

**Dharma
Essence
Series** **2010-13**
Volume-1



 *Sayalay Susilā*



Establishing the Appamāda Vihārī Meditation Center

in Penang, Malaysia
with Venerable Sayalay Susila



The number of practitioners who have attended Venerable Sayalay's Sutta studies, meditation classes and retreats is increasing day by day. In order to better serve the growing number of students and for the convenience of propagating the Dhamma, Venerable Susila is establishing the **Appamada Vihari Meditation Center**, a permanent monastery in Penang. In Pali, Appamada Vihari means "dwelling in diligence."

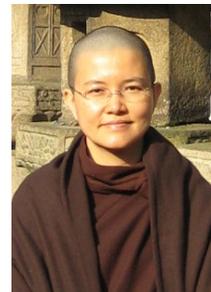
In December 2012, the full purchase price of an acre of land has been paid. Our construction project is currently in the planning stage and construction is expected to commence soon.

Unity of will is an impregnable stronghold. As long as we are united – with supporters sending their metta and donating generously, we believe the project will be completed in the near future. Dana, or the practice of generosity, allows the giver to reap the benefits of longevity, beauty, happiness, physical fitness, and wisdom.

About Venerable Sayalay Susila

Venerable Susila is well-known for her simple and lucid way of imparting the profound teachings of the Buddha. As a very experienced and competent meditation instructor, she has taught many students who have benefited and found joy through her meaningful Dhamma talks and guidance.

Venerable Susila's numerous Dhamma publications, both in Chinese and English, have been published and made available around the world. Over the years, Venerable Susila has traveled to many places around the world but has never made any of these places her permanent home. She untiringly propagates the Dhamma, teaching meditation in the United States, Canada, Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. Lately, Venerable Susila has focused her Dhamma teachings primarily in Penang, where she now leads a group of devoted practitioners to actualize her vision in prolonging the Buddha Sasana.



Her Vision To establish a wise meditation community with right view and right effort

Her Mission To integrate meditation into the daily life of Buddhist practitioners

How to Donate

Donations can be deposited directly into the bank account listed below:

Account Name:	Appamada Vihari Meditation Center, Penang
Account Number:	3177-97-4731
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Prince Siddhartha, while living in luxury, remained perplexed about the meaning of life. After seeing the four visions — an utterly helpless old man; a sick and forlorn man; a grief-stricken group, carrying the corpse of their beloved for cremation; and a recluse, serene and composed, wandering to seek Truth — he decided to renounce the world and search for a way out of the suffering of aging, sickness, and death.

He practiced six years of self-mortification, tormenting his body, but the goal was still unachieved. Finally he gave up and applied himself to the “Mindfulness of In-and-Out Breathing,” and successfully entered the first, second, third and fourth meditative states of absorption. Thus cleansing his mind of impurities, he directed it to the Knowledge of the Recollection of Past Births, followed by the Knowledge of the Disappearance and Reappearance of Beings of varied forms, in good and woeful states of existence, each faring according to his deeds. Finally, he directed his mind to the third Knowledge of the Destruction of the Taints, and became Buddha—The Awakened One. He silently uttered:

*Through many a birth I wandered in saṃsara,
Seeking, but not finding the builder of this house.
Painful is repeated birth.
O! Housebuilder, you are seen, you shall build no house again.
All your rafters are broken. Your ridgepole is shattered.
My mind has attained the unconditioned.
Achieved is the End of Craving. (Dhp. 153-154)*

The “house” implies the body. The “builder of this house” implies craving — craving for sensual pleasures and existence. To satiate these cravings, beings perform actions that leave behind karmic potential, and that karmic potential carries on and produces new life, with sickness, aging and death lying in wait. “Ridgepole” implies ignorance. Ignorance means not knowing the Four Noble Truths — the suffering of life; the origin of suffering, which is craving; the cessation of suffering through the destruction of craving; and the path to the cessation of suffering, the Noble Eightfold Path.

Having found the builder of the house and shattered the ridgepole, he attained the unconditioned—Nirvana. Out of compassion for other beings who are still caught in the pool of sensuality and becoming, Buddha wandered far and wide preaching his message of love and liberation. Understanding how beings reap what they have sown, he urged us:

Avoid evil, cultivate good, purify the mind.

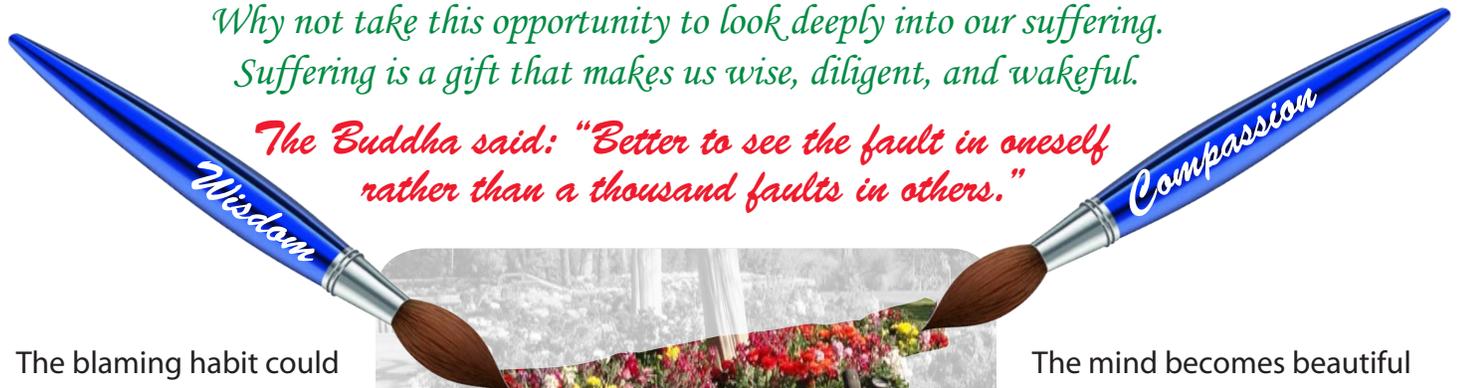
One avoids evil by self-restraint—not harming others based on the understanding of the law of karma. One cultivates good by performing charity, service, etc., grounded in loving-kindness and compassion for all sentient beings. These two will pave one’s way to happiness in this life and the life after.

One purifies the mind by practicing concentration and insight meditation. Concentration makes the mind serene, clear, peaceful, and radiant, having removed the hindrances that block the clarity of the mind; insight sees mind and body as they really are as impermanent, suffering and not a self.

Often we feel agitation and suffering in life. If one's defilements are left unchecked, life becomes overwhelming. Our usual way of releasing our pain is to blame others. It is always easy to put the blame on others and disregard the pain they feel, rather than confront our own weakness directly. This is a manifestation of our self-cherishing attitude. Such reactions agitate the mind even more, and the fire of hatred spreads out far and wide. The other party feels hurt and thus breaks the relationship.

