we will not gather (new) kamma.

The Buddha continues,

And what, bhikshus, is the ending of karma? When, bhikshus, one reaches liberation with the ending of these deeds of the body, of speech, and of the mind—this, bhikshus, is called the ending of karma.

This in other words is ending deeds or kamma made through mind, speech and bodily action, in such away the three states of liberation is accomplished. The teachings refer to three forms of liberation as *Animitta* (singless), *Appanihita* (desireless), *Sunnata* (emptiness). When we know that the two, i.e, sense experience and our deeds, occur in isolation of each other and our responses in form of thoughts, speech and bodily action has no connection to the external object we do not leave impressions (*animitta*), we do not have anything substantial that we can long to (*appanihitta*) and we do not see self or see as sentient or person (*sunnata*).

The path to end kamma is the Noble eight fold path with the Right View as the forerunner in perfecting the above wisdom, as preached by the Buddha in the Sutra,

And what, bhikshus, is called the path leading to the ending of karma? It is this noble eightfold path, that is, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. —This, bhikshus, is the path leading to the ending of karma.

In essence the Sutta (Discourse on (New-Old) Kamma) is a restatement of the four Noble Truths in terms of Kamma, Old Kamma is Suffering and New Kamma is Cause for Suffering. Cessation of Suffering is the Ending of Kamma and the Path to Cessation of Suffering is the Path Leading to Ending of Kamma.

2. KNOWING DUKKHA and THE PATH TO END DUKKHA

The way that the Path to end dukkha (suffering) is being practiced the world over as Buddhist meditation is contrary to Buddha's teachings. The Buddha preached to comprehend Dukkha (Suffering) as it is, in order to uproot craving (the cause for suffering) and realise ending of Dukkha (cessation of suffering). He proclaimed the Noble Eightfold Path as the path leading to end suffering. Today's practices have mixed up this teaching where the practitioners primarily attempt to realise cessation by observing the cause for suffering first, rather than the suffering itself in the order the Buddha has preached, pronouncing the Four Noble Truths.

The Buddha has defined 'Nibbana' as eliminating greed, hatred and delusion, referred to as roots of evil or three poisons. These defilements cannot be removed after the error has already been made in perceiving and knowing a thing or a person with delusion. The function of ignorance (delusion) i.e. formation has already been completed and confronting the object formed either by observing its impermanence or its composition, as one made of the Four Great Elements⁶ or Thirty Two impure parts of the body, does not help in discarding greed and hatred. The effect of these defilements can be subdued temporarily by meditating in this manner, but cannot be eradicated completely. This can be achieved only through removing ignorance (delusion) in its entirety for which one needs to see how the formation occurred in the first place. 'One should not make any response to the form seen, heard etc. but observe how the formation originated', says Venerable Sudassana.

DELUSION CAUSES FORMATION

When the visual object is not seen as it is, due to delusion (or ignorance), formation takes place erroneously, for instance an image of a particular shape and colour that associates a bundle of aggregates in form of hair, nails, teeth, skin etc. is perceived and formed as a human body. The mind perceives the image as a person and goes onto create relationships as father, mother, son, partner, friend etc. These impressions dwell in the mind and drive one to re-experience the objects as determined (as father mother etc.) and thus one begins to behold accordingly. What is seen is different to what one beholds and the latter that is formed in the mind as an impression is a defilement that progressively get accumulated as fermentations in accordance with our sense experiences which are pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Delusion, causes the accumulation of fermentations which in turn condition further delusion in sense experiences.

Venerable Thero proposes an experiment to explain this. Imagine that you are building a brick wall where you order bricks, cement and sand and construct it yourself. You complete the wall by rendering it to a smooth white finish. Now

⁶ Four Great Elements are , Earth or solidity, Water or cohesion, Fire or heat and Wind (air) or motion

you buy different colours of paint, paint brushes etc. and engage an artist to paint a picture of a person that you know, say Nimal, on the wall. You can now see the picture (of Nimal) that associates the wall that you built. The wall can exist on its own, but the painting is dependent on the wall. The wall made of bricks and mortar is selfless and so is the painting that associates it. The notion of 'Nimal' that arises in the mind, when you see the painting hence is without self too. You will either dislike or like Nimal (the painting) and may even respond, for instance, by saying that he is a wicked person who should be killed (unwholesome thought -hatred) or else you may say that he is a nice person and reach out to embrace him (wholesome thought -greed). However, you cannot touch Nimal and if you do you only feel the wall. You simply cannot have any physical interaction with (the notion of) Nimal as it is an impression or sign that is formed in the mind and not what exists out there.

