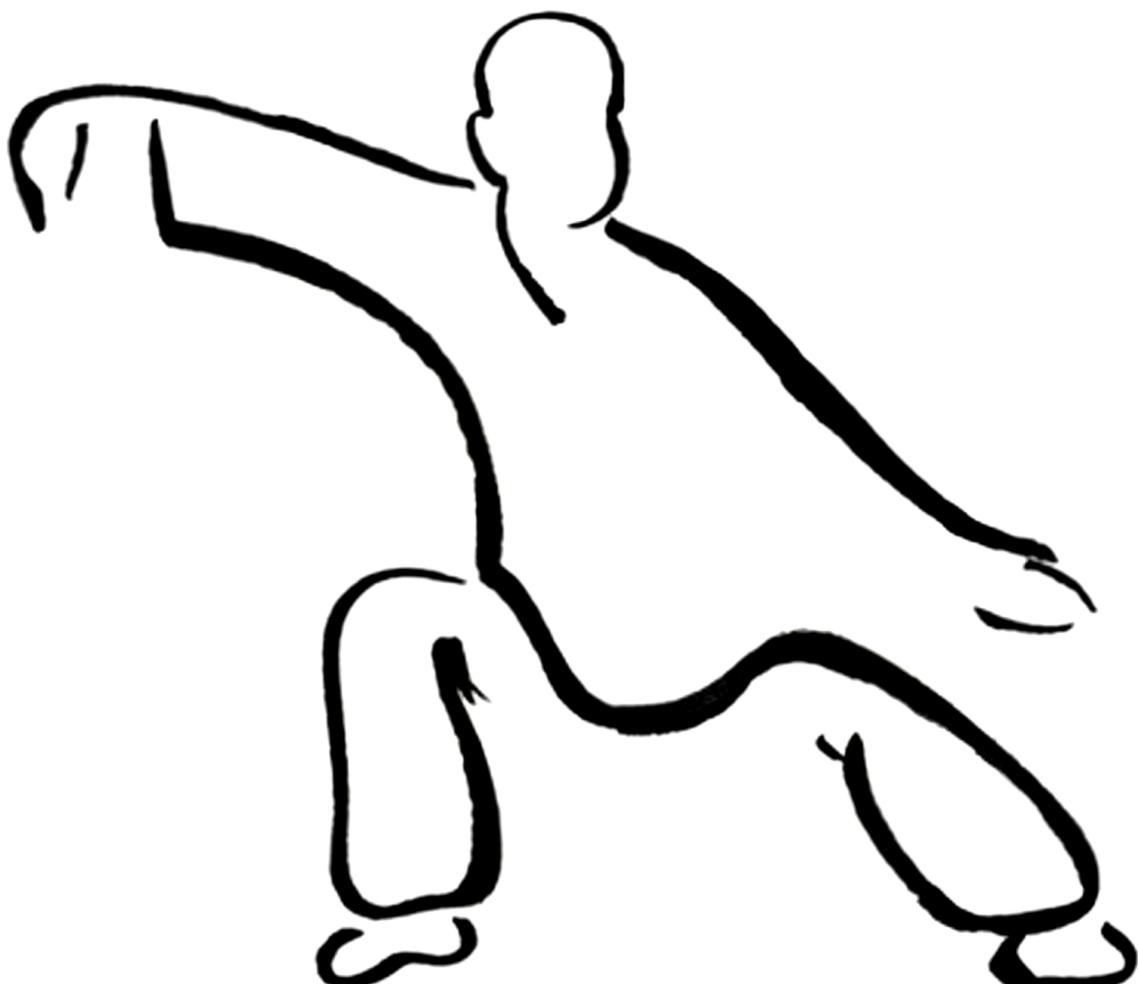


Realistic Virtue

Buddhist body-mind science

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Ajahn Kalyāno

To my teacher, Ajahn Anan

FOREWORD

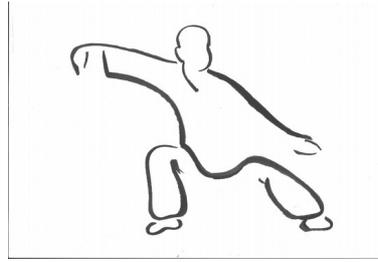
This book is an attempt to put together writing from many years of reflection. My dear father liked the first attempts that formed part of my first year Ph.D. submission. When he died, I determined to finish writing it, not realizing that in the mean time I would take ordination as a monk and that my view would continue to develop so radically. Dear Dad, I hope you have patient spirit.

The work draws upon the study and practice of both clinical psychology and physical therapies. Also training in and teaching T'ai Chi Chuan. In 1996, I took a sabbatical from my PhD. studies in psychology to stay at Chithurst Buddhist monastery I did not return to lay life but instead ordained as a Bhikkhu in the Theravada Buddhist tradition in 1998.

The consistent theme of investigation throughout was reflection on the mind body problem. This began with an emphasis on solving problems of physical or mental suffering. The limitations of such work became more and more apparent. However, at the same time I would meet people whose inner strength seemed to take them beyond suffering. This gradually led me to look for such ways to transcend it.

In Buddhism, I found both a framework with which to explain what I experienced and guidance on the path. This work, therefore, represents psychological, philosophical and heart-felt support for the Thai Forest tradition of Theravada Buddhism. Any insight I offer back to the Lord Buddha from whence it came. Any error is purely due to my own lack of insight.

Kalyano Bhikkhu, Thailand, 2006



INTRODUCTION

There are very many books on self-help or self development that encourage us to become something bigger and better, happier or higher in the worldly or the spiritual sense. Yet all that we will ever become will be impermanent. We make an effort but the results can never last forever as this effort can never be sustained forever, the conditions that sustain any kind of being are impermanent. If we are wise we realise this was never a real spiritual path but merely a false spirituality generated by a mind that cannot see beyond a materialist view, it was spiritual materialism.

Real spirituality lies in relinquishing ourselves rather than in self development. It is the happiness of the altruist. It is also the happiness of the wise who, seeing clearly, are freed from their attachment to the conditioned world including this illusion we call ourselves. Ultimately this path goes beyond all kinds of being to realise a state of pure truth or knowing. So the true path lies not in a refinement of being (including being energy rather than matter) but in a refinement of knowing and seeing that covers all aspects of our experience. The refinement of our minds through meditation is aimed at this. The encouragement is to stay with and examine the object of meditation developing our ability to see clearly rather than just developing a refinement of mind for its own sake or for pleasure. This is quite a different emphasis, one of awareness rather than withdrawal. It is not however that our awareness remains ordinary in its nature, not at all. Neither does our view of the world or experience of it remain the same, these are completely transformed. So this is not a bare awareness and acceptance of the norm but a completely new view and an expanded experience of reality in which it can be possible to see all kinds of new phenomena, a new reality. Ultimately the mind can know and see Nibbāna, ultimate reality (another danger of spiritual materialism is that we create not just ourselves but all kinds of other beings in our minds that are just mind-made, imagined, not real. We block our minds to the real spiritual dimension by creating a fake. We can even imagine Nibbāna, like our ultimate dream only to have a rude awakening when our fake Nibbāna comes to an end).

So in this book you will find a way of seeing the mind and body clearly. This helps the benevolent mind to understand and use all kinds of means to help use our minds and bodies for our benefit and that of others and yet it is in the quality of the seeing in-and-of-itself that the highest benefit lies, freedom of heart.

In my previous book virtue and reality I considered the links between - how our very own, subjective view of ourselves can become a natural source of morality, hence of happiness for ourselves and others. The book 'Notes on Dhamma Practise' and Part 1 of this book is a more extensive, practical model of body and mind and their relationship to the world. This model is meant to act as a structure for our experience and a means of deepening our understanding of ourselves.

In terms of this process, in order to be realistic and thus truly, effectively virtuous what we need to understand most of all and place at the centre and source of all other understanding is our understanding of our own human situation. We need to be mindful and stay in touch with the realities of that situation and let this inform us, moment-by-moment. Otherwise we may not be addressing the real needs of our situation as it changes. Even with the highest moral standards, with the best of intentions, we can be harming ourselves and others in the present or heading for trouble in the future. Then the deeper we understand what our human situation really is the more we find ways of satisfying our deeper needs. We find deeper and deeper sources of virtue.

Meditation is the tool we can use to deepen our experience.

The process of meditation does not lead us away from reality but in to reality, it opens the mind up to reality.

We abandon our inner world in order to embrace the reality of the outer world.

In this way the process of meditation can completely transform our view of ourselves.

The truths of Buddhism are not passive armchair truths but hold implications for every aspect of our lives. In my view the Buddha's teaching is unsurpassed as a practical understanding of the human condition and human spiritual potential. To me the Buddha's teaching is both broader and reaches further than any other understanding. In terms of its breadth, being in line with the truths of nature the Buddha's view of body, mind and spirit can embrace and utilise science, or science can use Buddhist principles to apply itself to the direct benefit of mankind.

Spiritual truth can influence our lives most fully when allied to science. In this respect the many kinds of alternative approaches to body and mind associated with Buddhism are evolving thankfully into complementary approaches and care into interdisciplinary care. With an open mind this can be taken further with model of humankind as itself, in its very nature, an open system. Mindfulness is to thus bring our own view in line with the truths of nature.

In terms of the body we should not think we can improve on nature overall. In its own way nature is seeking its own perfection. Cultivation is to utilize nature not to modify it, to go with nature not against it. Nature does go wrong in specific cases as it searches for this perfection. Disease is an example. In this case of course we fight it.

Let us now consider how we may most fully and practically apply this understanding and find a clear place for Buddhism as a religion in our lives, in our experience of the moment. I will argue that this place is the inside of the body. Here we face the realities of health or disease and the truth of our mortality and also find a subjective experience of the essence, emptiness of the mind. This inner reality we can realise is the most important. True, engaged spirituality is then that which extends this reality into the world of art and science.

Hence we have a religion that goes very well along with medical enterprise, both mainstream and alternative. It makes every sense to have a Buddhist model of holistic health care, for our realistic virtue to be a source of education and benevolent self-discipline.

We also realize that we can get to psychological problems through the body far more than we thought possible.

In terms of the mind, the fact that the mind is dependent on the body doesn't make it a physical thing. Only the content of the mind and not its emptiness is so dependent. Ultimately, the mind is not a physical thing it is information or truth.

The empty mind does not interfere with nature so it can in some cases resolve psychosomatic illness where this illness amounts to the mind interfering with the body's function. The mystery of the emptiness of the mind is that it can be extended beyond the body. It can therefore potentially resolve such problems in others. So, if we are looking for magic it lies first of all in this emptiness. This magic is a separate reality from that of nature so it does not confuse things - magic and science can go together, they do not contradict each other. Neither do we need magic to overcome the materialist view, we just need to recognize the immaterial. The practice of samadhi empties the mind and accesses this magic.

The second kind of magic lies in truth. Truth has power. Some truths or levels of truth can lie beyond our understanding and therefore appear to be magical, supernatural. This is not the case if we see truth as intrinsic to the processes of nature. A true magic spell is a kind of deep truth.

The greatest magic of all lies in these two kinds of magic coming together in Dhamma. **Dhamma is truth linked to emptiness**, to samadhi, and hence to this kind of healing but also to greater freedom from physical, material limitation for the heart and mind. If we can thus free the mind we will have no concern over the body. We will see the body as merely our vehicle.

If we see magic in this way we will demystify it and yet it will not lose its charm. We will see magic in nature rather than apart from it. We are not just making something out of something with our minds, just romancing reality. We are finding the true magic of the world, in truth.

It seems to me that as we try find the truth and to make sense of our human condition what we do is to compare and bring together our subjective experience with objective information in our minds in a myriad of ways. The more we make this process in line with objective truth the more realistic we are and the more effective we become. But we can go too far in trying to make subjective experience match objective fact - we can place our thoughts in our head and our feelings in our bodies when do they really belong there, just there, in our subjective experience?

In Part 1 of this essay I will put forward a Buddhist framework, the four foundations of mindfulness, in a particular form - a two-dimensional representation of our 3-D experience as human beings, useful to write or scribble our lives onto. This model represents the way that our experience of ourselves becomes clearer and re-organises itself through the practice of meditation. It can also be used as an intellectual framework with which to make better sense of our experience and one that objective information can be mapped on to – this can be in terms of the application of art or science.

Please be aware that what I am writing is a sharing, not a thesis or a lecture.

Buddhist phenomenology has a particular character. It is an account of the subjective experience of the present like all phenomenology but it may make statements either in a personal way ('I' or 'we') or an impersonal one (the mind, the body).