*Why not take this opportunity to look deeply into our suffering.
Suffering is a gift that makes us wise, diligent, and wakeful.*

*The Buddha said: "Better to see the fault in oneself
rather than a thousand faults in others."*



The blaming habit could be due to clinging to one's view, one's craving, one's ego, one's fear, one's false self and one's selfishness.

Having discovered our hidden shortcomings or weaknesses, we work to remove them, just as a girl who is fond of her beauty cannot bear to see any black spot on her face and works to clean it. Then she feels clean and happy. Similarly, without removing our defilements from moment to moment through persistent effort and mindfulness, true happiness is beyond our reach. This is the way to beautifying the mind. It takes persistent effort, honesty, and self-examination.

The mind becomes beautiful when it is accompanied with wisdom and compassion. The Buddha said: "Insignificant is the increase of relatives, wealth, and fame. The best thing in which to increase is wisdom." (AN 1:77-81)

Wisdom knows what is wholesome and unwholesome and eventually wisdom sees things as they really are, as impermanent, suffering, and not a self. Compassion makes one's heart "quiver" when seeing the suffering of others. To alleviate their suffering, one actually renders the help needed.



The most beautiful mind is the mind with absolute equanimity; having understood the illusion of the world, it clings to nothing as its own.

Love: without desire to possess, without thinking of "I," without selecting and excluding, embracing all beings.

Metta bhavana (Loving-Kindness Meditation), when practiced sincerely and thoroughly, results in tremendous inner power, which preserves, protects and heals both oneself and others.



Avera hontu — May you be safe,
Abyapajjha hontu — Free from physical suffering,
Anigha hontu — Free from mental suffering,
Sukhi attanam pariharantu — May you live happily.

BREAKING THE BARRIERS

One practices mettā by visualizing beings one after the other in a graduated sequence, progressively expanding the circle. One starts by spreading mettā to oneself, and thereafter to a respected person for whom one has reverence, then a neutral person, then an enemy. As one radiates thoughts of loving-kindness in this order, the mind breaks all barriers between oneself, a respected one, a neutral one and an enemy. All beings are looked upon equally with the eye of loving-kindness.

RADIATING METTĀ IN THE TEN DIRECTIONS

Once the mind has broken the barriers between oneself and respected ones, neutral ones and hostile ones, the meditator then begins radiating mettā in the ten directions (east, west, north, south, northeast, southwest, northwest, southeast, downward and upward), filling the world with love.

ELEVEN BLESSINGS OF METTĀ

One sleeps happily; one wakes happily; one does not suffer bad dreams; one is dear to human beings; one is dear to non-human beings; the gods protect one; no fire, poison, or weapons can harm one; one's mind gets quickly concentrated; the expression on one's face is serene; one dies unperturbed; and if one fails to attain higher states, one will at least be reborn in the Brahmā world.

Prerequisites of Mettā

- Gentle in speech, meek and not proud
- Contented and undemanding
- Not over-busy, and simple in living
- Prudent, with senses guarded
- Honest and straightforward
- Frugal



**FORGIVENESS IS THE ART OF COMPASSION
THROUGH NONJUDGEMENT AND
ACCEPTANCE OF ONESELF AND OTHERS.**

IN THIS LIFE, OFTEN WE DO WRONG
TO OTHERS, SOMETIMES OTHERS DO
WRONG TO US. SHALL WE CARRY THE
GRUDGE ALONG THROUGH LIFE AND
MAKE OURSELVES UNHAPPY?



Practice forgiveness meditation:

1. Whatever wrong others have done to me, may I forgive them. Say it repeatedly. Do not dwell on the wrong others have done to you. Know whatever happens as the effect of certain causes. Understand we have done the same wrong to others too. To forgive others is in fact being kind to oneself.

2. Whatever wrong I have done to others, I sincerely ask for forgiveness. May they forgive me my ignorance.

3. Whatever wrong I have done, may I forgive myself, knowing we are still imperfect. Do not let remorse enslave your heart. Be kind to yourself, forgive yourself. We all do wrong, don't we? And we come to this world to learn from our mistake and grow. Ultimately it is ignorance that makes us do wrong. See ignorance as ignorance, not as self. When we identify the doer of wrong action as "I" or "Myself," we are trapped in guilt and remorse.

Remorse and guilt are momentarily arising and passing away. When they pass away, they are gone. However, owing to our grasping them as "mine," they become persistent.

Hatred cannot be appeased by hatred, but by love — this is eternal law.



Walking on the Buddhist Path

Not understanding the Four Noble Truths, we continue to roam in the endless sea of births and deaths (Saṃsāra). Offering to Buddha is unmatched when Buddha said to Ananda:

“Whenever the bhikkhu, bhikkhuni, layman or lay woman abides by the Dhamma, lives uprightly in the Dhamma, walks in the way of the Dhamma, is by such a one the Tathāgata is respected, venerated, worshipped and honored in the highest degree.”

“Great is the gain of concentration when it is fully developed by virtuous conduct, great is the wisdom when it is fully developed by concentration. Utterly free from the pain of lust, becoming, and ignorance is the mind that is fully developed in wisdom.”



— Mahāparinibbāna Sutta

1

Morality Training

(*Sīla sekha*)

As a lay person, we undertake to observe the 5 or 8 precepts. Why?

1. Out of compassion for others,
2. To protect oneself and protect others. Killing brings short life, stealing causes loss of one's property. Good begets good, bad begets bad. With the understanding of the working of the Dhamma, we undertake morality training.

Sīla is the foundation for Samādhi (Concentration).



Five Blessings When We Observe Morality:

1. Wealth will increase
 2. Good reputation
 3. Strong self-confidence, peaceful death
 4. Reborn in happy states
- More importantly, it is the foundation for:
5. Concentration.

2

Concentration Training

(*Samādhi sekha*)

Concentration is defined as one-pointedness of mind or unification of mind. When the mind is rid of the five hindrances of sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restless and remorse, and doubt, the mind will stay on a single object such as the breath without distraction. This leads to neighborhood or absorption concentration. A concentrated mind is wieldy, malleable, gentle, and powerful. When one directs this powerful mind internally, one sees the five aggregates as they really are; it is possible to see millions of particles (kalapas) arising and passing away very quickly in the body.

Samādhi is the foundation for Paññā (Wisdom).



3

Wisdom Training

(*Paññā sekha*)

Wisdom allows one to see the constant arising and passing away of the five aggregates. They are impermanent (anicca), subject to change and dissolution. What arises and passes away, subject to destruction, cannot bring happiness; it is suffering (dukkha). What is impermanent, suffering, and beyond our control — can we regard them as I, mine, or myself? They are not a self (anattā). The arising and ceasing of phenomena are beyond our control, what is beyond our control is not only devoid of self but also of suffering. Seeing rightly, one becomes disenchanted with the five aggregates; being disenchanted, one becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, one is liberated from clinging.

This is the freedom of the heart!



The Immediate Purpose

is to overcome our habitual reactions towards likes and dislikes.