Ven. Sudassana Thero, relates this experience to explain the Four Great Elements (wall) and forms that associates them - *Upadaya Rupa* (painting). He compares this to a visual experience where you note a person when in fact what you encounter is a trace of an image of particular shape and colour where a bundle of aggregates that consist of hair, nails, teeth, skin etc. is present. When you see in person you perceive Nimal the same way you see him on the wall, responding to the image that appears where the aggregates of hair, nails, skin etc. are present. You recognise Nimal in the same manner if you see a picture of him in a newspaper or in a video clip. 'Which one of this actually is Nimal?' (See image in this book cover)

It's only the mental impression that's being recalled at each instance providing the visual identity, in other words a mental defilement or fermentation that persists even if Nimal is dead. Though one can contemplate on the said impression and attempt to see its composition by breaking the image into components (hair, nails, skin etc.) or even into group of matter (*Rupa Kalapa*), that want be helpful to see the form as it is since the impression is a formation, a fruit of delusion. "If defilements arise due to erroneous formations, for not seeing the objects as it is, can the errors made originally be fixed just by removing defilements attached to the impressions?"

Ven. Sudassana says, we need to go back to where the impression was formed in the mind first (due to not seeing and knowing the visual object as it is) and comprehend that where there is a group of aggregates (hair, nails, skin etc.) we have developed a notion of a person. In the same way, we can see how the impression will be formed again when we meet the person in the future. We need to grasp this dhamma in terms of both the past (origin) and the future.

Similarly, we can substitute 'Nimal' with our self and see insights of the notion of 'me' that seems to exist. It's a mental fabrication identical to the notion of Nimal seen externally. The teachings require that one must

see this phenomenon in relation to both the external and the internal in this manner (The Foundations of Mindfulness Meditation).

ABANDONING DELUSION: THE RIGHT VIEW

The error can only be corrected by gaining the Right View of seeing the object as it really is, discarding ignorance. To elaborate this further Ven. Sudassana relates to an interesting parable.

The story is about a chief monk in a rural temple, an acolyte and a bad neighbour. The acolyte is innocent, kind and sincere but the neighbour is vicious and hates him. This neighbour is experienced in occult practices and has supernormal powers thus plan to break the trust the chief monk has on the acolyte. Whenever the man goes away from the temple the neighbour appears in front of the monk disguised as the acolyte and abuses him badly behaving in an evil manner. When the acolyte returns to the temple the neighbour disappears. Soon the monk loses faith on the acolyte and begins to see him as an evil person, being distracted from the person's true nature. He simply fails to see that there are two people.

“The real acolyte is like the object that we encounter through senses, harmless and innocent”, says Ven. Sudassana. He further adds that the neighbour's role is similar to that of our mind, for instance, a visual object comes in front of our eye and the interaction passes away quietly but the mind substitutes it by recreating the captured image with false information (slanders) making us to respond according to our likes or dislikes. We are ignorant of the true nature of the object and thus get deceived by the ‘slandering’ the mind projects on the image.

‘By understanding arising ceasing nature of the clinging aggregates we can discard ignorance and see the two phases apart’, says the Venerable. In the above analogy, if someone can advise the monk of what is going on and if he doesn't believe, perhaps suggest him a way to distinguish the difference between the real acolyte and the fake one, for instance, that the real one being human should cast a shadow on ground and blink eye lids while the fake (inhuman) one will not cast a shadow or blink eye lids, the monk will accept and will be able to see the two persons apart.

Similarly if we need to see the contact bases and the mental formations apart, we need to identify the characteristics of the two phases, the five clinging aggregates and the subsequent mental volitions, as those arising due to causes i.e. nutriment. The former arises from edible foods (Form) and through contact (feeling, noting and knowing), the later (mental volitions) from the above (Name-Matter). The mental volitions are projected on the external objects to define and determine (with slandering) and to know it, so that we can respond with thought, speech and action accordingly.