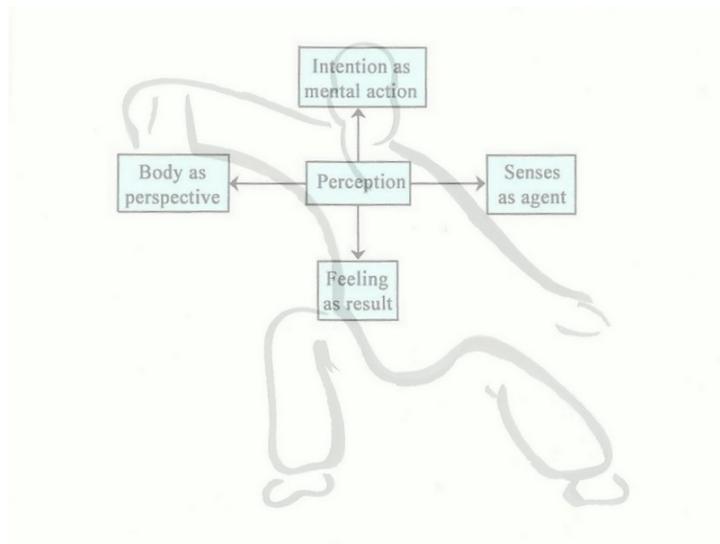
This is because we can be sharing our personal experience when we see our experience as personal or social in nature or we can be talking impersonally when we are seeing impersonally. This does not mean we are seeing objectively, as a scientist might, it means we are phenomena as not-self. To see things as not self can help us be open to the objective, scientific view but is not this view.

The catch is that this impersonal way of expression can risk sound pretentious or be confused with an objective statement. If we understand that what is being expressed is subjective, however, it can beg a question. This is good. It can and cause us to examine in the same impersonal way for ourselves.

Note that I often say 'our mind' rather than my mind; this is a tricky choice to make. 'Our mind' challenges the reader or practitioner to examine for themselves the statement.

Overall, the only answer I can see is to ask you to take whatever I write as a reflection. Pick up the challenge. "Is this so?"

This could sound like a new paradigm for human kind! It is not. It is both an application of the meditative mind and a way of looking that takes us toward a meditative space while keeping our feet firmly on the ground. Through letting go of things while the object of meditation is kept in mind, the mind steps back and opens up, at first to find a bit of space but later to find a lot. It is thus possible through meditation to unify our experience of life, of our mind and body and the world we live in completely within an open awareness, a sense of space. Within this space it is then possible for the different elements of our experience, the body, thought and feeling to find their natural place and dynamic: The essence of the mind can step back and find its centre in the body, we find a safe refuge. The content of our minds, thoughts and emotions appear in front of the body becoming a clear medium through which we experience the world. Physical feeling and mental or emotional feeling thus separate. Our inner world, which we realise was a product of our relation to the outer world, goes back to its source leaving the inner mind empty and bright. We do not identify with any particular part of the experience. Our experience becomes simply one of open 'awareness' in which all phenomena, real or mind-made come together and yet are not confused with each other. We see the movements or our minds within this space as well as the content. Let us represent this space, this field of information, like this, mapping it onto our subjective experience of bodily action:



As we centre the mind within the body we look out at the world through the window of our thoughts and their formative perceptions that are the central axis of the mind.

We thus also see clearly and separately what we are projecting on to the world and what information comes back to us, the cause and effect of our mental activity.

This can become a conscious process as we place our states of mind back into or onto the world of their origin.

Then, very simply, we can be honestly asking:

“What is it I am averse to here?”

“What is it I am attracted to?”

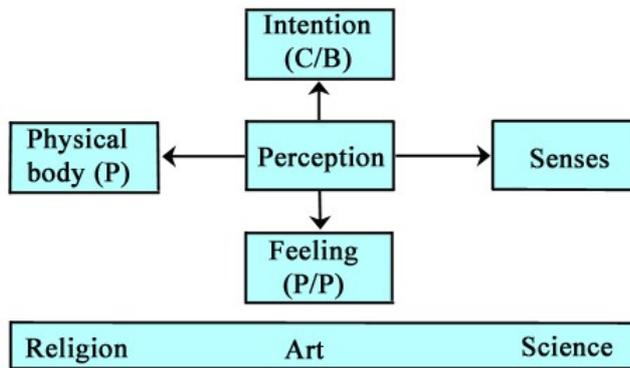
From a place of spiritual refuge our minds can take a fresh look. We can end up reviewing the priorities of our lives and at the same time see how and where to follow these priorities - a clear experience of body and mind taking us to a clear present-moment view of the world we live in and our relationship to it. We have a clear, broad, open and unified awareness of life.

In Part 2 we will consider how we may deepen this awareness in a way that reveals the spiritual dimension. This involves a transformation of the nature of the relationship between the body and mind and tends toward emptying the mind of its automatic reactions (our psycho-physical dimension) to allow a greater influence of conscious thought and feeling. It also opens up a pure spacious empty and ultimately transcendent quality of mind.

THE MODEL

This all then comes together in a process that is like finding ourselves, finding our way back to the source if you like. We act to strengthen this foundation and then reach out anew. We go through this process repeatedly to extend and broaden our knowledge and to overcome, replace our previous habits and views in all areas.

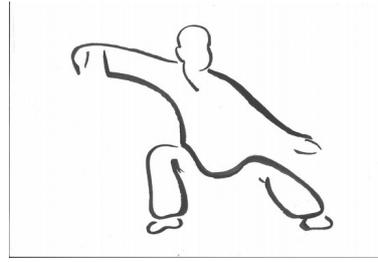
In terms of the clarity that is gathered throughout, we end up with a scheme including the senses and the three domains and tools of contemplation, art and science. In a way this scheme represents (Lord help me) an attempt to formulate a kind of modern Abhidharma, that has a place for modern kinds of information. We also identify four 'internal' pathways of information: the sense of the physical body (P), psychophysical or 'bottom up'(P/P), and cognitive behavioral or 'top down'(C/B) and the linking pathway of perceptions. These include the beliefs that are the conventional truth of religion.



Note also that the approach so far, although it has the unique criteria of Dharma, is still deductive. There is furthermore the emerging pathway of insight linked to a transformed perception of the physical body that leads to the realizations or ultimate truth of the Buddhist religion, the most potent, experiential source of Buddhist belief. The reflection that results in insight is inductive. So note that in contemplative terms we begin with the body and end with the body, so to speak. In terms of our appreciation of our own awareness, our awareness of being aware, we also begin and end with a sense of 'knowing' – first of all wrongly but definitely knowing - in the present moment.

The philosophical rigor, that may seem complicated, is to translate our terms to fit a phenomenological method. Our description of experience uses this method throughout in order that each moment of experience stands on its own without direct reference to past or future. The past and future are included in the present as statements of context and meaning respectively. In language that is more normal, we can say that through reflection we integrate our experience of past and future into the present. This is the full use of the mind in the moment, mindfulness.

We will be making statements about science, art and contemplation as tools for such guidance. I am not making statements about the Dharma or about these disciplines from any other standpoint than as an individual human being trying to use these skilfully for others and myself. Hence, for example, when I talk about the different types of causal relationships there are I do not claim to have penetrated the depths of these things. To say that science involves causal relations means that I see it as involving my causal relations with the world. If I hit a nail with a hammer, it goes in, if I write a book, who knows if I have hit the nail on the head.



PART 1 – BAREFOOT ABHIDHAMMA

SCIENCE, ART and RELIGION TOGETHER in ACTION

Let us begin with a word, a reminder about our intentions in doing all this work. The purpose of making such a picture is to spot weaknesses or blind spots and to suit practice to a given individual's karma and good qualities. The latter is very important, we must keep our eye on our strengths to sustain us and not become overly critical.

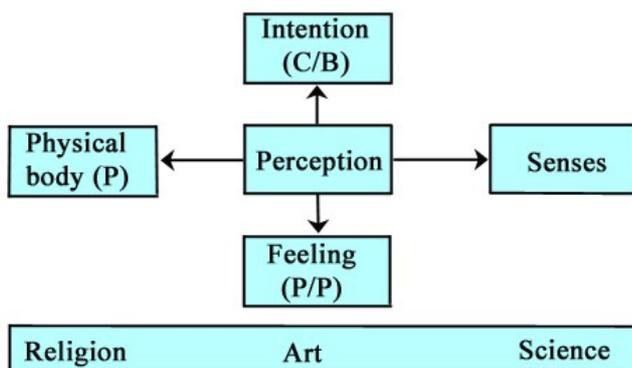
“Lord grant me

The Serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

Courage to change the things I can

And the Wisdom to know the difference”

Now I will embark on a more extensive phenomenological model. The purpose of this is to be able to gather all of the kinds of experience we may have and the knowledge that is formed by this experience more and more into the immediate present moment. The past and future are included in the present as statements of context and meaning respectively. We will draw again our two dimensional map of the present moment experience of the senses, mind states and of the empty or pure mind.



Within this map there are the perceived top-down, cognitive-behavioural functions of thought and intention and the bottom-up psycho-physical processes of feeling (the ‘stuff that comes up’). This is how we, usually unconsciously, make sense of our subjective world. It is proposed that perception is a central mediating factor that usually very largely unconscious. When perception is put in its proper place we can draw our map in order to track the movements of the mind and to clearly place information within a cognitive map that corresponds with the dimensions of our subjective

mental and emotional experience (up/down and in/out). In addition to clarifying the movements of our minds involved in forming our experience we can see knowledge as formed, gathered at each point on the map and also the quality (feeling) of our minds at this point. In phenomenological terms, this gives us a statement of context and process respectively. The picture is complete when we add a statement of meaning. The full meaning comes out of correctly placing phenomena within the map, tracking interactions between phenomena and then relating these to the appropriate objective knowledge base – whether religion art or science.

All this is hard work. We need courage. If we see the value of work, this also strengthens the spirit.

Do not hope for a life without problems. An easy life results in a lazy and judgmental mind. So accept the anxieties and difficulties of life.

Kyong Ho

And what can we really know? Within our subjective model we will be taking science to represent a functional, conventional rather than an ultimate truth. This eclectic pretension is safe as long as it is founded on moral principle and open dialogue, hence the attempt to write these factors into the model itself. On this basis, its statements will be accepted as true until proven false. Functionally as long as we stick to facts or truths on which all of us can agree then what we say will be regarded as objective. The term 'Shared truth' could replace the use of the word objective. Similarly, the term personal truth could replace the usual term of subjective truth. Meaning is the combination of these.

Skill is defined in objective truth as that which reduces pain and in subjective truth, as that which leads to a reduction of suffering or to serenity, to transcendence from suffering.

Belief is the most potent form of subjective truth and may be formed out of faith or insight.

DEFINITIONS:

Now we will go on to discuss the different domains of knowledge the mind can enter, also the different states of the mind itself in order of refinement.

DOMAINS

We will now define in detail the various domains the mind goes out into, or extends into as it moves and the different quality of the mind in each of these domains. The difference between the mind going out and extending is crucial, as we will discover.

The domains of mundane, personal knowledge are related to the phenomenon of the senses, perceptions and the body. It is proposed that as objective or shared truth this results in what we know as the fields of knowledge of science, art and conventional religion.

Information only has meaning within its own domain. Truth can be subjective or personal (the Art of observation, perception formation), objective or shared (the Science of action) or universal (Religious). There is also a difference between shared perception and shared experience.

We can know our own minds and perceptions more clearly than the outside world. It is therefore proposed that art is a higher order of knowing, than science.

Conscience is the combination of actor and observer and takes both to the higher level of religion. Thus as well as concerning our existential situation and hence the body it informs the whole field of art and science.

Let us continue by defining a few terms, as we will use them in our investigation. We could consider these terms as tools in themselves.

Note that meditation practice also changes the system it becomes aware of – it ultimately can result in a change of use of the whole system; everything has a new place. The temporary or permanent relinquishment of sense desire is all that is necessary to change the system. We are not trying to create the ideal mind; we are gradually revealing what is already pure through this relinquishment. This relinquishment however, will need to be active as well as passive to reveal a full heart beyond the scope of the grasping of ignorance.

SCIENCE - of Causal phenomena: draws pictures, putting phenomena and events into boxes and draws arrows to represent possible influence. Its domain is the senses. It is the standpoint of the agent.

ART - of Conditional and “mind cultivation” phenomena involving heightened awareness: Arranges things to form a ‘sense’ of something. Its domain is states of mind. It is here, in our states of mind, that we will first truly open the mind to the vertical dimension of experience. We all now know ‘stuff comes up’ and our minds get ‘high’ or ‘low’. Becoming aware of these movements of mind instead of just the content gives us all kinds of new insight. This is a whole realm of experience that we will see as accessible through art.

Its standpoint on the world is that of observing the scientific agent. Most significantly it has the power to change perception.

Art and Science are both representations of truth the former to create and give mundane insight (in that a whole is greater than the sum of its parts), the latter to predict and to give power in the world.

RELIGION – concerns/considers death and what we can do about it. Its domain is emptiness. In our model it is the standpoint of the observer related also to the body as we will discover.

MIND - this is our general term when there is no need to be more specific. Pre-practice it is a term that covers our crude mental self-image as opposed to our physical one. Practice shows us that this is centred in the action of perception in the present, seen as such it is readily super-ceded by religious contemplation or by apperception or ‘heightened awareness’.

FEELING – normally this represents the habitual perception of desire or of needs and/or values that use sensations to call consciousness. It is the resultant karma of our perceptions. It can be subsumed by the conscience in which case it can become a useful sense to guide us.