In our daily life, our six sense bases are always opened to the impingement of the six sense objects, namely eye to form, ear to sound, nose to smell, tongue to taste, body to tangible objects, and mind to various thoughts. The untrained mind grasps at agreeable objects as mine with craving, as myself with identity view. But if the object is unagreeable or unpleasant, the mind rejects it compulsively. When the object is neutral, we are in dull indifference, delusively think that there is no feeling.

These habitual reactions give rise to three kammic potencies. 1. Current Life Effective Kamma. When one reacts with aversion, fire element in the body is excessive. This phenomenon causes one's face to turn red and his body becomes hot. When a person is constantly in a state of anger, his health is also affected. The 'unhealthy' energy generated also affects others as well as the environment. 2. Next Life Effective Kamma. Craving and aversion are considered unwholesome kamma that leave behind kammic tendencies in one's life continuum. When this kamma matures, one may be reborn in a woeful state accordingly. 3. Indefinitely Effective Kamma. We are owners of our own kamma. As long as we are still cycling in the round of rebirths, this indefinitely effective kamma has the potential to come to fruition when the conditions are ripe.

So we meditate to stop our habitual reactions and undermine their kammic effects.

The Ultimate Purpose

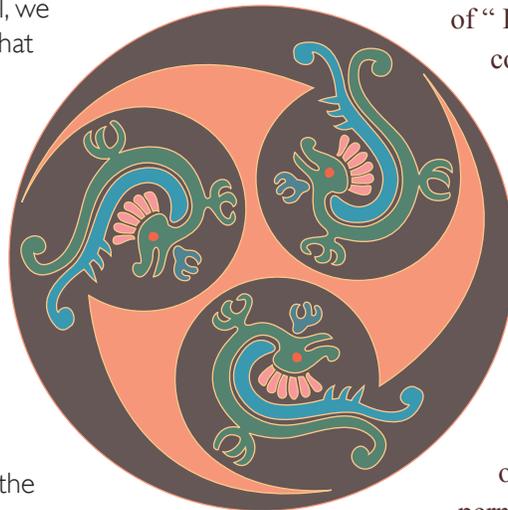
is to see the five aggregates as they really are in order to end suffering. Suffering comes from the attachment to the five aggregates. We cling to the aggregates because we fail to see their dangers or faults. We are blinded by beauty and pleasure stimulated by the five aggregates. Our practice is to see the five aggregates as they really are as impermanent, suffering and non-self repeatedly in order to arouse disenchantment. Being disenchanted, we become dispassionate, then letting go the cause of suffering (i.e., attachment) is possible.

The five aggregates are bundles of materiality, feeling, perception, fabrication and consciousness. They work together to form the conventional truth of "I". For example when one looks (eye consciousness) at one's image in the mirror (materiality), one perceives one's own beauty, that perception causes a very pleasant feeling to arise, followed by delight (fabrication): "I am beautiful!" In reality, what really exists are just the characteristic, function and manifestation of five aggregates.

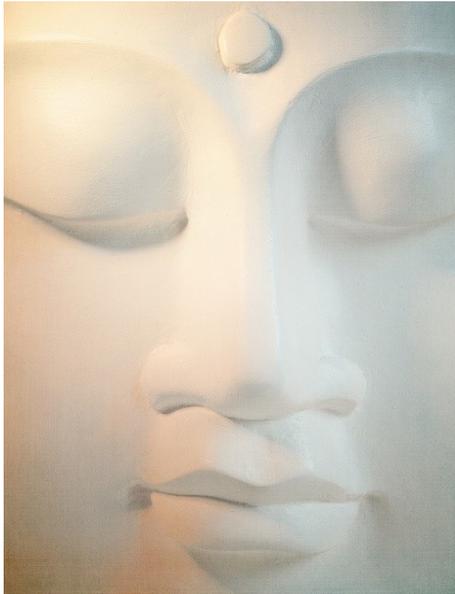
The compactness of continuity of consciousness creates illusion of a permanent and substantial self existence.

Consciousness arises one after another in rapid succession, performing their functions but we are unable to see the continuity of the process and we take them as self - I am seeing, hearing, etc. Unable to break down the compactness of the continuity, we mistake consciousness aggregates as a permanent self.

So to let go of grasping, we meditate to see the true nature of the five aggregates.



The FIVE AGGREGATES are impermanent and suffering, therefore cannot be regarded as self.



What are the five aggregates?

 **SS** 'Form 'Feeling 'Perception 'Mental Formation 'Consciousness

The *Buddha* taught us that “you” are not an integral, autonomous entity. The self (conventional truth) is a combination of the five aggregates (ultimate truth), namely the **Body** (*form*) and **Mind** (*feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness*).

Why do we need to understand the five aggregates?

 **SS** They are the objects from which identity view and clinging spring. They are the objects for investigation to gain insight.

1. The five aggregates of clinging are what the *Buddha* summarized as the Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha Ariya Sacca*). Only when we understand *dukkha* correctly can we be liberated from suffering.
2. *Dukkha* comes from the syllable “*du*” which means “bad” and “*kham*” means “void of happiness and self”. *Dukkha* comes about when we cling to the five aggregates as I, mine, myself, my pleasant feeling, my unpleasant feeling, I see, I hear ...
3. The five aggregates are the objects from which identity view and clinging spring. They are the objects for investigation to gain insight.

Why do we attach to the five aggregates?

 **SS** Because we are unable to see the faults and dangers of clinging to them.

We are attached to the five aggregates as I, mine, myself because we are unable to see the faults and dangers of clinging to them. The five aggregates are the objects of identity view and craving. They are the objects of *insight* (*vipassanā*) for one to gain release from *dukkha*. The goal of our *vipassanā* practice is – **to experience the constant arising and passing away of the five aggregates and to see clearly the dangers of attaching to them** – like a child that sees the dangers of getting burnt by touching fireworks in fascination.

Venerable Ananda attained Stream Entry (Sotāpanna) when Arahant Punna Mantaniputta exhorted him, “*It’s with clinging, friend Ananda, that there is ‘I am,’ not without clinging. Clinging to what?*”
Clinging to form, feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness. They are to be seen as they actually are with right discernment as “This is not what I am.” – SN 22.83

We practice to see that all these five aggregates are impermanent, not permanent. What is impermanent is suffering and what is suffering cannot be regarded as self. What exists is just cause and effect relationship. Only when we are able to see their arising and passing away together with their causality can we become disenchanted and finally let go of attachment to them.

These five aggregates, not clung to, lead to long term happiness and well-being.





Why is it important to study the five aggregates? It is because the five aggregates of clinging are the truths of suffering which must be fully understood by insight: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not myself.”

— Sayalay Susilā

Understanding this sutta is important so that we do not get attached to the five aggregates and do not determine any of them to be “myself”. These five aggregates, not clung to, lead to long term happiness and well-being.

The aggregate of **materiality** (*rūpakkhandha*)

Rūpa means “keep on changing” and is subject to deformation and oppression. It is made up of the four great elements (earth, fire, water, and wind) and the 24 derived materialities from these four elements. What causes the arising of the four elements? It is due to past karma, consciousness, nutriment, and temperature — all of these have the ability to influence the four elements, which are then seen as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self, as the body reacts to causes and conditions caused by the four factors.