THE NOBLE PATH

By observing the sense bases which are unsatisfactory by nature and susceptible to clinging (Suffering or *Dukkha*), with insight, we can remove the potential they carry to arise again (Cause for Suffering or *Dukkha Samudaya*). Meditating on the 32 impure parts of the body (*Kayagathasathi*) alone, as preached by the Buddha is sufficient in this regard, says Ven. Sudassana.

One need not contemplate on disintegrating the form into components or even groups of matter as said before. One need not attempt to comprehend this dhamma by observing the thought processes either. Mere observation by disintegrating the form is considered as the materialist approach which hinders comprehending the Truth of suffering. The eternalists approach which is built upon the notion of continuity of aggregates: name-matter, thwarts uprooting of the craving, the cause for suffering.

3. PATH TO PURIFICATION and HAPPINESS, THE ONLY WAY

Worldly beings are constantly searching for happiness, however, is their anyone who is enjoying lasting happiness?, the problem seems to be that we do not identify what happiness is to go in search for it and we do not see what unhappiness is to make an effort to keep away from it, we do not have a realistic aim either way.

A hungry fox wondering about, looking for food, sees a tree with chunks of red meat hanging from it. Delighted with what it saw the fox runs towards the tree for a good feast. When the fox gets closer it sees meat fallen on the ground as well and quickly bite into one, well it's not meat , then it sees few pieces falling from the tree and have a go at one, again it's not meat. The fox has actually been deceived by a coral tree that is in full bloom. However, still hungry and eager, it keeps staring at the remaining red coral flowers up on the tree hoping that they are meat.

We all have expectations to achieve certain goals to become happy but when we reach those goals the anticipated happiness is not there anymore. The above parable relates to how we overlook the reality in search of happiness and to keep away from unhappiness, how we have been deceived in the past (like the fox grabbing the flowers under the tree) and present (the fox catching the flowers falling from the tree). As the fox continue to be deceived, thinking that the flowers on the tree are meat, we have hope that we can gain happiness in the near future. We continue to seek material comforts, to gather possessions and form relationships, to be free from unhappiness and be happy as we have done in the past and aim for the same in the present and future but all what we could gain more and more is unhappiness. Buddha Dhamma shows the path to be free from unhappiness and gain eternal happiness.

MINDFULNESS

The Enlightened ones emerge in this world to recognise the cause for the misery we are in and to free us from this deception. The Buddha has said that the Four Foundations of Mindfulness is the only way for purification and to be free from grief, lamentation, sorrow (*Dukkha*) and thereby to reach states of enlightenment and emancipation (eternal happiness). He has said. *'there is only one way bhikkus to the purification of beings to overcome sorrow and sadness to the disappearance of pain and suffering to attain the right path to realize nibbana and that is the four foundations of mindfulness.'*⁷

⁷ Eka Yano Ayam Bikkhave Maggo Sattanam Visuddhiya Soka Paridevanam Samatikkamaya Dukkha Domanassanam Atthangamaya Nayassa Adhigamaya Nibbanassa Sacchikiriyaya Yadi dam Cattaro Satipattahana`ti- Maha Sathipatthana Sutra

Just by offering one meal to a person who lives up to 100 years, can one make him happy all his life?, similarly just as one experiences happiness in this life there is no assurance that he (or she) will be able to experience happiness in future existences.

Having understood the short lived happiness, there were kings who left Royalty and the rich who left all their wealth to gain eternal happiness. Mindfulness helps to discard unhappiness and to gain absolute happiness. If one is not able to understand the Four Foundations of Mindfulness correctly and practice accordingly he or she cannot pursue the Noble Eightfold Path effectively and that means the person cannot become enlightened. Therefore, we need to comprehend the Four Foundations of Mindfulness correctly.

The Hunter and the Monkey Trap

A Monkey hunter sets up a trap, a doll made out of glue, to catch monkeys. An eager monkey tries to touch it with its hand and the hand gets stuck on the glue, he tries with the other hand and that also get stuck. Thereafter, he uses a leg to release himself but that gets stuck and similarly the other leg too. Finally the monkey uses its head but again to no avail and thus it gets trapped on all five points of the body and now the hunter can do anything to the helpless monkey. Meanwhile the wise monkeys avoid the trap and move elsewhere sensing the danger and hence the hunter can't see them, catch them or do any harm to them.