DESIRE – this can be the desire to get something or get away from something. It can intensify to be the desires to be or become something or to not be or annihilate our ‘self’ as we see it. It is not the sense of need or of values/discipline held independent of circumstance. Our task is to convert our desires into this. Neither desire nor values are the ultimate, the urge for freedom.

DESIRE-BODY this is a term used to describe our normal experience of the body and feelings before this is transformed through religious contemplation of the realities of the physical body, its impermanence in particular.

PSYCHOPHYSICAL (P/P) – It is the ‘bottom up’ pathway of feeling which when driven by desire are craving, and clinging. It represents our past in the present, it is our old or resultant karma or habit. It has habit or compulsion pointing it toward the future. In the broader sense of the practitioner, this is a term for the result of the mind's involvement in the sensory/material realm - one could say it is our sensory autopilot. When included in heightened awareness in the present it can be readily subsumed into art or religious contemplation.

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL (C/B) – This is the new karma we are creating in the present. It has intention pointing it toward the future. It is the ‘top down’ pathway. In its broader sense this is a term for the result of a mind that is involved in information. Potentially it has awareness in the present of the consequences of actions. It is adding to the automatic function of that which is perceived as needed. These terms P/P and C/B will be used to mean these psychological factors within an individual or between individuals as well as denoting a particular inner mode or field that the mind has entered. Both of these pathways will also seemingly have energy to them as well as information. This apparent energy is the force of habit, as we will explain. religious contemplation, pure heightened awareness, belief and conscience can include both of these, giving an individual a holistic sense of themselves and a new source of personal authority.

RELIGIOUS CONTEMPLATION - is a function of both perception and apperception. Ideally it is accepting, has an element of impersonal dispassion and the urgency of recognizing the rapidly changing nature of phenomenon, especially the physical body (the physical body is accepted as an object of Nature). In Buddhist terms the representation of the physical body in the mind (the ‘mental body’) is the psychological consequence of and therefore in some way the representation of religion in the mind. This develops through practice to be completely different from the original perception of the body linked to feeling that is merely the ‘desire body’. This represents a completely new pathway in the mind. Ultimately it is the condition for an ontological transformation.

MUNDANE INSIGHT – conventionally this is the reconciliation of personal, subjective and shared, objective views both within a person and between people. This leads to the promotion of heightened awareness. This may occur purely mentally or through physical or social/spiritual mediators. This philosophy suggests that it is possible to liberate the Mind from constant concern with, hence it is conditioning by, the Desire-Body and considers the dynamics of such a transformation of the system. To minimize this

conditioning it is recognized that is only necessary to the extent that the Mind identifies needs. This process is made conscious through self-referential heightened awareness.

Ultimately, the free Mind can not only detach itself from suffering but also find belief with which it can be better tolerated. In practice, we seek to enhance and maintain this liberation by replacing habitual reaction within the caring influence of the patient. In addition, the ideal for practice defines the qualities of Courage, Serenity and Wisdom as mediators between Mind and Desire-Body.

Heightened awareness - a feedback loop in the process of mind /body conditioning. This represents a training/refinement of Consciousness. This is like human consciousness over animal consciousness. We are aware of our predicament to some degree, there is a passive, existential element to our consciousness. Ideally this heightened awareness is:

a) Moment by moment,

b) has responsiveness rather than automatic reaction to demands that can relax once the demand has gone,

PURE AWARENESS – the passive heightened awareness of being aware – the mind is aware of its own presence.

This is different from APPERCEPTION, the mind is aware of its own perceptions and therefore of the sum of its states of mind.

BARE AWARENESS – a completely passive / open heightened awareness in the present moment

HEART or CONSCIENCE – The function of the mind that integrates and furthers all its other wholesome factors - it is the knowing nature of the mind - we reclaim it through our practice.

TRANSCENDENT WISDOM is the integration of heart and mind, combining–

1. Conscience.

2. religious contemplation.

3. Heightened awareness - leading on to the heightened awareness of being Aware or Apperception, Bare awareness, Pure awareness and Samadhi.

these three further each other and come together as a balanced gnosis or ‘knowing’ that takes us ultimately to a religious “realization” that leads either to the discovery of personal belief, faith and/or supra-mundane insight emerging out of phenomenon and a total freedom from the conditioning of the mind by the desire-body.

The PATIENT PATIENT – this is a person who wants to become aware, to overcome delusion, to face the realities of life!

COMPARISONS

Further comments about the differences between science, art and religious contemplation are shown below (with Pali terms from the Buddha’s teaching in brackets for your reference):

Note how art can point either way towards grace or function.

We could say, for example, that one view of the physical body (that sees impermanence) points us toward grace, another toward reproduction! Functional truth says, ‘we will understand this phenomenon in this way for this purpose’. In this way, we avoid losing our direction in theorizing or speculation.

Having abandoned desire we still have to do things and be things so there is a science and an art to religious contemplation. However, we see these things for what they are; we use our doing to sharpen our knowing, our being to express it.

| <u>religious contemplation</u> | <u>ART</u> | <u>SCIENCE</u> |
|--|---|--|
| Formless (CITTA) | take form apart (NAMA) | Form (RUPA) |
| Empty, (supramundane) | Refined, mundane | Coarse, worldly |
| Equanimity = Object in space 'Letting go' | Mental feeling = Touching object | Physical feeling = Holding object |
| Unconditional (e.g. paramitas) | Conditional (e.g. brahmaviharas) | Causal |
| Goal is realisation | Goal is purification | Goal is integration |
| One who knows – mind knows mind itself (CITTA) | Knowing and known – mind knows mind state (CITTASANKHARA) | Aware of 5 senses, thought and feeling (VINNANA) |
| Transcending Ultimate truth – Dharma | Being Conventional truth – Vinaya | Doing Functional truth - arrangement |
| WISDOM - Sati-panna | APPERCEPTION - Sati 'inside' | PERCEPTION -Sati outside |
| Calm and insight (samatha/vipassana) together | Insight - vipassana | Calm - samatha |
| Relinquishment of desire | Values - Responsibilities toward others | Needs - limited responsibility for others |
| Mind cultivation (bhavana) | Virtue (SILA) | Generosity (DANA) |
| Spiritual friendship | Friendship, sharing | Provision, FAIRNESS |

We will not be confused if we see science, art and religious contemplation as different standpoints of agent, observing the agent and just observing respectively.
Let us begin to explain our path structure in these terms, by way of illustration and in order to set out our starting point in more detail.

At the beginning, to arrive at clarity, we define what we are looking at (body, mind or the senses) and from what standpoint - feeling, perception or intention.

We can look at problems inner and outer with or without relating these two to each other. This develops a clear, still, unitary standpoint (a clear sense of 'where we are at') and places any practical problem in its correct sphere of knowledge.

Then our Practical problems relate to our horizontal dimension of experience. The vertical dimension, of the purely personal, adds a further dimension of personal meaning that the mind can become aware of or literally into which the mind can open. We can see how we see things or what is on our glasses, so to speak (the dust of karma in our eyes in Buddhist language). At the beginning this dimension is by its nature grasping, so we are extending the scheme to make a map of attachment, of the 'desire body'. Later, when we can enter into these realms without grasping, we discover the possibility of a truly open, full mind, a still field of heightened awareness, a unified experience of life – body, mind and the world.

The ideals for science, art and religious contemplation are integration, purification and transcendence respectively. Ideals are not, or need not be, desires but interests. We must be very careful that our ideals, instead of uplifting us, do not become impossible standards or divert us from the purpose of the teaching. This is always to abandon desire. It is not to try to perfect anything in the world. We must be careful in our scheme never to think that we are dividing truth and virtue; they come from the same place, the same heart and perception. Ajahn Maha Boowa says,

“Sometimes the nature of moral behaviour is altered from its true or inherent nature into doctrines and traditions. This is why people blame and criticize each other.”

This is why we state religious contemplation as the place of the 'one who knows' Dhamma, the place of just knowing, a passive, receptive space. We see the place of virtue as that of entering into conditions according to this same knowing. We make the division to clearly form wisdom and compassion, the complementary aspects of this same view. Compassion is the mind directed toward the world, it becomes a thing of the world; our intention may be perfect but the result far from it. Wisdom comes from the world but is not directed back into it, it speaks from where it lies, inside. At the beginning, wisdom and compassion must not be confused with each other, nor compassion neglected on the way into the world, so to speak. We stand back with wisdom; we look at the world through the glasses of compassion.

Please refer to what follows as an example of the principles of stillness and openness stated above: Once the purity of the mind is able to extend into the senses (clearly without losing itself, its perspective,) and is therefore a still point, just the direction in which the pure heart moves, in or out, divides wisdom and compassion. When this extended mind is still, (it has detachment) they are at one, a still field. Science becomes expressed as integration, renunciation, harmlessness, generosity; art as purification as good perception and intent; religious transcendence as perfect rest. Combining art and science throughout our daily lives we perfect detachment, recognizing that we must deal with the karma of our human birth as best we can. With religious dispassion we can remain at rest.

The body, as we will see, provides a centre from which the mind extends. We can map this scheme of knowledge against our moment by moment experience to form a phenomenological model of the open mind.

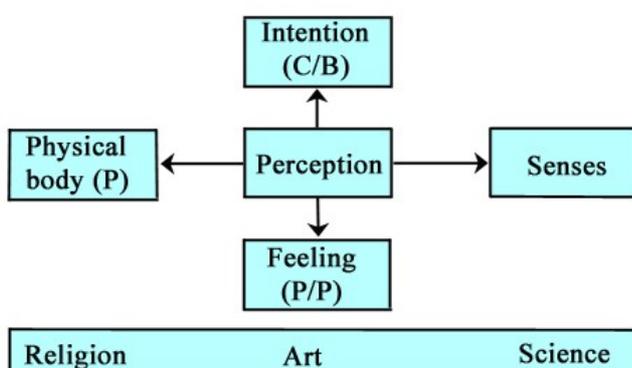


Fig. 1

Note the direction of the arrows in this figure. These describe the dominant passage of information. This will change as we describe how the mind may

transform with the practice of Dharma. At the beginning perception dominates, through its divergence (or 'proliferation'), feeding information in all directions. First of all we use this system as it is and look to replace unskilful perceptions with skilful ones. This is our spiritual education.

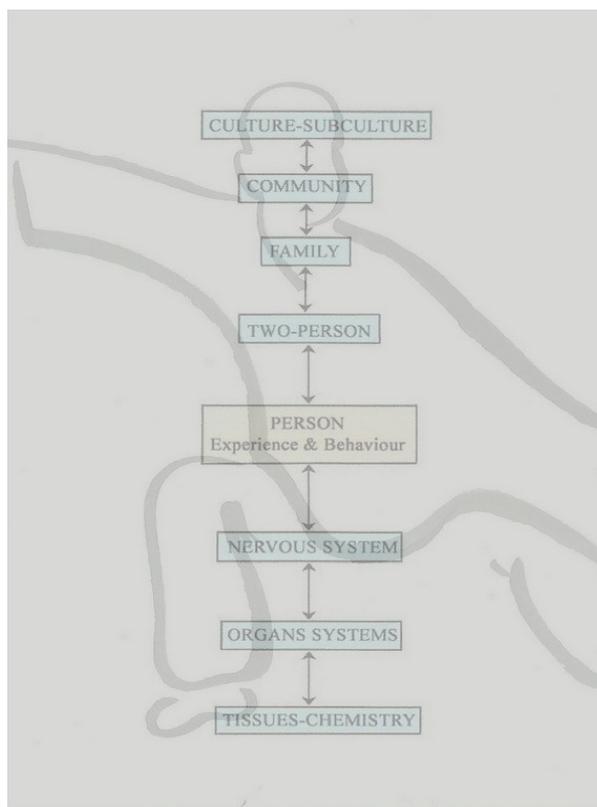
Then, as we practice further, both directions of information become open. Information from the world and from thought, feeling and sensation can dominate, changing underlying perceptions that we never thought could change. This is where all aspects of the mind converge rather than diverge and the whole process is changed and begins afresh.

This is our way of describing the process of insight.

USING SCIENCE

Conventional science covers the cause/effect relations in the material world.

Fig. 2 the 'biopsychosocial' model, from Engel (1980) - the objective world



We can also add a hierarchy to the systems included within Science on the right side of our model, the realm of the senses, that is parallel to the items in our subjective, vertical dimension to allow us to cross-reference.

It has been proposed that natural systems exist in a hierarchy. An event at any level in the hierarchy has an effect on the levels above and below it. This is a very useful concept in that different systems are self-organizing as well as relating or reacting to others. However, the hierarchical structure that places the mind at the top of things seems somewhat a dream. We cannot tell our bowels what to do even if we go through our nerves, *eh, eh*.... but we can maybe eat sensibly or something, give them favourable conditions and hope for the best; so the art of bowel management rather than the science, perhaps. In addition, the higher mind centres have their bodily influence largely through suppression not through activation. We will come back to this point later on.

Considering ourselves scientifically then, in a holistic model, complex situations can be explained and understood because the model unites the knowledge bases of all the human sciences, medical and psychological, without any discipline having to change its fundamental standpoint. We are bringing all the standpoints together. We can note that interventions are only effective if the levels at which they occur are joined by a sufficiently well operating system. It cannot be assumed that intervention at a lower level will be effective higher up or the reverse, although there may be examples of this.