The aggregate of **feeling** (*vedanākkhandha*)

Dependent on contact, feeling arises. There are six types of contact (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind). Each contact gives rise to three types of feeling (pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral). So in total there are 18 types of feeling. Feelings are always present and we practice

observing them as they arise and cease. They are the object of our practice. When we do not contemplate feelings as they arise, two fetters follow. First, we wrongly identify feeling as “myself”, thereby strengthening the personality view. Secondly, feeling conditions craving and our craving increases.

The aggregate of **perception** (*saññākkhandha*)

It perceives the quality of an object by recognizing its “sign.” This sign is a distorted sign, such as when we mistake a rope for a snake in semi-darkness. We wrongly perceive the five aggregates as permanent, happiness, and even having an unchanging self. Although we experience in our day-to-day life drama a constant fluctuation in our feelings and emotions, the perception of impermanence still does not deeply imprint on our mind. We fail to contemplate or note “impermanence” at that moment. It will take a long time to correct this perverted perception.

The aggregate of **formation** (*sankhāraakkhandha*)

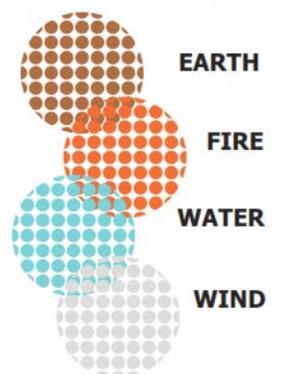
Its characteristic is forming, fabricating, and constructing. Its function is to accumulate karma. Excluding feeling and perception, the remaining 50 mental factors are grouped as formation aggregates. Its manifestation is intervening and to be interested. Practicing generosity, morality, and concentration are good karmas that prolong samsaric existences. But through Vipassanā, contemplating impermanence, suffering, and the non-self of formations, the mind turns away from the engagement of formations, letting go of grasping, and cutting short our samsaric existence.

The aggregate of **consciousness** (*viññanakkhandha*)

Its characteristic is to know the object. Its manifestation is a continuity of process rather than what it seems to be: It seems as if an independent being (a compact rather than a composite entity) is experiencing phenomena. The truth of impermanence is hidden by this continuity, because consciousness is arising and passing away so rapidly. Unable to break down the compactness of continuity, we mistake it for an independent self.

6 TYPES OF CONSCIOUSNESS = EYE • EAR • NOSE • TONGUE • BODY • MIND

FOUR ELEMENTS



6 TYPES OF CONTACT
x3 TYPES OF FEELING
18 TOTAL

SS Because of gratification, we cling to the five aggregates.

By Sayalay Susilā

**Because of not knowing clearly, we develop attachment.
Because of knowing clearly, we give up attachment.**

Just as a dog, tied to a post. If it walks, it walks right around that post. If it stands, it stands right next to that post. If it sits, it sits right next to that post. If it lies down, it lies down right next to that post.

In the same way, the uninstructed person regards the five aggregates as "This is mine, this is my self, this is what I am". If he walks, stands, sits or lies down, he is right next to these five clinging aggregates. Thus one should reflect in one's mind with every moment "For a long time has this mind been defiled by passion, aversion and delusion".

SN 22.100

Like a crooked murderer who disguises himself as a faithful servant to gain your trust and afterwards will kill you. You assume the five aggregates to be self and do not discern this murderer, which will lead you to long term loss and suffering.

SN 22.85

Like a man born blind, who was given a grimy rag and, believing it was a clear and spotless cloth, develops attachment to it. We have been fooled by our mind, thinking the five aggregates are permanent and bring happiness. MN 75

Understanding the above suttas is important so that we do not get attached to the five aggregates and do not determine any of them to be "my self". These five aggregates, not clung to, lead to long term happiness and well-being.



What is the gratification, what is the danger, and what is the escape from the five aggregates?

Form

The pleasure and joy, bhikkhu, that arise in dependence on each of the aggregates – this is the gratification. These aggregates are impermanent, suffering and subject to change – this is the danger. The removal and abandonment of desire and lust – this is the escape. MN 109

The five aggregates are empty

Form is like a large lump of foam. Feeling is like a water bubble. Perception is like a mirage. Formation is like a banana tree. Consciousness is like a magician. Upon investigating, they would appear empty, void, and without substance. SN 22.95

Mental Formation

Mahā Kotthita asked:

What is the appropriate way to contemplate the five aggregates?

Venerable Sarīputta replied: "A virtuous monk should attend in an appropriate way to the five aggregates of clinging by contemplating them as impermanent, unsatisfactory, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness and not as self." SN 22.122

Clinging to the Five Aggregates is dangerous.
Let go and do not get attached to them.



Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85)

Is form, feeling, perception, fabrication, and consciousness constant or inconstant?
Inconstant, my friend.

And is that which is inconstant peaceful or stressful?
Stressful, my friend.

And is it proper to regard what is inconstant, stressful and subject to change as "This is mine. This is myself. This is what I am?"
No, my friend.

Do you regard form, feeling, perception, fabrication, and consciousness as Tathāgata?
No, my friend.

Do you regard the Tathāgata as one who is without form, feeling, perception, fabrication, and consciousness?
No, my friend.

Then, an Arahant with no more mental effluents, what happens to him with the breakup of the body after death?
Form, feeling, perception, fabrication, and consciousness are inconstant. That which is inconstant is stressful. That which is stressful has ceased and gone to its end.

Understanding this sutta is important so that we do not get attached to the five aggregates and do not determine any of them to be "my self". These five aggregates, not clung to, lead to long term happiness and well-being.



Form, feeling, perception, fabrication, and consciousness are inconstant and non-self. All phenomena are inconstant and not-self.

Venerable Channa, having received and understood the teaching of non-self from the senior monk, thought to himself: "But still my mind does not leap up, grow confident, steadfast, and resolve on the ending of craving. Instead agitation and clinging still arise. Who, then is my self?"

— *Channa Sutta (SN22.90)*

SS Agitation arises because of fear of losing the "self" that one has clung to so strongly.

He sought help from Venerable Ananda who preached to him: "The world is supported by a polarity, that of existence and non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is, with right discernment, "non-existence" with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is, with right discernment, "existence" with reference to the world does not occur to one.

He has no uncertainty or doubt that, when there is arising, only stress is arising, and that when there is passing away, stress is passing away."

This is RIGHT VIEW

The Middle Path: "Everything exists. That is one extreme. Everything does not exist. That is a second extreme. Avoiding the two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma via the Middle Path (Dependent Origination)."

— *Kaccayanagotta Sutta (SN12.15)*

SS The instruction here is to contemplate the arising and ceasing of mind-and-matter (nāma-rūpa) so that the myth of "self" is destroyed. When there is no "self" then there is only the natural process of rapid arising and passing away; there is no clinging to existence (to be) and non-existence (not to be).

SS With clear understanding of Dependent Origination, one frees oneself from the wrong view of these two extremes. Understanding intellectually is not enough, as insight knowledge is weak.