Similar to the eager monkey, beings of the sensual world who are caught up with the five senses and deceived by things of pleasure, tread in the territory of Mara⁸ and get stuck in his traps and thus the Mara can do any harm to them. However, the man with wisdom will not get caught up with things of pleasure and cleverly avoids the traps set up by Mara. Those who practice the Four Foundations of Mindfulness are not exposed to Mara. The Mara can't see them but they can see Mara. It is known as living while observing the body as it is, the sensations as it is, the mind as it is and the perceptions and formations as they are.

To practice it precisely we need to understand the noble Right View. We see, hear, smell etc. through senses as Name-Matter (fruits of old kamma or *vipaka*). This state is similar to what a little child sees without any descriptions. Our thoughts, speech and bodily action upon those Name-Matter becomes our consciousness. If we tie our consciousness to the corresponding object, or form, it positions itself on the object. In other words when we tie our consciousness to those that we see hear etc. the consciousness positions on

⁸ Early Buddhism acknowledged both a literal and psychological interpretation of Mara. Specially Mara is described both as an entity having an existence in sensual world, just as are shown existing around the Buddha, and also is described in *paticcasamuppada* as, primarily, the guardian of passion and the catalyst for lust, hesitation and fear that obstructs Buddhists meditation.

those objects. This phenomenon is called *viinnana thithi* in the Buddhist canon.

Furthermore, if we tie consciousness to a feeling from an external object the consciousness will take position on that feeling. Similarly if we tie it to the perception i.e. shape and outline of what is seen, it will occupy the perception associating the external object, visual, audible etc.

In summary, if we tie what we think, speak and act about a sense experience, to the object (Matter) or associated sensations and perceptions (Name) the consciousness will position on name-matter, if the consciousness does not take position on those it is considered as not 'positioned' and hence we will not gather kamma therefore freeing us from the three existences. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness detail the methodology to achieve this.

MINDFULNESS OF THE BODY

If we allow kamma consciousness arising from our notion as a person to position on the object such positioning makes that object a person. Our notions in such instances are said to be underpinned by our grasping and clinging (as person) and the resultant thoughts that are tainted get projected onto the external aggregates making them appear real. As they are susceptible to clinging in this manner the aggregates are known as clinging aggregates and hence as 'suffering'.⁹

Our effort must be to prevent the positioning of consciousness on the object (matter) or the related sensation, perception and formation (name). Mindfulness of the body (*Kayagata-sathi*) helps to arrest our notion of person projecting on an external object.

In the previous example of the brick wall and painting it was noted that neither the brick wall nor the painting are self. The person applies paint on the wall according to his ideas. The perception we develop that it is a person is due to our fermentations. Our responses to that notion (as a person) conditions arising of kamma consciousness. When we tie our mental concepts to the painting we ignore the wall that is made of brick and mortar. When our consciousness lands on the painting we begin to think of it as a person. We continue to feel the same even when we move away from the object.

The Sutta highlights, mindfulness with clear comprehension of what is seen heard and so on, When thoughts arise in the mind, if we are mindful with clear comprehension, we can witness the truth as positioning of the consciousness on the form gets arrested. When we keep on contemplating this way, brick and mortar come into focus and hence we begin to see the reality without

⁹ The Buddha referred to the Five Clinging Aggregates as Suffering- Dhamma Chakka Pawattana Sutra

much effort and eventually we get to a point where our thought speech and bodily action will not associate the object at any time. That's when we can say that we have liberated from form and that there is no more gathering of kamma.

If we let our responses to associate the external object it becomes memory. If we do not tie our thoughts, speech and bodily action (consciousness) to the external object those won't be retained in our memory. Through mindfulness we prevent such positioning of consciousness, with the shield of wisdom.

GATHERING OF KAMMA

We gather kamma only if we connect our consciousness to the object, or associated feelings, perceptions and formations. Mindfulness of the body protects our thoughts from positioning on the object. It discloses that what exist out there are only Four Great Elements (*Mahabutha*) and those forms that associate four great elements (*Upadaya rupa*).