For most of us it must be noted that physiological needs do come first, followed by psychological and social needs as put forward in the well-known Maslow triangle (Maslow, 1968). This order cannot be assumed

either (e.g. in terminal care, for example) (Kubler Ross, 1969) but must be negotiated. It needs to be noted that for the truth or falsity of an argument to be determined its standpoint, the level at which it operates, must be stated, this is often not the case when a particular discipline/profession puts itself forward.

So, the discipline of science covers the cause/effect aspect of coarse material karma, the further result of this in the mind is what we will call cognitive behavioural understanding. The events of the past have results here in the present and a momentum toward the future. There is also the karma of potentiality that belongs to the realm of Art. In the wider scheme of heightened awareness, we can follow the momentum of karma in the present or depart from it. We can follow the automatic pilot, when it is taking us to a good place, or take the joystick. Alternatively, we can say that where we can predict we can take responsibility and act, be the cause. We can do this when we can see that a particular result has one or more clear causes. If we see that science is about how we do things rather than about knowledge we can also better integrate the fact that its investigations are all actions in themselves.

At this level of things, we can talk about needs and likes and dislikes, preferences that are fixed by our constitutions or whatever. Trouble is we give our constitution an inch and it wants a mile, *eh, eh...*

SOME RELEVANT SCIENCE

The physiology of the desire body

Another way to consider the desire body is to think of it as embodied in the nervous system. Alternatively, we can say that the way the nervous system operates influences the way our minds operate and our minds influence, form the nervous system (both in our lifetime and in the evolutionary sense). To take a few examples:

1. **The integration between C/B and P/P** mentioned above is that between the sensory and motor sections of the central nervous systems respectively. These are integrated by higher level functions involving mental imagery or representation, not necessarily internal imagery but often a matching response between the real world and that desired.

Sensory input from the peripheral nervous system (PNS) to the central (CNS) moves in an upward direction, from CNS to PNS a downward direction. Therefore, if our mind is biased toward input we sense this coming up; in colloquial terms we can say we have 'stuff coming up'. If balanced toward output this is sensed as downward, as suppressive, oppressive, repressive, depressive etc. These both represent a grasping of some aspect of experience, passive or active respectively. Without such grasping, these two sides of experience can be integrated. The output of our actions and perceptions are simultaneously regulated by the input of the feeling, which represents their result. Alternatively, information travels in the opposite direction, the feeling result of a previous action or perception calls us to repeat it and then guides it for us. Therefore, our mind is calmed and collected and our faculties used in their natural way through a balance of input and output, moment by moment. We can say that the quality of sati is that which represents this balance of detached observation in which both apparent subject and object are present. This is best explained as a quality of light touch that can follow the movement of something - a touch that is not pulling, pushing, grasping or losing contact. In formal practice terms, this is the balance between application of mind and feedback (*vitaka* and *vicara*).

In this respect, we need to further note that we can deceive ourselves into thinking that we can make the perceptual process conscious through our heightened awareness of it. However, the very act of changing the balance of our attention inwards change the whole system. What is a perception if it is removed from its object? It is better instead to consider how the results of the process of perception are manifesting - in other words to take both indirect measures and indirect action towards perception.

2. **Karma** - When a nerve is fired this increases the likelihood that it will fire again; we strengthen and sensitize neural pathways through use. The more we think something the more likely this thought will return to mind, similarly for perception and feeling. This is how we form our karma.

3. **Neural anomaly** - The dynamics of the nervous system can also confuse us. Different orders of experience can get mixed up. We have back pain, for example, over a long period. Long after the back is healed, we can experience an altered sense of that area when we become aware of the body. If anxiety

accompanied the pain then this may be rekindled or anxiety may re-stimulate the sensations in the back. To get to the pain and suffering we may have to approach it again from all these different angles. If we do this we may find that this process itself is insightful not just in the sense of realizing what a problem is but in itself making new links that tend to diffuse rather than rekindle a process. Always the most powerful link is the perceptual one. It is the most radical short circuit.

In addition in some cases a system has been developed for a particular use becomes stimulated in a way that it is not 'designed for' so to speak. For example in terms of physical pain, the system is designed to inform us of what the situation is in the case of acute injury. In the case of chronic conditions, what we are feeling can be deceptive as a source of information. A problem in the back can be felt in the leg, as a simple example.

The limitations of science

First in simple terms, science very often over-estimates or over sells itself. How often have you had the manual out and then said to yourself, ah, there is a bit of an art to this one, *eh, eh...* If we did not believe the sales-pitch there is no suffering in this. More profoundly we can say categorically that because of the non-material nature of consciousness, material science ultimately knows nothing about consciousness itself, only its neural correlates. So hard science can begin to look a bit meaningless in relation to the mind.

On one level consciousness is the experience of a stream of information. Seen like this we can have little to learn trying to track its physical correlates and get a meter on it of some kind. This would be like seeing mathematical equations written on a blackboard and thinking that we could understand the equations better by analysing the chalk.

On the other hand, if you offer me a cup of tea, I accept and you make me one, that is already understanding consciousness.

Therefore, ultimately material science has nothing to say about the mind itself, the empty mind. As we have already explained consciousness will arise dependant on things but anew. It is dependently originated. Science offers conventional truths specific to particular points of karma. Similarly Dhamma has nothing to say about the sensory/material world but only about its appearance in the mind. The mind itself is immaterial or rather it is not!

The contents of the mind have material consequence.

Therefore, we can open to the possibility that there can be phenomenon in the world and not in the mind. Also phenomena that are in the world and represented in the mind (consciously or unconsciously); lastly those that are just in the minds eye; of the latter there is also the possibility of things being just in the mind and created by it or just in the mind but not created by it. It is the very last of these that we can term the exclusive world of the spirit.

Actually, if we think about it philosophically, our experience of life can seem pretty meaningless. All experience is subjective, apart from mind objects nothing can be known. Apart from the world of the senses, there is nothing there to know. And yet maybe this meaninglessness frees the mind rather than tying it down to the conditioned realm.

Another argument to answer the material determinists is, philosophically speaking: The reality is that, for events in the brain "...there cannot exist a complete account of the immediate future that you would be correct to expect and mistaken not to" (McKay, 1991). The scientific paradigm can therefore not apply. This is the case because the brain is part of a self-organizing system that can have insight into its own predicament (the agent standpoint). From the standpoint of the observer, all phenomenon act according to the laws of conditionality, every phenomenon being dependant on another (science). However the standpoint of the agent as having free will is also valid, the two can fit together (McKay, 1991). All we need to do is specify where we are coming from and be sure to put the other side of the story.

But why don't we just get into a bit of radical science to free the mind from its sensory/material constraint?

Yea!

Let's use that the space-time conversion possibility (referred to first in relativity and then in thermodynamics) to escape from the bonds of time into infinite space.

Great.

Our minds can be free of mechanical causality. Let's apply quantum theory to the micro-dynamics of synaptic activity, they're little enough.

Great.

Or we can disappear! Consciousness has not been found by science (it seems we can trace every nuance of brain activity but it is only the pattern of this, not the presence or absence of a given phenomenon that implies the presence or absence of consciousness)

Yeah!

And haven't you heard? When the minds of some good meditators attend only to emptiness, brain activity completely ceases – hence it seems it is only the objects of the mind that are embodied in neural activity, great. Who needs the brain!

Yea!

Feel better?

Yes, kind of ...
But it all still feels real don't it?

Well, yeah...
And we still have to feel it don't we?

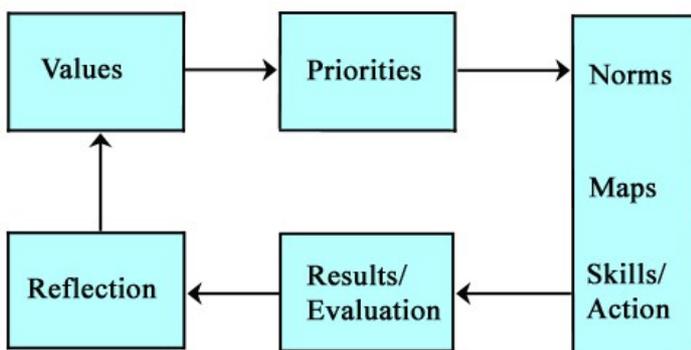
Still the functional truths of science can tell us how to mess about with the material stuff on which the mind is dependent. This of course can have massively positive or negative effects.

ART - The Cultivation of heightened awareness

In one way Art can be thought of as an extension of science, we do more than is really necessary in order to train ourselves and make our lives beautiful. Art goes beyond function. In other words, the way to keep the heart in something is to go beyond function - the way to keep the spirit is to have the sense that the spirit is using the world, not the world the spirit.

Secondly we can use art to alter the perceptual process. Let us now suggest how we can widen our consideration to include mind cultivation. The key process within this domain is perception. Let us present a model of our perceptual interaction with our environment (Fig. 2).

Fig.3. Processes within the perceptual level.



This model is a scheme for the way we seek to process more fully the information of the senses.

In the process of cultivation, we are placing conscious processes within the perceptual level, not trying to become aware of our habits but replacing them. Thus to the right our buffer and first step is to translate our

experience to one in which norms, and skills are added. Also one in which our map of the territory is articulated. This allows us to output our priorities and receive a natural evaluation out of action because our criteria are already in place. We can identify a further step inside as we reflect on results in the context of our innermost values. This corresponds with the belief formation of conventional religion.

Notice how within this level it is possible to take the outside world as a perception rather than a reality. This is very significant. This is the reason why the perceptual process can have the power to delude. Also this means that at this level we can have an integrated experience of ourselves and the world. This is also if feeling is clearly seen as resultant. This is even though it may be the cause of further thought or action. In a sense, the energy of desire can be considered as an intensification of feeling. So the mind is not taking another direction unless perception intervenes. In this way, we have results and further results with the same initiation. Also, intention is seen as mental action or new mental karma. This integrated experience is the way we take our experience into the realm of mundane insight.

It must be noted immediately that this represents one possible pathway that can be short-cut by psychophysical processes or in a wider context by conditioning of the mind by the desire body and the desire body by the mind. It remains however in the moment of decision a potentially dominant pathway to such processes. This is because we have covered all the areas or angles through which habitual desire enters in unnoticed. Usually such desire can hide in a map or perception, or an established norm, or a bias caused by a particular skill or lack of one, for example.

NOTES

The mind cultivation process furthermore acts through the place of perception in consciousness as a formative part of many psychophysical elements e.g. positive perception, positive reactions.

The formation of perception is also where we see the potential of belief formation that we will be going on to. It is, I would argue our most potent tool **for it is ultimately not things that directly make us mentally suffer but the view we take of them.**

Furthermore, only the truth can give us peace of mind. This is like an awakening process as the mind realizes a fresh view. It is not just an intellectual understanding. It is as though an event happens to a person in their mind.

Truth at the level of art is matching personal and shared experience.

Art can be the way wisdom directed at the world. The wisdom of it also points back at religious contemplation. So it points both ways, it is a bridge.

Note here that we are inwardly directed in our labelling of context and process. We see process as internal and context as external. Although this is the better choice, we need not let this make us too inwardly focused.

ART AND SCIENCE TOGETHER - THE MUNDANE DOMAIN

Art so formed is a field of knowledge in its own right, that of our personal process and a possible standpoint on the world - the realm in which we will place the (vertical) dimension of the purely personal experience of mind states that is the joining together of observer and observed, the standpoint of watching the agent.

Once the mind is open and still this dimension exists in the other two domains of experience and of knowledge. Therefore, from our scheme of a cross we open to a complete field.

Stepping back once from the senses, in other words disengaging ourselves from the world, then we paint a personal picture (although seen in an impersonal way, in impersonal terms), or we allow it to paint itself. This is the first function of meditation. We withdraw from action in the world and also from acting on the thoughts and feelings that arise

directly. We will have to see causes, what is it that we desire that we let the world affect us, stay with us? What is it that we are doing or how are we seeing things that lead the mind to proliferate, to talk back? What is it that takes our minds out of the present? In the present, why do we pick things up? Why not leave them where they are, deal with them there with the science of the senses or the conventions of morality? Can we, when we need to, let go and rest with an empty mind? If not why not? Why does the heart get lost out there, why does it go out rather than extending out from the heart? Craving is the short answer, desire linked to the senses and therefore to the body, therefore to materiality. If we can empty these things out with meditation and then see them re-arise in context we will see clearly with no doubt or need for theory or speculation as to how cause and affect is operating.

In terms of our map of the mind, this investigation allows us to clearly experience a new dimension. If we are calm, our still point of investigation can move off the horizontal axis.