Sayalay Susilā

"Abandon what is unskillful. One can abandon what is unskillful. If it were not possible, I would not ask you to do it." ~ Buddha

Kilesas (defilements) operate at three levels:

- *Anusaya* (latent) level, called "*Latent Defilements*"—The latent or dormant kilesa meets with the right conditions and becomes active. *Example: Seeing an enemy, latent anger arises.*
- *Pariyutthana* (conscious mental) level, called "*Obsessive Defilements*"— Thoughts and obsessions arise. *Example: The mind is furious at seeing the enemy.*
- *Vitikkama* (action) level, called "*Transgressing Defilements*"—Bodily and verbal actions (transgressions) are performed. *Example: Killing, stealing and telling lies.*

Different levels of defilements are tackled by different means:

1. *Transgressing defilements* are restrained by way of Morality (*Sīla*). Every action lays a track of kamma within. If we love ourselves and have compassion for all beings, we will uphold our precepts dearly.
2. *Obsessive defilements* are suppressed by way of concentration and wise attention.
3. *Latent defilements* can only be uprooted by way of *Vipassanā* meditation. Only when wisdom sees the true nature of all conditioned things as *Anicca* (impermanent), *Dukkha* (suffering), and *Anatta* (non-self) will we be able to let go of many forms of defilements. Ultimately, only the path knowledge of stream entry, once-returning, non-returning, and Arahantship can uproot latent defilements completely.

Wise Attention Keeps Defilements at Bay

- To overcome lust for the opposite sex: By reflecting on the impurity of the 32 parts of the body or doing skeleton meditation, the perception of beauty disappears, and lust is overcome.
- To overcome hatred: One can never overcome hatred with hatred; it can only be overcome by loving kindness, forgiveness, compassion, gratitude and equanimity. Understanding that we are the owners of our own kamma, we abandon hatred.
- To overcome jealousy: Saying "*Sadhu*" ("well done") when others meet success becomes a magical mantra that turns jealousy and envy into joyful rejoicing at others' good fortune.
- To overcome attachment to the five aggregates: Contemplate impermanence. Every day we witness the changes in our body, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations and consciousness, yet we do not reflect wisely on this impermanence. Owing to the latent defilement of ignorance, we mistake the impermanent as permanent, the not-beautiful as beautiful, and non-self as self. Wisdom functions by seeing through the appearance of things as permanent, beautiful, and self and realizing the way they actually are—impermanent, suffering, and non-self.

Failure to acknowledge the truth of change (Anicca) is the greatest source of our suffering, as desire is based on the assumption that things do not change.

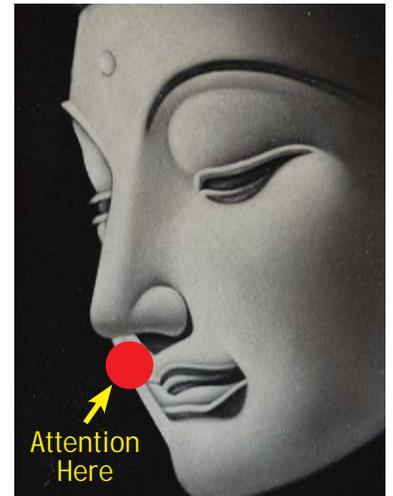
- Sayalay Susila

MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING IS THE CONTEMPLATION OF BODY THAT HELPS TO DEVELOP CONCENTRATION.

Preparation — relax your body and mind

Sit in a comfortable position. Keep the back straight. Gently close your eyes and take a deep breath. Breathe in love and breathe out all stress, worries, and irritations. Let them go with the wind.

Next, we must learn to relax the body by doing a body scan — starting from the top of the head and slowly moving down each part of the body, relaxing each part one by one: forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, lips, jaw, neck, shoulders, chest, upper back, abdomen, lower back, arms, hands, thighs, calves, and feet. Again, from head to sole, relax



Mindfulness of Breathing (Anāpānasati)

Anāpānasati takes the in-and-out breath as object. Keep your attention under the nostrils where the breath touches. Do not follow the breath up to the head or down to the abdomen—doing so causes the mind to move and prevents concentration from developing. Also, avoid paying attention to the cold or heat of the breath, which switches the object from the breath to the fire element. Simply be aware of the flow of the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils; allow the breath to flow naturally, without trying to control it. Practice with a relaxed mind, without strain or expectation. Wanting to achieve something creates excessive effort and causes the mind to tense up. Balancing concentration and effort is important. The effort needed here is the effort to be constantly aware, to notice. The breath can be long, short, clear or unclear, just be aware of the breath as it truly is, regardless.

When a thought arises, simply be aware of its arising and then gently “pull” the mind back to the breath. Persistently bringing the mind back to the breath again and again will make mindfulness on the breath continuous. Only when mindfulness is continuous can concentration develop. As concentration deepens, the breath will become more subtle, and light (nimitta) may appear. Light is the product of concentration. However, do not pay attention to the light immediately. If you do, the light may disappear. When the light becomes brighter and persists for 20-30 minutes, the mind may naturally shift its attention to the light, and eventually “sink” into it for a long time, after which you will attain either access or absorption (jhāna) concentration.



The purpose of this practice is to see the body as it really is as impersonal elements.

- Sayalay Susila

The body is composed of the four elements. The body is a conventional truth, the four elements are ultimate truths.

The Characteristics of :



earth

hardness, roughness,
heaviness,
softness, smoothness,
and lightness



water

flowing and cohesion



fire

heat and maturing



wind

supporting and pushing

To master this meditation, one begins by learning how to discern each of the characteristics of the four elements, one at a time.

Follow this sequence.

First, feel the hardness of the head, then scan down from the top of the head down to the soles of the feet. Feel the hardness all over the body. Recognize this as *earth* element.

Second, feel the flowing of blood or energy (*chi* in Chinese) throughout the body. Recognize this as *water* element. The binding force in the body (cohesion) is also water element.

Move on to *fire* element. Pay attention to bodily temperature from the top of the head down to the soles of the feet. As a little warmth is felt, mentally note, "Fire element, fire element." Cold, relatively speaking, is also part of fire element.

To discern *wind* element, feel how air is moving in and out of the nostrils. Become aware of the pushing as the abdomen or chest expands when breathing. Mentally note, "Wind element, wind element."

After meditation on each element, contemplate it simply as an impersonal element, not my body, not a being, not an enduring self. Once the four elements become clear, stop scanning from head to feet. Simply take the body as a whole, seeing the four elements one by one. Sometimes when noticing one element, other elements may be noticed together. This is very good; however, they must also be distinguished one by one as earth, water, fire and wind element. In this way, they will not get mixed up. As one keeps discerning the four elements repeatedly, seeing them as mere elements, one gradually loses the perception of a "living being".

The mind establishes itself upon the elements.

Extending one's knowledge externally, one realizes all matters – animate or inanimate – are composed of the four elements only. As concentration and wisdom develop, the discernment speeds up and one reaches a point where the body appears as billions of vibrating particles, incessantly arising and passing. The entire body is in a state of radical flux. There is no solidity at all.

