

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 lead 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.



Dukkha
Samudaya
Nirodha
Maggā