Whatever the artist draw on the wall whether it's a car or a bus will be seen in accordance to our notion of what it looks like. If one finds things externally that's a sign that thoughts that have arisen in his or her mind are projected on those objects. If things are seen as they really are kamma will not get accumulated.

Tathagata has assured complete emancipation if mindfulness is practiced in the way he has taught. One need not worry even if he or she doesn't know how to peruse remaining factors of enlightenment such as the Four Roads of Power (*Sathara Irdipada*) and Factors of Enlightenment (*Saptha Bojjanga*). Mindfulness takes one through all the above and respective states of enlightenment on its way to discard suffering and to reach emancipation.

Without knowing what mindfulness is and how it works, even if we practice for a number of years, its not beneficial. We cannot observe mindfulness on formations which are already formed with defilements. The purpose of mindfulness meditation is to eliminate defilements. Where hair, nails, skin, flesh etc. are grouped in a particular manner we perceive a person, say as Nimal, and experience similarly when we see his image in a newspaper or a video. This is awakening of thoughts in our mind with the notion of self or a person. As long as we behold as Nimal - a self, the truth (the body composed of hair, skin, flesh etc.) disappears due to positioning of consciousness on the form. Mindfulness reveals form as non-self and prevents it being positioned by consciousness. As we continue, the tendency that make us perceive as a self, fades away and as a result fermentations and hindrances disappear enabling us to comprehend the four noble truths.

We also need to focus on the notion of me, myself¹⁰, considering that my picture is painted on the wall, for instance, if I touch my face I feel the wall. If I let the thought it is 'me' to position on the painting I will behold that way. If so I will be able to identify 'me' even when I see a picture of me in a newspaper or a video. Mindfulness of body thwarts it and using the technique we can prevent our thoughts taking position on the body. We need to meditate to comprehend that the thought 'me' is a one that arises in the mind where a bundle of aggregates i.e, hair, skin, flesh etc. are present.

The following dialogue between the Buddha and his disciples well illustrates this dhamma,

"Just as if there were a roofed house or a roofed hall having windows on the north, the south, or the east. When the sun rises, and a ray has entered by way of the window on the east, where does it land?"

"On the western wall, lord."

"And if there is no western wall, where does it land?"

"On the ground, lord."

"And if there is no ground, where does it land?"

"On the water, lord." "And if there is no water, where does it land?"

"It does not land, lord."

"In the same way, where there is no passion for the nutriment of physical food ... contact ... intellectual intention ... consciousness, where there is no delight, no craving, then consciousness does not land there or grow. Where consciousness does not land or grow, name-and-form does not alight. Where name-and-form does not alight, there is no growth of fabrications. Where there is no growth of fabrications, there is no production of renewed becoming in the future. Where there is no production of renewed becoming in the future, there is no future birth, aging, and death. That, I tell you, has no sorrow, affliction, or despair."

(Atthi Raga Sutra- Samyutta Nikaya)

MINDFULNESS OF SENSATION

Sensations that are pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant are to be recognised as those which relate to sense desires (*kama*) or desirelessness (*nekkhamma*). It is also to be noted the eleven states where sensations arise, i.e. sensations that are past or present, far or close, pleasant or inferior, gross or fine etc. similar to the eleven states the form is represented with. Sensations are also categorised according to those that arise in the body and the mind, for instance, pleasant sensations are identified as *sukha vedana* (body) and *somanassa* (mind) and unpleasant sensations as *dukkha vedana* (body) and *domansassa* (mind). Neutral sensations arising in

¹⁰ 'ajjhataṃ vā dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati, bahiddhā vā dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati'

both the body and mind are commonly known as neither pleasant nor unpleasant (*adukkhamasuka vedana*).

Mindfulness of sensations helps to avert interpretation of internal sensations as those that belong to external objects. It is about not letting the consciousness to take position on sensations, associating them with objects that are seen or heard. Sensations do not vary in accordance with different types of objects, visible audible etc., they are generally felt as pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant. We must not let our thoughts on sensations to associate external objects, alternatively we must observe that they just arise due to contact and cease thereafter.