For some meditators, the body may appear to be bubbling. In the "Lump of Foam" discourse (SN 22.95), Buddha likens the body, this internal materiality, to foam: "**It is hollow, void, insubstantial.**" One feels weary and humiliated with this uncontrollable occurrence. One sees the impermanent, suffering and inevitably impersonal nature of the body. Such seeing is seeing it rightly, just as it is in truth.



“MONKS, THESE SEVEN PERCEPTIONS, WHEN DEVELOPED & PURSUED, ARE OF GREAT FRUIT, OF GREAT BENEFIT. THEY GAIN A FOOTING IN THE DEATHLESS, HAVE THE DEATHLESS AS THEIR FINAL END. WHICH SEVEN?” – AN 7.46



7 PERCEPTIONS	BENEFITS	WAYS OF PRACTICE
The perception of Foulness	Mind shrinks away from sexual acts, bends away, pulls back, and is not drawn in; either equanimity or loathing takes a stance.	Contemplate the impurity of the 32 parts of the body: Reflect on this very body, encased by skin, as full of various kinds of impurity, such as head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, large intestines, small intestines, gorge, feces, brain, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, skin-oil, saliva, mucus, fluid in the joints, and urine.
The perception of Death	Mind shrinks away from fervor for life. Disenchantment with all kinds of becoming develops. One is constantly diligent. There are no stains of avarice about one's property. The perception of impermanence grows and one dies undeluded and fearless.	Look around and notice beings who were formerly seen enjoying life but are dead now. Then arouse a sense of urgency by reflecting: "Uncertain is life, certain is death"; "I might die at any moment"; "Death will take place."
The perception of Loathsomeness of Food	Mind shrinks away from craving for flavors; either equanimity or loathing takes a stance.	Reflect on the repulsiveness of food that has been eaten — food smeared with saliva; chewed food that has been vomited; undigested food that is being excreted with a foul smell, etc.
The perception of Disenchantment with the whole world	Mind shrinks away from worldly embellishments or thoughts, and is not drawn in; either equanimity or loathing takes a stance.	Contemplate the impermanence, fault, and danger inherent in the five aggregates, both internally and externally; generate disgust toward all formations by understanding that any delight in the world becomes an impediment to progress on the path.
The perception of Impermanence	Mind shrinks away from gains, offerings, & fame.	Contemplate impermanence in whatever arises.
The perception of Suffering in what is impermanent	Mind establishes a fierce perception of danger & fear towards idleness, heedlessness, lack of commitment, & lack of reflection, as it would towards a murderer with an upraised sword.	Contemplate the oppression inherent in the constant arising and passing away of all formations.
The perception of Non-self in what is suffering	Mind is devoid of I-making & Mine-making internally with regard to this body and mind and externally with regard to all themes; it has transcended pride and is well-released.	Contemplate cause and effect; contemplate that the arising of formations is beyond one's control.

Dhamma shared on 14 Apr 2012, BHS, Penang, Malaysia Design: Jesse James Chen

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It is important to discern mental factors (cetasikas), seeing them one-by-one as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. Buddha expounded the Anupada Sutta (“One-By-One As They Occur”), citing how Venerable Sariputta investigated the mental factors associated with jhāna one-by-one and was able to abandon all the mental defilements through direct knowledge, which led to his Awakening.

The process of repeatedly investigating the five aggregates (Khandhas) in the light of Insight Knowledge (Vipassanā-ñāna):

The enlightenment factor of investigation, which is the same as wisdom (pañña), is indispensable to the practice. Without wisdom, mindfulness alone, though important, cannot attain the goal. When undertaken with mindfulness and wisdom, the path to the goal is smooth, straight, and clear.

After practicing mindfulness of breathing for some time, take the breath as the object of investigation in the following way:

1. Who knows the breath? **Consciousness.**
2. Who causes the touching of the breath on the nostrils? **Contact.**
3. Who feels the pleasantness of the breath? **Feeling.**
4. Who perceives the breath as long or short? **Perception.**
5. Who directs the mind towards the breath? **Attention.**
6. Who does not forget the breath? **Mindfulness.**
8. Who makes the effort to know, This is the breath? **Effort.**
9. Who repeatedly places the mind on the breath? **Sustained application of mind.**
10. Who acts upon the breath and accumulates wholesome kamma? **Volition.**

Contact, Feeling, Perception, Attention, Mindfulness, Effort, Sustained Application of Mind, and Volition are not I, not mine, not myself. They are merely mental factors performing their functions and immediately passing away. When you can recognize them one-by-one along with their functions, the non-self nature of mental phenomena becomes evident.

The perception of “I” dissolves.



Breath, which consists of the four elements, is the form aggregate; feeling is the feeling aggregate; perception is the perception aggregate; attention, effort, sustained application of mind, mindfulness, and volition are the volitional formations aggregate; and consciousness is the consciousness aggregate. These five aggregates of clinging are the truth of suffering; craving for them is the origin of suffering; destruction of that same craving is the cessation of suffering; and repeatedly seeing they are impermanent, suffering and non-self is the path.



**FORM • FEELING
PERCEPTION • FORMATIONS
CONSCIOUSNESS**

“And how, O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating feeling in feelings?”

“Here, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu when experiencing a pleasant feeling, understands: ‘I experience a pleasant (worldly and spiritual) feeling’; when experiencing a painful (worldly and spiritual) feeling, he understands: ‘I experience a painful feeling’; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful (worldly and spiritual) feeling, he understands: ‘I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling.’”

“Thus he lives contemplating feeling in feelings internally, or he lives contemplating feeling in feelings externally, or he lives contemplating feeling in feelings internally and externally. He abides contemplating in feeling its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in feeling its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in feeling both its arising and vanishing factors. Or mindfulness that ‘Feeling exists’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary just for knowledge and remembrance, and he lives independent and clings to nothing in the world.

“Thus, indeed, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating feeling in feelings. (MN10)

The contemplation of feeling is very important. When one is not mindful of feelings, they will inevitably condition craving and identity view.

Feeling is a mental factor. Its characteristic is “to be felt.” Its function is experiencing the “flavor”— whether desirable or undesirable—of the object: each form, sound, odor, taste, tangible and mental object will have its particular “flavor.” Pleasant feeling experiences the desirable aspect of the object, and thrills both mind and body. Unpleasant feeling experiences the undesirable aspect of the object and makes both mind and body wither. Neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling experiences those objects that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant, and causes indifference of mind and body. There is no “I,” no person who feels. Rather, feeling itself “feels.”

With mindfulness established, when pleasant feeling arises, one becomes aware of its presence and, by understanding its individual essence, does not grasp that feeling as “myself.” One further contemplates feeling as a formed, conditioned, and dependently arisen state. Feelings arise dependent on the six contacts of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind with its six respective objects.

When one looks upon the arising feeling dispassionately, one can see the feeling as fleeting, impermanent, suffering (owing to its change), and empty of self. With such understanding, feelings lose their power to activate the underlying tendency of craving and identity view.