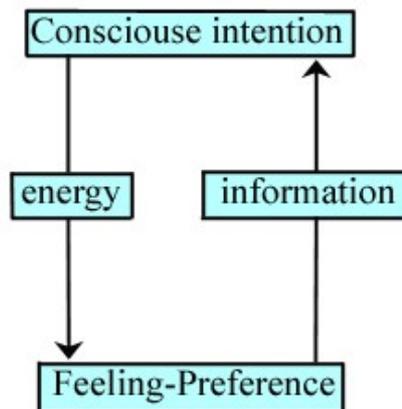
Now in these terms we can open the possibility of the attribution of meaning to experience in the present. To emphasize, this is not the usual kind of inner meaning, not of our personal stuff in the sense that we are not trying to sort out this stuff out in the absence of an understanding of external cause and effect. This is very dangerous, it is exactly what we are working to avoid. We are not trying to enter this whole inner world but find a way out of it, a space around it or to clear it out. We are opening a clear avenue for wisdom to travel, not closing it by turning in on ourselves. We are entering into the realm where subject and object are already joined and looking to disentangle it, to calm it. In this all-embracing way, we clearly see causation operating within what we previously saw as ourselves.

While being very careful to still take responsibility for what is happening we see this in an impersonal way, with a growing perspective. We need not actively do too much on this level, either; mostly we are replacing the desire body, our old self, with our training or virtue body merely by emptying it out. The mind is already pure, when it is clear, it will know. What we do need to do is to add skilful conventions to our lives, discipline. We replace personal truth with such conventional truth. We enrich this possibility, add weight to it as we feel things out more and more, we explore the realm of suffering, its causes and the way to overcome it, to take our minds and behaviour in another direction. As we calm this realm, it becomes still again and opens, for all our hard work. We are extricating the pure mind from its attachments. The full potential of this is only recognized when we let go of our attachment completely and step further back into the realm of religious contemplation. This is potentially a unification of the mind and may lead to samadhi or insight (next chapter).

Let us now proceed to look further into the processes that can arise within the vertical passage - these linking functions of our minds - and the crude expressions of clear seeing or the obstructions to it. Ultimately, all our work is only to clear the way. The mind is already pure, it will see for itself.

Fig.4 Process within the person level or desire body.

Within the vertical link, perception is seen as the way two functions of thought and feeling condition each this by passing information up to thought and energy feeling. Perception also represents the way in which feeling try to understand each other – feeling out our thinking about our feelings creates perceptions. Then in turn form further intentions. Notice, very how intention can form a direct link between energy information – it is in this way that intention can be seen karma.



in which the other. It does down to thinking and thoughts or perceptions significantly, and to form

Perception is also a route or level through which the origin of information or apparent energy can become confused. It is fundamental not to confuse these two or the directions in which they work. We risk falling into the usual perceived conflict between mind and body. This is the classic error of the Western mind. We see feelings as energies, as a force. We see our conscious intention as rational, informational. The opposite is the case. Our feelings, if clearly seen as the result of our perceptions, are information about the past or the result of our experience in the present. It is our intentions, past and present that have the real energy. The information of feeling can seemingly come along with energy but these are merely the forces of habitual desire. When seen as information they lose this power. This is also not to say that we cannot positively empower our ideas, consciously rise up our aspirations. This is exactly how we overcome these conditioned reactions, by clear responses.

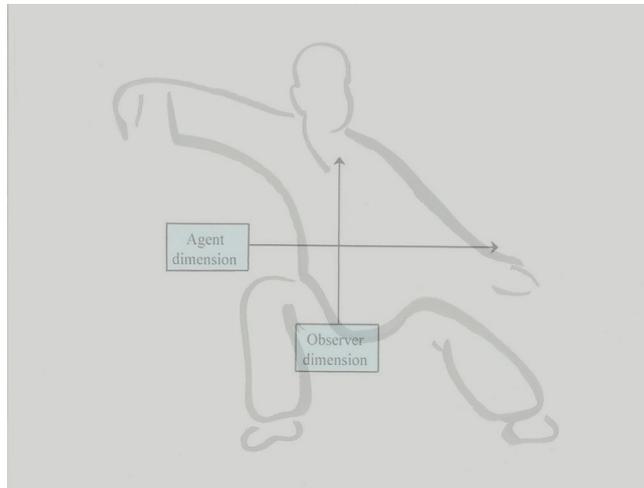
Therefore, to repeat, we see feelings as information regarding our past preferences, as our resultant karma. It is our conscious intention past and present that provides this energy. Seen in this way our awareness of and choice in the present is seen as recognizing habit, incorporating it when skilful, going against it when unskilful. We have a relationship with the automatic pilot that is not one of indulgence or of ignoring. It is the strength of our minds in the present rather than being lost in past or future that therefore empowers us.

Essential in this realignment of our perceptions is to realize that channels of information cannot be closed. They represent an open loop that includes the world that is our mirror. It is when we see things in others is that when we can judge them best in ourselves, for example. If we admit that we are no different to them. Also needed then is the humility to place our faults within ourselves. Doing this we do not disempower ourselves, we empower ourselves. We bring things within the sphere of the power greater than this self that is our habits, within the scope of our mindfulness in the present. As we let go into the present the mind is disentangled and begins to discover space and lightness, freedom from the driving force of desire.

TRACKING THE MIND WITHIN THE MUNDANE - MAKING A THE FULL, DYNAMIC PICTURE

As we have discussed, in order to form a full phenomenological picture we need to make statements of process, context and meaning: We can use the horizontal dimension of science to represent the dimension of the actor, our context statement, the situation we are in and what needs doing. The horizontal dimension divides events (by quantity) and the phenomena that influence them into a hierarchy of natural systems. The vertical dimension divides phenomena (by quality) into Perceptual, Psychophysical and Cognitive/Behavioral categories of information or observation (of the agent), our personal process. The points of intersection of the two dimensions represent points of meaning or belief where both sides of the story are brought together so to speak. This is our meaning. It arises out of the other two perspectives but is different from either. The two dimensions are represented as a cross, proposing perception as the midpoint where the dimensions intersect. Note that until insight occurs these three perspectives will always remain separate. All are valid but the standpoint of each must always be specified.

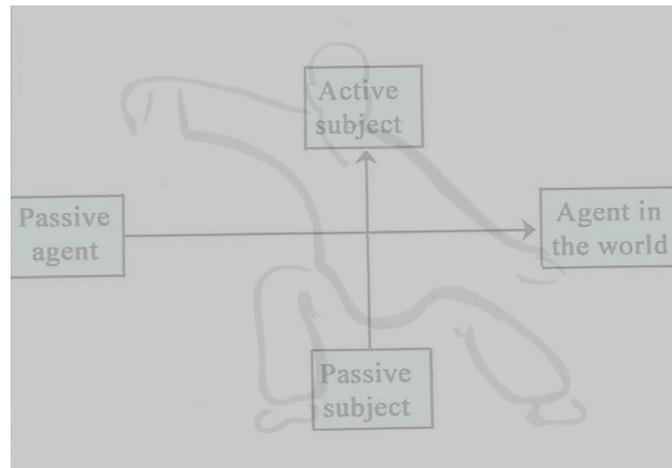
Fig. 5 The movements of the mind



The horizontal, outward movement of the mind thus represents that of the agent or 'agent effects' if you like. This can also be either be the dimension in which the still point of perception can go out into the world from the centre or the open field of heightened awareness extend into it.

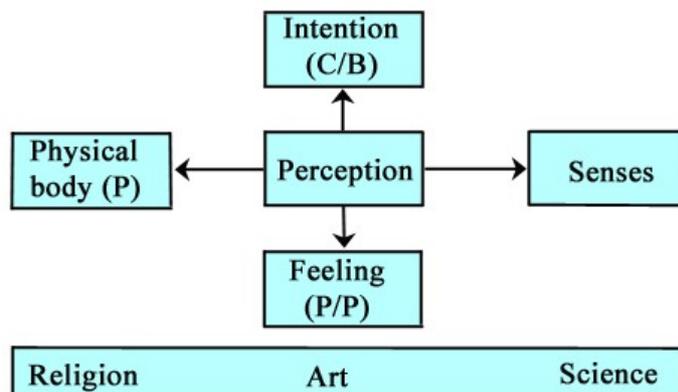
Vertical movements represent 'observer effects'. Intention from above tends to try to pin things down, feeling from below to bring things up. When these exist in balance there is a still point. When too strong from above the mind tends to be heavy and overconfident, pushy. When too strong from below this will cause confusion. Thus the two dimensions are like a navigation device for us on the path, the horizontal representing direction and the vertical, status. The still point can open to a field. There can also then be a field of heightened awareness around the point of intention. Let us now try to take this scheme into action. First of all the aroused pre-active state might look like this:

Fig. 6 Pre-active mind



The passive subject settles down (into the armchair), the passive agent settles back (into the same armchair). The active subject wakes up.

Fig. 7 – Active mind



In brief: we end up with a scheme including the inner senses and the three domains of religious contemplation, art and science resulting in four ‘internal’ pathways or levels of information: the sense of the physical body, psychophysical (or ‘bottom up’), and cognitive behavioral (or ‘top down’) and the linking pathway of perceptions. These include the beliefs that are the conventional truth of religion. There is furthermore the emerging pathway of insight linked to a transformed perception of the physical body that leads to the realizations or ultimate truth of the

Buddhist religion. Therefore, we begin with the body and end with the body, so to speak.

We come out of this with a language of practice in which we can identify and communicate a particular phenomenon. For the different domains we can say, “My picture of” is applicable to the domain of science; “my sense of,” would be relevant to the realm of art; “my perspective on” to the realm of religious contemplation. We can say, for example:

“From the ...perspective of ...on the level of perception (or feeling or intention)... the picture that forms (or the sense I have) is...”

In more detail: Internally, we have the ‘top down’ process of intention and the ‘bottom up’ process of feeling, of liking and disliking. To repeat, these two both appear as forces in the mind but are actually only informational pathways if we do not, or have not in the past, given them energy. Usually we erroneously attribute feeling to the physical body. Intentions tend to lead us forward into the senses and are dominated by thought. Behind this hasty mind comes a more ‘feeling sense.’ Usually this is dominated by desire and gives force to intention. This can be developed to become our first moral restraint on the mind but we have to beware that these feelings have a mind of their own. They are in themselves a source of craving. We can suffer just as much by attaching to goodness as to badness.

Out going perception is the mediator or balance point between these two. This in itself is invisible to craving and so to the untrained mind. It completely, literally, overlooks it.

The most important aspect of this full picture is that all the processes of the desire body are seen as outgoing. This is a radical shift. Previously the whole dynamic of the system was one dealing with incoming experience. When we have withdrawn from this back to the physical body we see that all our internal

experience comes from the mind going out into the sensory world - the world is not bothering us, we are bothering it, or rather our sense desires are bothering it, for a reason. This reason is in the world, with our object of desire.

The three processes of the desire body in the centre are all different functions of the same thing. So when feeling is driven by greed, hatred or delusion so is perception and intention. There is no reason looking over it. If we are lost we are driven by the senses and the body is just dragged along behind. Or we are listening to feelings not with feelings. It is although we have a purpose within the instruments with which we view the world. Our only break in these moments is our bare awareness of what is happening and the body that can hold it all back. We cannot close this system in on itself. It cannot see itself. We can, however, step back from it.

Our more enlightened self-referential loop is not a closing of the system within itself, away from the world but a placing of ourselves within it, using an environment as a mirror. To put it another way, from a different angle, within the person internal representations of the world, perceptions have a controlling role in all processes that involve referral to higher brain centres (Brooks, 1986).

This is crucial because we can realize that perception is an active process. We begin to realise that we see things, not as they are but according to what we want. We promote the perception of phenomena that fits our agenda. If things turn out not to be the way we see them then all our efforts are then frustrated.

To take this further, once the perception is formed the action can follow on automatically, thus:

“..we subtract or repress our awareness that perception is active and repress our awareness that action is passive. This it is to be conscious.”

(Gregory Bateson (1987))

So free will lies in perception rather than in action. We try to establish an impression of free will or control in many ways. This is natural. Then we feel safe. The mind and body, as part of the nature around us, however, are self-organizing systems in a wider sense; furthermore, there is no part of the whole system that can control the whole. Therefore, to try to exert control will be stressful in itself. To surrender out of control is stress. The serenity prayer is the answer to help us find a balance, again this hinges on clear perception..

If our more mature encounter with science can go something like this...”What, they do not know everything? Scary, but they do not need to; they only need a functional truth.” We can act without knowing the full picture. If we see that our perceptions are active, we can act on a functional truth and review the result in line with that truth. This is being heedful. We realize that the mind is caught up not through our perceptions or our action but through our intentions that are the result of both of these. So this is what we watch, aware of how these intentions themselves reveal the perception that underlies them. This means that then the full picture becomes something that naturally goes beyond function or desire. Also importantly then our actions and desires begin to appear to us because they have become only part of the picture.

What really helps to clarify this is virtue because this restrains desire. If we do not always act on our desires, they also become even more visible, the force of habit reveals itself when frustrated. In time, this further means very significantly that we **become** bigger than our desires. In the absence of such experience or reflection we can find a similar safety by identifying ourselves as outside of or greater than our desires, as a system of belief. Conventional religion often provides perceptions to do this for us. This may seem comparatively stupid but if skilful, it can open the mind to the experience of non-identification. What is more it provides the moral code that helps us to see desire more clearly. The disadvantage is that this can be a forced rather than a natural practice. With a reflective experience of personal growth, however, we are seeing things as we go naturally. We are kind of developing a natural religion out of relinquishing desire.