Mindfulness on sensations with clear comprehension discloses the conditionality of sensations, as those that arise due to conditions and cease when the conditions cease to exist. Thereby we can ascertain that sensations are not created by me or an external force and that they are not spontaneous either but arise due to conditions. It should particularly be reminded that a product formed due to conditions does not belong to the conditions, such as a shadow of a tree appearing on ground does not belong to the tree, ground or the sunlight.

Similar to the earlier discussion about thoughts having no linkage to external form, sensations felt in our mind should not be noted as hand pain, leg pain etc. Sensations are felt to be arising in hand or leg as we tend to grasp them as experiences a person (or self) undergoes and therefore our responses on them are natural. If we can contemplate on this delusion and comprehend that there is no interconnection we can be free of hand pains, leg pains etc. and eventually from the notion of legs and arms of a person that seem to exist.

When our body touches somebody else's body can we say that we feel the other person? No, we only experience our body sensation due to the contact. If we get hit by a wooden stick we only feel the body pain not the wood, similarly we feel a sensation due to contact, when we touch a person we only feel our body but not somebody else's. If we let our consciousness to position on sensations associating external objects its inevitable that we feel sensations from visible objects, sound, smell etc. that are external.

To understand how we develop stress due to errors in our perception as discussed, consider your foot being trampled by a rock, you will bear the pain and deal with it not worrying about the rock, however, if it was a person who trampled your leg you will react instantly with anger, finding fault with that person. If we can refrain from tying physical sensations to external objects there won't be any difference in our reaction in both instances noted above and hence we will be free from stress.

SENSUALITY AND MIND

The Sensual world is built upon forms. It is made to look real due to projection of erroneous thoughts arising within the mind on external objects and hence it is said, sensuality is a dream (*swapnopama kama*).

We are not born into a world that exists. Buddhist teachings refer to forms such as, visible and audible, as attributes of Sensuality (*kama*), not just sensuality as we associate. The reality is that the world only consists of four great elements and those forms that associate four great elements. We formulate sensuality on elementary things that exist out there with our thoughts and desires.

As said before we can paint different objects such as cars, buildings etc. on the wall and they just remain as art created by brush strokes on the wall until our thoughts are projected on them to make them real and similarly we create a world that consists of things and people in our mind. The sensual world conceals reality of form but mindfulness reveals this hidden reality by exposing the elementary state made of Four Great Elements and those forms that associate them (the wall and the painting in the above example) overriding sensuality.

However, in this endeavour we must not contemplate on the impressions that arise in the mind but rather concentrate on respective objects that seem to exist in the external to address the cause for becoming (*bhava*). Things that arise in our mind often relate to external form due to our notions that things that we have seen, heard or smelt etc. exist out there. When something arises in mind it always associates external form which is the notion of existence. Mindfulness of the Body discloses the truth and eliminates our deception caused by positioning of consciousness on external form.

PROFOUND PHILOSOPHY

*“If one can paint a mural covering this wall in front of us, we will see a mural but if we touch we will only feel the wall. We don’t see what we feel and don’t feel what we see. If we push the wall over to fall flat on ground and walk on it **we don’t see where we walk and we don’t walk on what we see.** If we practice to meditate in that manner we will not have any impression of where we go or to where we return to”,* says Ven. Sudassana thero.

Imagine that the whole world is like the wall painted with pictures of buildings, roads, trees etc. We have never seen where we walked and we haven’t walked on what we see. If one can relate to where he (or she) goes to (*gathi*) and return to (*agathi*) the person is said to be associating death and rebirth. As long as we see on which we walk on and walk on what we see, we are said

to be dealing with birth, decay and death or suffering (*Dukkha*). This is how the notion of continuity (*Santhathi*) prevails.

If one can overcome this habit of claiming I went to that place (*gathi*), I arrived at this place (*agathi*), the person is able to reach a state that is peaceful and calm. Buddha Dhamma takes one who practices in this manner to an incredible and spectacular state though understanding such deep concepts of teachings is not simple. However, one only needs to begin by taking one step forward i.e. starting with mindfulness of the body.

If one is to reach the depth of the ocean, he or she always has to start from a point where the water is only ankle high and as the person keeps walking the sea will get deeper and deeper, likewise the path needs to be followed step by step in order to reach the depth of realisation.