“And how, bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu abide contemplating mind as mind?”

Here a bhikkhu understands mind affected by lust as mind affected by lust and mind unaffected by lust as mind unaffected by lust. He understands mind affected by hate as mind affected by hate, and mind unaffected by hate as mind unaffected by hate. He understands mind affected by delusion as mind affected by delusion, and mind unaffected by delusion as mind unaffected by delusion. He understands contracted mind as contracted mind, and distracted mind as distracted mind. He understands concentrated mind as concentrated mind, and unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated mind.

INSIGHT

“In this way he abides contemplating mind as mind internally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind externally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in mind its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in mind its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in mind both its arising and vanishing factors.” (MN 10: Four Foundations of Mindfulness). Or else mindfulness that ‘there is mind’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind.

ATTITUDE OF THE MIND

What attitude are you practicing with? Right or wrong attitude? The watching mind must be free from all expectations, judgment, preference and bias. Keep the mind in the middle. Watch different mental states in a dispassionate way without getting involved. Let everything come and go without reacting to it.

While watching pain, be aware of the mind that is watching the pain, not the pain. Check the reaction of the mind towards the pain. Observe that reaction as though a third party is observing another’s pain.

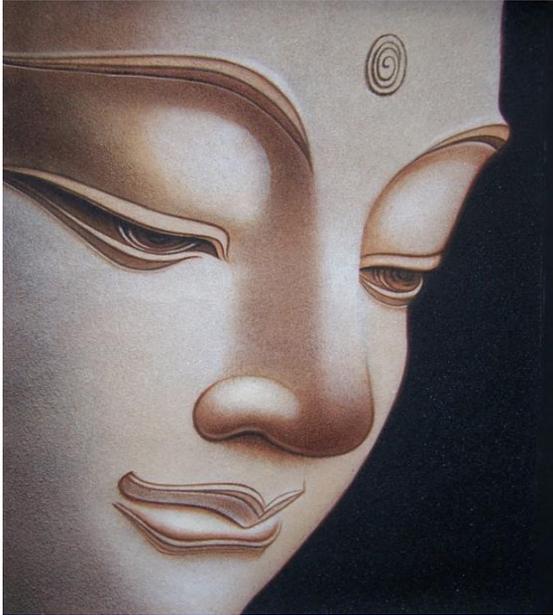
Recognize phenomena (anger, joy, greed, heat, confusion, tension, fear, sleepiness, pain, happiness, depression, stiffness, remorse ...) as they arise. Let them be what they are, merely impersonal mental events. Identity view stubbornly remains intact, contaminating our mental stream, a habitual reaction to almost everything that arises as body and mind. If delusion leads us to spontaneously grasp at emotions as mine, or myself, the remedy is to dis-identify and see phenomena as impersonal.

To depersonalize or dis-identify is to mentally note any arising emotion repeatedly as “mere emotion.” Look upon these mental states dispassionately. See whatever arises as foreign, as a third party, as empty or devoid of self. In this way, one frees oneself from entanglement. From a psychological point of view, this way of looking at things allows one to step back. One separates emotionally and is thereby relieved of the worry and fear that, in truth, does not belong to one. In reality, physical and mental phenomena momentarily arise, perform a function, and naturally fall away.



By Sayalay Susilā

Duk (bad) *kha* (void of happiness or self) — which must be fully known



**Buddha taught Suffering and the End of Suffering.
The end of suffering is only possible when we understand
what Dukkha truly is.
To understand suffering is to end all sufferings.
This marks the true compass of our practice.**

Until we know and see
Dukkha, we find little
reason to practice. When we
truly understand ***Dukkha***,
it puts our practice immediately
back on track.



The five aggregates affected by clinging (form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness) comprise what we conventionally call “self”. They are the **TRUTH** of **SUFFERING**. This **TRUTH** must be fully known.

Dukkha is characterized by oppression through the constant arising and passing away of the five aggregates, or mental and physical phenomena. When one truly sees the five aggregates as they really are, this knowledge becomes independent of others (texts or teachers).

Only then:

- we can experience disenchantment that leads to dispassion
- we can say we really understand what dukkha means (that which is difficult to bear)
- the desire to liberate oneself really arises and letting go is possible

SS EVERY ARISING IS THE ARISING OF SUFFERING, EVERY CEASING IS THE CEASING OF SUFFERING: not seeing this truth, we think the cessation is the annihilation of “self” and feel rejected.

These aggregates, when grasped and held as “I” or “mine”, are suffering. Non-grasping is possible only when we see the five aggregates as they are: a dynamic process that is arising and passing in every moment, dependent on causes, rather than an enduring “self” that is moving through the processes of birth, old age and death.



Sayalay Susilā



***Suffering exists,
but no sufferer can be found.***

— Visuddhimagga, 513



Instructions to Anathapindika on his deathbed by Venerable Sariputta

A powerful exercise in non-attachment as one works through the map of the inner landscape step-by-step.

I WILL NOT CLING TO and MY CONSCIOUSNESS WILL NOT BE DEPENDENT ON:

- the six sense-bases — the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind
- the six sense-objects — forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and mind-objects
- the six types of consciousness — eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind- consciousness
- the six contacts — eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind- contact
- the six feelings born of eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind- contact
- the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air
- the five aggregates — form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness
- the immaterial jhana pertaining to the sphere of — infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, and neither-perception-nor-non-perception
- this world or the world beyond
- what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, encountered, sought after, and examined by the mind.

Attachment to these phenomena brings suffering. Why? All these formations have the nature of arising and ceasing. When what we strongly attach to – for example, pleasant feeling – undergoes change and dissolution, we suffer enormously.

Furthermore, when there is attachment, consciousness becomes dependent. When consciousness becomes dependent, five aggregates of clinging are built up. When five aggregates arise, aging, sickness and death inevitably follow.

But how do we abandon clinging and free our heart? By practicing mindfulness and developing wisdom. Mindfulness is aware of whatever arises at this moment without producing further reactions. Wisdom sees through whatever arises and knows it is impermanent, conditional and stressful—prompting the mind to let go of grasping.