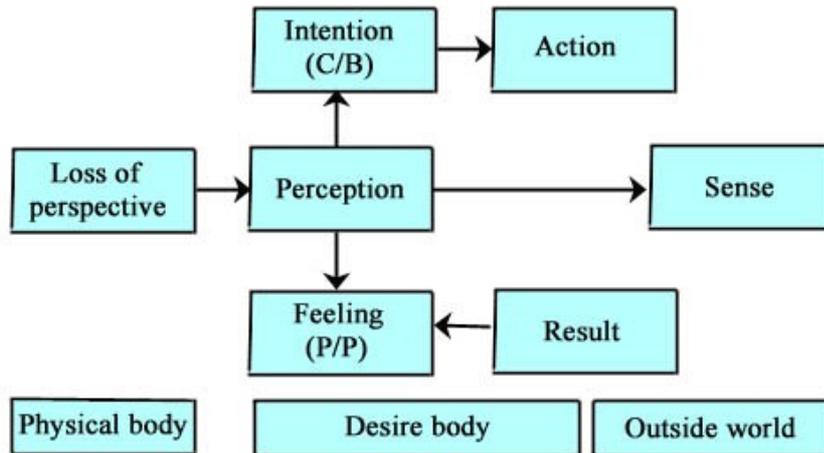
In my own personal case, I would say that Buddhism gradually emerged naturally out of my life in which medical science took my attention to the realities of the body. There was then recognition of the truth of teaching as I encountered it. This was very powerful. The most powerful Dhamma are those that come out of the world, what I call the belief that comes out of faith or insight, not Dhamma from books that are imposed on experience. The latter is our perceptual mechanism; an outward directed matching response not the drawing together of the strands of information before us **in the present moment** that can lead to insight.

Fig. 8

Pre-active processing

Now we can add action and result in their place. This would be the pre-active situation: contrast this with the grasping pattern below

Fig 9 Grasping in action



When we grasp at actions or results and they are sensed in the desire body rather than at the point of action, we in a sense fall short of fully applying ourselves. We are not feeding information back into the present but holding on to it. The actions or feelings are neither fully part of the perceptual process and consciously projected in terms of skills, maps or norms; nor are they felt-out at the senses in the way they are if we take responsibility. In this way they can only feed into their respective fields of intention and feeling. Perception remains invisible as it cannot be discerned from either thought or feeling. Our experience remains confused, like a radio changing channels as we jump from one level to another to try to keep the peace between all the conflicting priorities in our minds. Perhaps we have some perspective on it all, or we are just lost in it. In this way the mind is thrown around by the world. The mistake is then to try to push against these movements or indulge in them, both are grasping. All of these things belong to the world, to the objects that create them and should be given back to these objects. There may be a need to change habitual movements of the mind but this needs to be again in relation to the world. We are not trying to grab the mind and sort it out: this is adding grasping to grasping or trying to fight fire with fire. We are giving our knowing back to the world in order to find release there - craving begins there and ends there.

Alternatively, we give it a calming object. We can grab the mind and put it on this object. If we try to get any other handle on the mind at this point it will get a handle on us. This then is the best we can do with a mind dependant on its objects. When the mind can withdraw, then the situation changes.

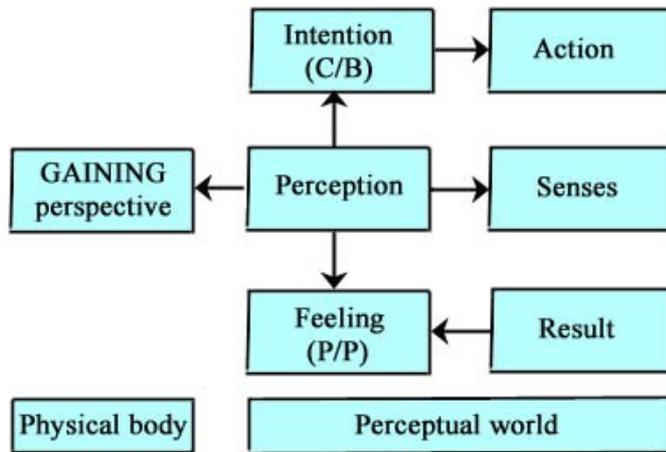
This withdrawal is first to the physical body - this anchor and perspective then allows the mind to be tackled a second time. The defilements use the body. If we have awareness of the body and mastery of its actions then we have a handle on the mind that has no handle on us. We can then begin indirectly to tame the mind.

If we have a sense of the dimensions above, the movements of the mind we can train this movement (bodily movements or gestures can help this). As examples we can overcome or supersede the upward reaction of the mind with the ability to raise the mind, with aspiration for example that leads to refinement of behavior or attention. We can relax the downward force of intention with a more receptive, listening approach to things. We can extend the mind rather than let it go out, to our hands for example, responding rather than reacting. Alternatively, we can watch the mind bounce around without further mental or bodily reaction, allowing old karma to wear itself out. These are the natural results in the mind of right effort or equanimity respectively.

Concentration is the third factor of cultivation that can continue to calm the whole process and sharpen mindfulness at the same time. These three factors need to be kept in balance.

As we are able to take this mind into action we are taking responsibility.

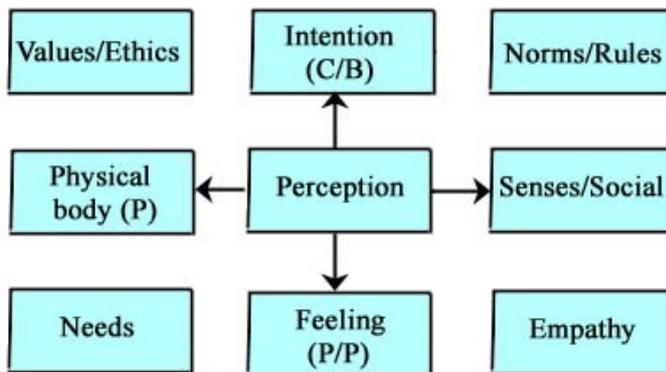
Fig.10 Taking responsibility



When we take responsibility, our minds bring together action and result at the senses. Notice also that we are seeing the world in this case as though it were a perception, which is actually what it is. In this way, the processes of intention and feeling are naturally integrated into the perceptual function as we have discussed. This is another element in this integration. We can now refer to the outside world as our external sense base and the world of the khandas as our internal sense base, the gathering point of the results of our actions. We then have a clear, integrated experience. The conditions of the mind and the world are coming together.

The two dimensions can further be used to divide phenomenon into 4 convenient compartments. In this way we classify information into categories of meaning

Fig. 11 Categories of meaning



The vertical dynamics represent the relationship between thoughts and feelings via perception that can have three pathways through social, personal or physical routes. So far we have considered the individual only but this can be further influenced from outside by social influence or comparisons.

The horizontal dynamics of the Map represent the interaction between a person and their environment that also has three pathways - C/B, Perception and P/P; when phenomena are brought to consciousness this can effect the relative involvement of these pathways.

Through meditation we seek to make ourselves an open conduit to thought or feeling rather than being pushed or pulled by such forces. We can sense the solidity of the body as an anchor point and the developing perspective on the realities of physical body and as a source of wise perception - the spiritual practitioner returns their mind to the body as a way of gaining perspective on things – in the spirit of “what is it all about anyway?” We will return to this aspect in Part 2.

PART 2 : THE RELIGIOUS SIDE



In Part 2 we seek to deepen our view of life overall through the practice of meditation and the contemplation of the relationship between the mind and the body. We will begin with an overview of the spiritual domain and path. Then we will consider the contemplation of what we take to be ourselves. This begins with the body, then the transformation of the mind through meditation in which the movements within the mind separate out from the stillness of the mind (samādhi).

Lastly we outline the contemplation of mind and body within this stillness, the practice that leads to the final liberation of the mind from suffering. It should be noted that the development of samādhi can be practised before the examination of body and mind in which case the result will be to contemplate in the still mind from the beginning.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEMPLATION: BEYOND ART AND SCIENCE – THE SUPRA-MUNDANE DOMAIN

So far, in our articulations of objective or shared truth or in the search for skilful perception or fuller meaning we are still making no statement about the belief or deeper meaning that a given individual gives to these truths. Belief can lead to perception formation but certain perceptions do not have a particular belief attached to them. Considerations of belief lie outside our formulation of art or science because they need not be either caused or conditioned. This is so because this represents pure information that does not follow the laws of order or energy that come to us through the senses. Philosophically it can be argued that the mind is correct to recognize freedom of Belief even when strict Causality operates (McKay, 1991). This does not mean that this information does not require some sensory substrate for its expression or receptivity. This dependence is non-specific with regard to this, however, in the same way that a message can carry the same information whether written on a computer or on a blackboard. Thus, although certain Conditions or Causes may hinder or facilitate the arising of belief or beliefs, these may equally be held regardless of these, as faith.

If beliefs are not in line with objective or shared truth this is only problematic if the latter becomes distorted. A belief, however crazy, cannot harm the world unless it is acted upon, until it actively enters the informational or energetic field.

On our diagrams although our dimensions are conditionally linked through perception there is another channel, through the higher perspective of belief. The latter can itself become a perception by the process of insight.

In practice, great care must be applied not to confuse truth, meaning and belief. This is a matter of an individual's philosophical/emotional or spiritual/religious freedom. If we are thus clear we can challenge a belief without disregarding it.

To give examples - firstly we can challenge the truth consequent upon an individual's attribution of belief. For example, a person's suffering may be seen as a form of divine retribution, this may lead to a subjective or personal response of stoic resignation or submission. We can challenge the latter without negating the former, redemption can be seen in the taking up of this suffering as a challenge, rather than in resignation. In general we can avoid the investment of natural phenomena with subjective or personal belief that leads to suffering being compounded by feelings of persecution or low self-esteem.

Secondly, this philosophy allows a complete openness of mind and the possibility of going beyond the restrictions formed by our own rationalizations into a mind willing to investigate any possibility or form of reality, both internal and external. This is the realization that in the mind anything could happen - including all kinds of helpful magic, having a source either within the mind or beyond it.

Thirdly, in order to have a perspective broad enough not to interfere with such beliefs, let us say that for our purposes we recognize the possibility of an awareness of truth that is not in itself caused or conditioned. Let us conceive of this awareness as non-judgemental, a silence in which an individuals' beliefs can be articulated, or on which it can be superimposed. It could be suggested that such a silent awareness of the map we have proposed puts the various truths about 'ourselves' in their proper perspective. Similarly, giving the two pathways we have proposed the wider, inclusive definition of the Desire-Body to note our integration of these faculties we free ourselves to consider an alternative, a free transcendent Mind or bare awareness. In terms of experience this can be the key to experiencing this quality of mind, a spacious quality of mind raised to the level of an overall perspective.

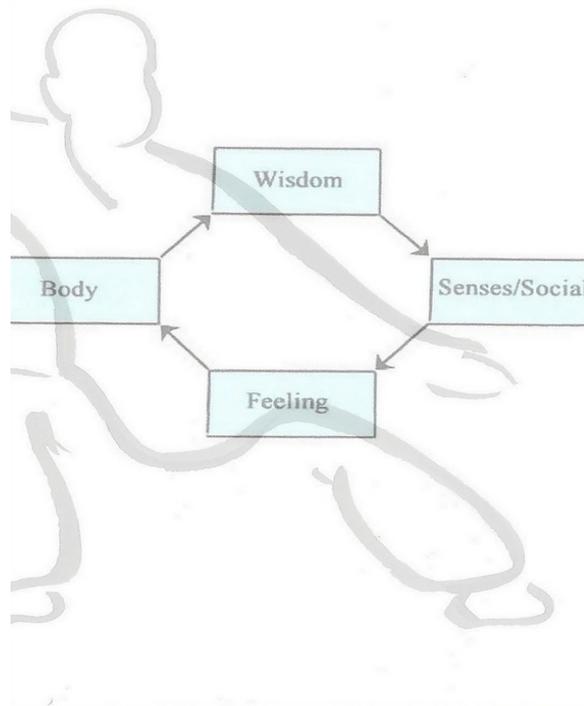
As we have discussed already, the passage across from one pathway to another, or the dialogue between them, can be an opportunity to divert from one pathway to the other. This can represent the effort of one to understand the other but it can also be a root of confusion and conflict. We all, perhaps, know about the conflicts between head and heart. In our terms we might say, the mind seems so often to be conditioned by the habits of the Desire-Body that this conflict becomes, when this is not necessary. This often forms a

maladaptive, persistent cycle that hampers the ability of both our minds and our bodies to react to the moment.

Consciousness of our desires seen as a dialogue in this way is often the means by which we try to understand ourselves, filling our minds with words and pictures that only represent a commentary on, description or picture/image of the reality and can become divorced from the reality itself. In contrast a silent Awareness of truth, an Awareness of being Aware, that is unconditioned, detached, gives us a perspective on reality that we did not have before. Very importantly **this is not to claim some mystical, transcendent vision of psychological reality but rather to ground us in the simple, realities of our physical experience, rather than on our commentary to it.** In Buddhist terms we might say that we are not believing in our attachments. In fact discovering the reality of this kind of transcendent awareness is the natural result of contemplating the body, as we will go on to discuss. This holds the potential to fully and neutrally receive back the information of our senses and minds. This can then lead to the initiation of deeper belief rather than seeing through our own biased truths, to insight; we recognize that otherwise man is fragmented, self-contradictory and alienated from his own experience (Ingleby, 1981). This understanding can be achieved when the above kind of Awareness closes the self-referential, self-organizing loop. We have a still field of Awareness.

Previously we considered the passage of habit or energy or the information of functional, subjective or personal and conventional truths through conditioned processes. Ultimately speaking, Contemplation is information as ultimate truth. The field opens up when perception is displaced both upward into its highest context and back into its widest perspective; when perception is still or silenced and raised to the level of wisdom and when the mind is centred on the physical body. **These two naturally happen concurrently.** Thus in the 'open mind' where there is no fixed perception and no sense of self - **arrows represent the passage of pure information** as insight.

Fig. Passive Contemplation



Here we are also taking a non-grasping ‘social view’ of the mind. It is a natural consequence of opening the mind that its dialogue is seen as embodiment of the social. The social view of mind has been proposed as an interpretative model for the understanding of mental illness (Ingleby, 1981). It puts phenomena into their widest possible context. This gives us a way of conceiving how an individual may use their beliefs as a positive social force; also a way of allowing spiritual freedom. It also prevents the confusion of subjective or personal and objective or shared considerations with wider belief.

Often we recognise the need to include someone’s subjective experience (of pain or suffering, for example) in the picture of care but we either disregard their beliefs or take them as sacrosanct when if we approach this aspect respectfully it can be included in the picture and we have an integrated, holistic model. The belief that the person ascribes to the phenomenon is represented in our model as the clockwise (healthy) or anticlockwise (unhealthy) passage of information between the four quadrants.

Note that it is when we are temporarily passive in our contemplation that we can divert from the previous system. Hence we see the need for moments of pure observation or an element of pure observation in our minds. We so seldom manage to consider fully the problem we are out to solve we are looking already for a solution. If we do see the problem fully sometimes our decisions regarding a solution can be completely different.

In our model this is the temporary absence of intention allowing perception to be displaced upward and become fully conscious as what we will call wisdom. Once the channel of meaning is opened beyond beyond subjective or personal intention, insight can be made possible by the contemplation of (and ultimately experiencing), the physical body as different from the desire body, by passing information through the physical body instead in the sense of keeping in mind the realities of the body. Surprisingly to some, Buddhism takes this to naturally generate the ultimate, spiritual perspective.

This is also opening the mind to the extent that it is seen as an embodiment of the social/spiritual. Thus, as an experience, we open the channels through mindfulness, calm and still the mind until it drops back into the body and then wait to see what drops into the empty centre space as insight. This is like the reversal of the direction of the mind which up until now has been divergent, moving out from the perceptual core, to converge on the heart. We will return to describing this convergent mind again later.

Implications and further suggestions

The thinking mind and senses are designed for purposive action in the present, in the outside world. They function in strange ways when put to another use. This is just like the body's adaptation acute stress or illness. Its responses are inappropriate to chronic stress or sickness.

We can place the objects of our imagination into a feeling field in front of us to feel things out. If we do this at the body we will end up with a confusion of mental and bodily feelings. A kind of introjection of mental feelings.

Similarly passionate perception adds mental feeling to physical feeling or projects physical feelings into the world. Mindfulness of the body solves this problem, allowing us to look down at ourselves with clarity, freeing mental feelings from bodily limitation.

Instead of subject and object being separate in space they can come together first as a point of intention (rather than action) then as a field, intention within attention, action and consequences.

THE RELIGIOUS PURPOSE

(with an uplifting accompaniment from the Kalyano heart orchestra)

It is proposed that all phenomena arising through sensory or material conditions are impermanent, that everything that arises ceases and therefore leads to suffering.

(‘Do not panic’, says the bassoon with a confident, deep concern)

Freedom from suffering, then, relies on the ability to distinguish and ultimately to separate in our experience the empty, immaterial, non-sensory mind, from mind objects.

(a chorus of angels, heralded by a joyful cornet’s blast rents the heavens open... ‘there is another shore, it can be done, the Deathless waits!’ ... yet the Lord’s mind remained calm...)

Mind objects comprise:

b) States of mind: these have refined sensory/neural manifestation and therefore fine material existence. This is the realm of infinite potentiality and interdependence.

c) Coarse sensory forms or objects: these are the most limited, operating according to the fixed, causal laws of the coarse material world. This is a realm of relativity, temporary stability and local independence. These things can affect the state of mind only through coarse sense desire. In human terms, these also have coarse material dependence on the sense bases of the eye, ear, nose tongue and skin.

(Yes, just skin, eh...eh...)

Notice that we are not trying to divide the coarse material from the fine material. This is the attempt to divide the manifestations of the mind from those of the body and other coarse material phenomenon. **This division is not necessary, if we can let go of attachment to the body, we can let go of the states of mind that are dependent upon it. In our terms this means to let go of the desire body and step back into the real body.**

Also, we are not concerning ourselves with what we would call the outside world but only with its representation in the senses. We are accepting, however, that the objects of these senses are the source of our different perceptions. The diversity of sensory perceptions depend on the diversity of material elements, (in this case of air, fire, water and earth), not the other way around. This mind depends on form, not form on the mind.

In recent years with the development of instruments of fine material science, we have been delving into a realm where there is interdependence in this respect, observation as an action of mind changes the observed, which is also a manifestation of the larger mind. This is also the realm of the purely mind or heart sense that is independent of the other senses bases. In Buddhism, this is understood as the heavenly realms. These are realm of fine material form and formless realms. It is useful to be clear that these operate in different ways that the laws of the mind are different from that of coarse material. Quantum science is beginning to expand our language and understanding to encompass such things, although as yet this is also with a degree of confusion and hence disagreement with coarse material science. Perhaps one day a clear distinction will occur in objective terms but this is not so important to us. The distinction in subjective terms will become, I hope, **clear enough** if we do not get confused looking down too many high-powered instruments. However, note that this distinction is not the goal of our practice; we need not let the finer discrimination of these things confuse or divert us. It is only the scientists themselves, perhaps, that have the job of sorting it all this out so clearly in their minds. For our less precise purposes, we will call the coarse material realm that of Conventional Science and that of the fine material as the realm of Art (and therefore have the possibility of some kind of different science of art). For us the latter is still subjective or personal in nature, the fine material is a recognition of the possible inter-connectedness of certain kinds of subjective or personal experience. Perhaps we are also discovering the stuff of rebirth and hence of what we will call our mundane refuge in a mind that can out-live the physical body and can develop and refine over many lifetimes. All a wonderful source of optimism and motivation on the mundane religious path in which we develop spiritual qualities, of virtue and wisdom, which we can take beyond the grave, despite the fact that coarser material matters may hide them from us. These are like the protectors of the conventions Buddha, Dharma and Sangha

Notice that we now have coarse material realms, fine material realms that constitute realms of form and formless realms of formless beings. All of these are ultimately impermanent, conditioned realms. We are suggesting that it is desirable (in many ways at least) to move on up through these realms into more refined existences but also that it is possible to find a base for consciousness that is permanent, beyond them all. This is Nibbana

(Glory be...)

In the arising of conditions, a central concept is that of contact. Consciousness is seen as arising on contact, dependant on both subject and object but of a different nature to either. Rather than representing either pole, all phenomena are seen as arising anew as dependently **originated**. The model presented therefore identifies all phenomena as the intersection of two dimensions. It proposes that to see things as anything else is deluded. We either delude ourselves that our perceptions are real or that our subjective or personal world of mental conditions is somehow independent of material substrate for its arising. We can still acknowledge, however, the freedom of the arisen phenomena. This is our mundane refuge. Existentially the mind is seen as a function not an entity within consciousness. It normally reveals itself only through the objects which pass through it. It has many channels, through the senses and within itself (e.g. feelings, thoughts and beliefs). This paper puts forward no preference for any channel over another; instead, all are seen as the potential carriers of skilful or unskillful perception or intention. Also, let us take care; we are talking about processes, not entities. Desire makes a thing out of a process, feeling-ness into a feeling. This is a misuse of the faculties, which need to be listened with to guide us, not listened to (*eh...eh...?*)

Although reliant on material means for its receptivity and expression, the mind may still operate only according to its own laws, those of the fine material, to the extent that a clear self-supervisory capacity is present. To this extent, it acknowledges a very important role for freethinking and for the formation of belief and discipline. Furthermore it sees the possibility that a mind that sees truth can be released from the material and fine material, having a purely informational origin; thus "he who sees the Dharma, sees the Buddha". This is no longer trying to create the ideal mind; it is revealing something that is already pure, an eternal refuge through complete relinquishment, detachment. This relinquishment is not merely passive but it is not searching either...it is just seeing and knowing together. In seeing the ultimate inter-dependence of even the most refined, subtle realms, we are taken back to earth, in a sense, back to nature. We discover that the coarse material provides a comparatively stable anchor from which the ineffable can be reflected. From the vantage point of refinement, we can use it to still the ethereal states of mind. The process and practice of relinquishment is therefore, in terms of an experience, down to earth, back to nature religion, with a very big bounce (*eh...eh...!?*)!

Heart first...

This is the Reflective Glory of the Lord Buddha.
This is indeed the Reflective Glory of the Lord Buddha.
This is the Reflective Glory of the Dharma.
This is indeed the Reflective Glory of the Dharma.
This is the Reflective Glory of the Sangha
This is indeed the Reflective Glory of the Sangha.

A UNIFIED EXPERIENCE

In our normal experience, there is no subject or object, no knower or known, only knowing. **There is only perception.** Therefore, when we wonder whether suffering is in here or out there we just get confused. The tendency is to use an internalizing or externalizing story or way of considering mental phenomenon rather than seeing both sides of the story. Better than this is always to try to see how both sides of things are forming this single experience. There is only one experience, of Knowing. Although we all have this knowing heart-mind to realize, to experience this is what brings awareness itself into our awareness. This is through some kind of letting go of ourselves through generosity, morality, mindfulness (presence of mind) or samādhi. We are aware of being aware.

This further develops into experiencing the knower within this state of knowing. We can directly see our state of mind in relation to an object within awareness. We can see our lovingness around our loved ones, for example. When we can see this, we realize that this state of mind is what we really know. Other things we are just aware of - we just see sights, hear sounds, think thoughts etc. Furthermore as we become clearer about what we really know then this knower becomes stronger and its connection with virtue becomes clear. What really knows is our conscience (*eh...eh...?*).

Only our conscience really knows
Only our conscience can be truly happy
Only our conscience is alive
Only our conscience "rises again"
Only our conscience can be free
What is our conscience?
Bliss only knows.
It is not telling.

This knowing is the beginning of the path out of suffering, the path to the deathless. On this path we are driven on by the fact that our knowing is dependent on its object and therefore impermanent - never able to sustain itself, always moving and changing with an uncertain world (that lovingness turns to grief when he or she is not around, doesn't it!). We are pulled on by the fact that when this knower is clear and strong we can strive to abandon all attachments to phenomenon and watch it get brighter, happier and more loving. If we achieve this detachment fully for just one phenomenon (through wisdom or samādhi), the mind will be released from the senses and we will for the first time experience "the one who knows". We must be careful that we do not see this as an independent mind or we may grab it. I say abandoning attachment to phenomena, not abandoning phenomena. Do not let me then also take us too far! Only detachment is necessary. We can influence things and be influenced by them, through information or truth. We do not have to, through desire, become entangled in energy, sense or form (*eh...eh...?*).

The Lord Buddha (bless him)'s method is to thus empty the mind and then return to contemplating conditions. To see how suffering arises with attachment by greed or by hatred. In addition, to see that there is no suffering and the emptiness is there in the midst of conditions when desire is absent. However, it is best not to call the emptiness anything, not even emptiness - just the end of suffering. This is enough; any more is the beginning of attachment all over again! We could end up attaching to emptiness or feeling like a god or something and pour scorn on our mortal flesh. Instead we must purify this knowing, cool it down by directing it back at the physical body or rather taking the body as its source. When it bounces off the body, it

is truly free. Bouncing off where though, you may ask. Nowhere is the answer (*eh...eh...?*). Just stay with the desire-less-ness that is the supreme... or in the mean time enjoy those moments of freedom...

*I like the public toilets,
I like the public toilets,
The nasty smelly ones are the best!
I like the public toilets,
I like the public toilets,
Where my desires take a rest!
The greatest of relief...*

THE SPIRITUAL PATH

Although we all have this knowing heart-mind there is no doubt that it has darkness, ignorance within it, however, the spirit of the practice is not to turn toward this but away from it:

Shall I drive evil out of my soul by wrestling with my own darkness? It is sufficient to turn away from the darkness to His light...