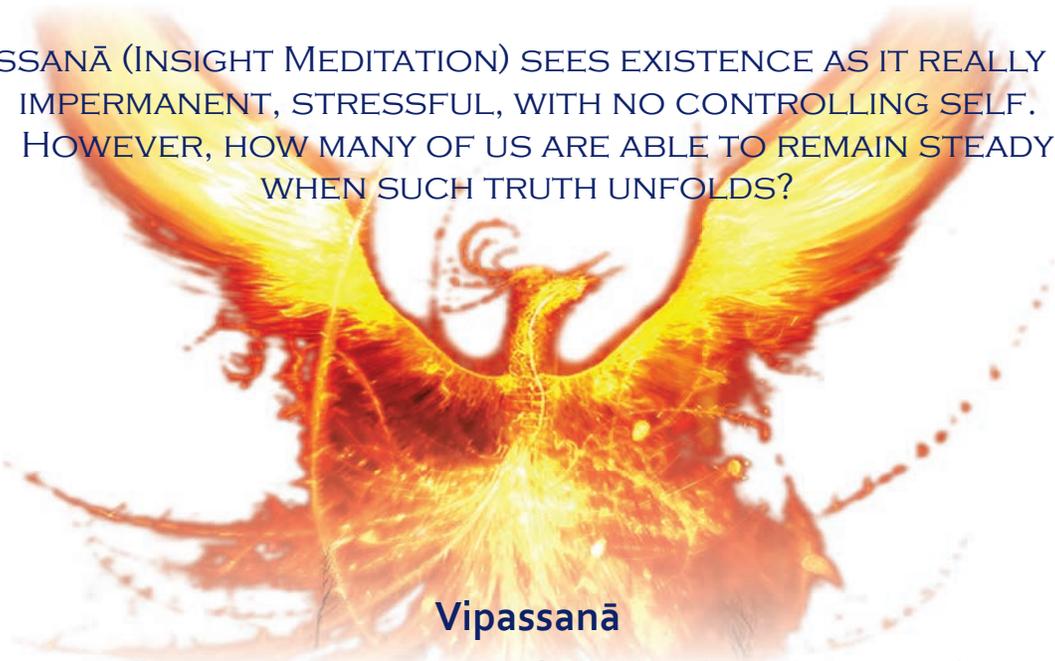
Such understanding arises when one follows the instruction given by Venerable Sariputta above.

When there is clinging, there is suffering. To be free from suffering, I will let go of any clinging whatsoever.

How can one let go? By contemplating Anicca, Dukkha and Anattā.



VIPASSANĀ (INSIGHT MEDITATION) SEES EXISTENCE AS IT REALLY IS AS IMPERMANENT, STRESSFUL, WITH NO CONTROLLING SELF. HOWEVER, HOW MANY OF US ARE ABLE TO REMAIN STEADY WHEN SUCH TRUTH UNFOLDS?



Vipassanā

After repeatedly seeing the impermanence of one's thoughts and emotions, the mind may start to resist the truth it's witnessing, as it goes against our cherished belief in security, pleasure, happiness and permanence.

The resistance is even greater when we realize that we have not the slightest control over what is happening at this moment. Our whole being (existence) is an ongoing process of causal relationships—a constant reaction to randomly arising thoughts.

Are the thoughts real? When one grasps a thought as "myself" or "mine," it becomes real. Otherwise, it is unreal.

Following the thought without realizing it is illusory is likened to a mad man running here and there aimlessly. Or like a wandering spirit roaming here and there, finding no eternal home (self) in which to settle down.

Life is sustained by clinging to a "permanent self." It is unpleasant when we realize the opposite, as this is not the way we are used to living.

To ease this spiritual upheaval requires total acceptance. Surrender to the truth.

Let the "self" die in order to be reborn. You experience greater happiness when there is no self to cling to.



BLESSINGS

Maximum of 7 more lives to reach Arahantship.
One can never be reborn in the 4 woeful states.

3 Fetters Are Removed:

1. Identity View
2. Doubt About the Triple Gem
3. Clinging to Rites and Rituals

THE PRACTICE THAT LEADS TO STREAM-ENTRY

1. ASSOCIATE WITH WISE TEACHERS

Observe the teacher's bodily and verbal behavior and notice if it is based on greed, hatred and delusion. A wise teacher teaches Dhamma that is deep, hard to see, hard to realize, tranquil, refined and subtle. This Dhamma can not be taught by one who is greedy, angry, and deluded. The wise teacher is endowed with knowledge of the Suttas, Abhidhamma and Vinaya. He appreciates the value of meditation and does not speak much. He teaches the Buddha's teachings (without changing them) and does not use his own teachings. To recognize a wise teacher one must have clear powers of observation and must stay with the teacher for some time.

2. LISTENING TO THE TRUE DHAMMA

True Dhamma leads to dispassion, not passion; to being unfettered, not fettered; to letting go of attachment, not accumulating; to contentment, not discontent; to seclusion, not entanglement; to the arising of persistence, not laziness; to being unburdensome, not burdensome.

3. WISE ATTENTION

In response to whatever ideas enter the mind, the unarisen defilements of sensuality, anger, cruelty, and ignorance do not arise and any arisen defilements are abandoned—this is called **wise attention**. We attend to the five aggregates of clinging and see that attachment to them is the cause of our repeated rebirths. We attend to them in an appropriate way, seeing them as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as alien, as empty of self, as void, as bubbles, as a mirage, as non-self.

4. PRACTICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DHAMMA

We observe **Morality (Sila)** based on the understanding of Kamma and its Result, and also out of compassion for others. We practice **Concentration (Samādhi)** to make the mind clear, still, bright and malleable in order see things as they really are. We develop **Wisdom (Paññā)** to see the arising and passing away of the five aggregates. Seeing rightly, we become disenchanted, making it possible to let go of our clinging to the five aggregates.



Sayalay Susilā

was born in Pahang, Malaysia, in 1963 and ordained as a Theravada Buddhist nun in the Burmese tradition at the age of 28, in Malaysia. Sayalay began developing her keen interest in insight meditation while at the University of Science Malaysia, where she obtained a degree in mass communications in 1988.

After graduation, Sayalay worked as a high school teacher for a year and a half. But disenchanted with worldly matters and desiring to be dedicated to the practice more than ever, she resigned her post to take up meditation full time. Six months after her ordination in 1991, she went to Panditarama Monastery in Myanmar, where she practiced intensively for nearly three years under the guidance of the famous meditation master Venerable U Pandita Sayadaw.

In 1994, wishing to cultivate concentration meditation, Sayalay moved to Pa Auk Forest Monastery in Myanmar. She placed herself under the guidance of renowned monk, Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw, and remained in the forest for 14 years. In addition to an assiduous program of meditation, she also learned the Abhidhamma, ancient discourses, and the Pāli language from Pak Auk Sayadaw. Meanwhile, she became his English-to-Chinese interpreter in Myanmar and abroad.

During her travels in Myanmar, she also practiced different meditation methods, such as those taught by Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw, Mogok Sayadaw, and Sayagyi U Ba Khin. As a result Sayalay has become an unusually accomplished teacher able to present the subtleties of the Buddha's teachings in a simple and direct way. In particular, she presents the most profound division of the teaching, the Abhidhamma, in a lucid manner grounded not in pedantic philosophy, but in actual meditation experience.

Sayalay has traveled extensively as a meditation and Dhamma teacher, presenting the Abhidhamma and Sutta expositions in formal lectures and talks, and has conducted meditation retreats throughout the U.S., Canada, Australia, Taiwan, Latvia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. She speaks fluent Chinese, English, Burmese, Hokkien, and Malay. Her publications include *Unravelling the Mystery of Mind and Body through Abhidhamma* (second edition), published in both English and Chinese, *Mindfulness of Breathing* (English), *The Practical Manual of Abhidhamma* (Chinese), and *The Nine Virtues of the Buddha* (Chinese).

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