Thomas Merton

(With a crisp strike of the small cymbal)

Taking our philosophical basis further into seeing its consequences for practice we see that mental agitation, darkness is attachment revealing itself. In the spirit of Thomas Merton, **relinquishment is all that is required**. Attachment is the result of unwise attention or perception and its resultant actions, which involve greed, hatred or delusion. As we relinquish both actively and passively, then this attention is gradually purified. The result, wise attention and the action that result from it are calm, clear and kind. As we see and act in this way our minds become calm, still and clear further, through a lack of remorse and we can directly see what is right and wrong as well as what is what - Dharma and virtue cannot be separated.

A still mind is balanced and neutral, or it can become still through finding a balance or neutral view, either way round – passive or active. Examples of balance include the principle one of calm ‘Awareness’ – our passive tool of relinquishment, equanimity. This needs to be balanced with investigation or ‘Contemplation’, our active tool of mindfulness. These two approaches, active and passive, together lead to wisdom and insight (vipassanā). This latter is like a combination of active and passive, like a still mind that moves, as we will go on to discuss. Other important examples are to balance faith with wisdom; the calming “samatha” path is in a sense the path of faith and vipassana of wisdom.

When we discover more and more ‘what - is - really - what’ we can find ourselves under pressure to revise our worldly priorities. Our definition of what is kind, shifts from that which leads to a lessening of suffering towards that which leads to liberation, to transcending rather than ameliorating suffering. Essential in this respect is to balance wisdom and compassion and bear in mind that right intention comprises the three factors of benevolence, harmlessness and renunciation. We can use wisdom very unskillfully if we lack compassion. A good safeguard is to remember that the word “should” is never part of Dhamma practice; we must never suggest that we should be detached or dispassionate or we should be compassionate, more that we need to be or that we benefit from having these qualities.

Let us not forget the physical either. Physical suffering can be very acute even without added mental suffering. Let us never lose our compassion towards that or the urgency it gives to go beyond the body. In addition, as a bit of an aside, mental and physical energy is often linked. At the beginning, we need to cultivate both.

So much for the quality of attention, the apparent subject, but how do we know when our mind is still and clear, how does this show itself in our perception of an object? When we investigate, we see the three characteristics of experience pointed to by the Buddha. To repeat, this can be done deliberately or occur naturally, or a mixture of both. When we are not seeing clearly we can remind ourselves. The spirit of that reminder is important, we remind ourselves of what we already know but have forgotten. Thus, **the spirit of**

mindfulness is one of recollection. We are not trying to change our minds. When we investigate the first two of these characteristics of existence, of impermanence and satisfactoriness, we are correct to discover that the suffering of conditions is their impermanence or uncertainty. It is not correct if we then take this to mean that they are great while they last, if we do not attach, tempting as this may be! First, the impermanence of conditions is apparent in the present if wisdom is there to see it (*eh...eh...?*) Secondly, if we experience conditions as pleasant then we will crave them in the future, we are making karma in the direction of attachment and becoming ('bhava'); just the same, if we experience things as unpleasant we will want to get away from them and we are making karma in the direction of 'vibhava', wanting annihilation (*eh...eh...?*)

What we need to discover is that our experience is actually a dual experience of feeling and perception. This is another way of saying that it is neither subject nor object.

When the mind is still and we have the ability to detach from things, we see that the perception of suffering is not the same as the feeling. This perception can furthermore be conditional; for example, I know that this poison will kill me in the future if I drink it. Similarly, this condition will be suffering if I delight in it with either attraction or with aversion (*eh...eh...?*)

So the mind, seeing how it is being caught and wanting to be free to enjoy its own qualities (which it finds is always available for free and more fun than enjoying anything else; for anything else good enough is good enough) abandons attraction or aversion to external objects and seeks neutrality first of all. As a further step, it seeks a refuge beyond the senses: this means it does not grasp with the senses, this becomes clear to see, or to the senses. This is more subtle. Therefore, **we listen with the senses not to them.**

Listening is a very good word to use because it is naturally an open, receptive sense rather than a closed, grasping sense. We can use the listening capacity in fact to help us to establish a more open awareness. Not knowing is open also but the awareness we are seeking to develop still has the knowing quality. Therefore, we are finding a balance, not too tight a grip or too loose, the balance in technical terms between 'vitakka' and 'vicāra' (I will come back to this one). Therefore, it is not like a sharp pinning something down as one extreme or an open "don't know" at the other. It is more like weighing something up.

The most important sense to the practitioner is feeling because of its importance in guiding skilful, moral action and in determining our degree of attachment or freedom. In this respect, we could say that we do not develop a felt sense, where we in some way grasp at a feeling as having some significance in it but a feeling sense. Therefore, our feeling remains in contact with its object; it is always in this context. This means we also have perception arising of the same object, usually unseen. This perception is often revealed if we consciously make the act of believing something about what we are feeling, we can chase it out so to speak. We have to be careful not to blindly believe also, in the same way that we have blindly perceived (*eh...eh...?*)

Here we can utilize the theory of phenomenology; that to be complete a description of experience must include a statement of process, context and meaning. Note, very importantly, that we are seeking an experience of process, context and meaning together **in the present moment**; we are not merely labeling experience in this way. Therefore, what I am saying is that it is not just that a complete **description** of experience constitutes these three elements but that a complete **experience** has in it these three elements **all together**. Although we can and do use the labels of conventional language or of pictures, we are not grasping these but merely using them. If we grasp at them, we will only ever have one at a time and our experience will remain fragmented. This may be a necessary part of things but it all has to come together and it can only do this when the labels are there but not grasped at.

It is like learning to drive or something. We have to perfect the different skills, focusing on each in turn without forgetting the others. We can help ourselves to learn by listening to the instructor label the next task. We can internalize these labels. However, when we are putting it all together in a difficult situation then to think, "Brake" or "mirror" or something would take us away from our necessary focus on the outside world (*eh...eh...?*) Forgive me a little personal indulgence here but out of filial piety, I have to mention my father invented what is called a head-up display. This gives us a way of describing the next step. The head up display is where information is projected onto the windscreen of an airplane so that the pilot need not take his attention away from the world to look at the dials. Our instruments, however do not merely give information on the process that is occurring but are seeking its subjective or personal and existential significance. In this way, we are investigating experience. Often we have to do this repeatedly, opening repeatedly to the simplest of experiences in order to gather the different aspects of a full, mindful experience of it in the present moment. Often, I think, the reason why we do not do this is that we think to be wise we have to know very many things, everything in fact. This is not so in this context. If we are looking for the Dhamma of things we need only to penetrate to the reality of one to see them all in the same light, to have a

experience of release from one object of desire can give us a dispassion not just for this object but for desire itself.

When the label comes back to us out of the experience this is insight. It is as though you hear your own mind coming from a different place. The message is often incredibly simple but it always seems to have a radical effect on the mind; it goes straight to the heart. Here the Dharma has only one taste that of a blissful sense of freedom and love, light and playful. We may also see the truth of the third characteristic of experience, that no conditions are self; I think this is the only way to understand this one.

After such an experience we find we also have a perception in our heart that is stronger than a mere label. We can use it to defend ourselves from the labels that continue to be thrown up by our experience as well as from the mental feeling of our less enlightened moments. Therefore, we can empower the perception of suffering to such a degree that it protects us from the feeling of suffering. At this point, we really have to let go of the idea that we should feel a particular feeling in a particular situation. We have gone beyond the realm of what we may have previously thought of as normal healthy reactions to realize that actually there is something more natural and healthy than these, mindfulness, awareness in the present moment (*eh...eh...?*)

To sum up **TRANSCENDENCE** is by a two-fold refinement of consciousness—

1. “Contemplation” is the standpoint of the mental agent where we use the power of perception and apperception to transform the mind and bring its strength into the present moment.
2. “Awareness” is experience viewed from the standpoint of the mental observer that can be developed to include bare awareness and pure awareness, the awareness of being aware.

Both of these approaches are enhanced by calm and concentration – when the mind is still it sees clearly. Otherwise, these two approaches can seem very different at first but as time goes on the differences become subtle and disappear. The first begins actively, we reason with ourselves, more in a heart sense than a cerebral one. It becomes like doing nothing as our minds become clear of the activity of desire and the work of relinquishment takes hold. The second is passive from the beginning but then a need for restraint and virtue shows itself and we follow what is skilful and turn away from what is unskilful, a subtle activity comes about. Which way we go at the beginning depends on how active we like to be or at what point we step back from things. We will come back to this and to formally trying to put the two approaches together; in doing this we take both beyond themselves.

Until this point these two approaches can further each other, we need a balance of activity and passivity in the longer term and come together as a balanced ‘Knowing’; this knowing takes us ultimately to a Religious “Realization” that involves subjective or personal belief or Wisdom, **emerging out of phenomenon**. If we are on the right track and these beliefs match the Buddha’s teaching as I have described we can potentially experience a total freedom from the conditioning of the mind by phenomena. We are unshakeable. This “knowing” is then in itself both the initial realization of our path as I have described above and the ultimate realization of it. We raise it up higher and higher, more and more refined through our contemplation and the cultivation of pure awareness.

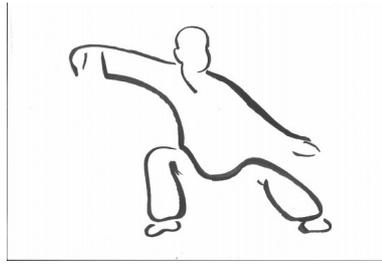
The Buddha identifies the body as the most fruitful of all objects of our awareness and contemplation. In fact, the object naturally brings contemplation and awareness together as well as reminding us of impermanence, of our mortality. We can also see a crucial way in which we have misconstrued our experience. We have taken feeling and form to be the same. Through Dharma practice, we learn to re-perceive these as separate realities in the mind.

In the same way that we have already discussed our use and relationship to the senses we also have three educative tools; science, art and religion with their respective domains of the senses, states of mind and emptiness respectively. We can similarly use these in the same two different ways as tools of contemplation or tools of awareness with their two different standpoints for the mind. This scheme is designed throughout to enable the practitioner to enquire while keeping balance. Therefore, for example, we can use science to brighten or sober the mind according to what aspects we examine but also how we do this. We also need to do it in a way that leaves us un-entangled. We do not grasp at or identify with the process, with thought, for example, we just use it. In other words, we keep our knowledge; we do not give it to science. Similarly, with art we use images in our minds in the same way.

In terms of the fruits of practice; the gradual teaching described by the Buddha is one leading in turn to generosity, virtue, the ease and happiness of heavenly realms (also of Samadhi), seeing the disadvantages of sense pleasures and the benefits of renouncing sense pleasures (two aspects of wisdom). If one has enough faith, one can embark on these in turn. Note that many of the quotes I use evoke the heaven realms. Beyond the practice of virtue, this represents a direction in which to take the mind that does not require special training or conditions to imagine, although always there is a skill to every contemplation and possible pitfalls of which to be careful. A good rule of thumb is not to try to force the mind; to wherever possible let the

fruits, however small, lead one on.

Truth has a far greater impact on the heart without any pitfalls if it emerges out of experience as insight rather than if we impose, force it on reality as perception. At the same time, it is our perceptions, nothing else, that come back to us out of experience. How do we find our way out of this apparent impasse? This forcing can be like a 'prodding away' at the world with the mind. We need to work hard like this but be patient and keep the perspective of a broad, receptive awareness, until the day when it all starts coming together. We see that what we experienced as the observer is the result of our heart's action. What we saw as the world is a perception, is the heart's action. We no longer have a "me and my mind" experience or a 'me and the world' experience, there is just knowing, only perception, action and result. Like a craftsman we are completely with our experience and yet we are detached, the brightness of the purity of our minds shines off things, inner or outer, our reflective glory. It is that we can tune with truth toward Nibbāna.



CHAPTER 2 - CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY

We have now discussed Dhamma practice in outline. We have talked about the nature of the mind and of knowing. Also tracked the mind through its different pathways of information and into the different realms or domains of knowledge the mind can enter into. We have seen the need to make a clear distinction between these functional, personal, conventional and ultimate truths. Now we will go on to apply these skills more fully to a particular object, recommended by the Buddha, the body. As Ajahn Thanissaro comments with regard to body contemplation, “Because the suttas treat the body both as an object of mindfulness and as an object of jhana, or mental absorption, it raises questions concerning the relationship between these two mental qualities (and the body) in the practice of meditation.”

In our analysis of perception, this connection will gradually become clearer. In doing so, the whole way of practice becomes much clearer, integrated. We solve the riddle of how we get beyond the body when we are directed towards it in the practice, how we are to transcend the body through contemplation of the body. We see how this hinges on transforming apparently real objects into mental objects or rather mental realities, not as a philosophical stance or conventional perceptual shift but as a brand new experience altogether, a kind of perception beyond perception.

Let us begin by putting our contemplation of the body in the context of the other elements of our scheme as they relate to it.

The image of the body in the mind is usually a functional one (a desire body), not a passive, contemplative one (a mental body). The functional image is calmed both by contemplation of the objects that elicit these functions or goals and by simply relaxing into passivity. It is important, however, not to be mistaken that in our passivity we have resolved the issues inherent in function. In order to do this we need to have wisdom informing our actions.

The desire body consists of thoughts, perceptions and feelings which are all transformed:

Feeling

The mind is looking for pleasant feeling. It is using the body for this. We attach to it, identify with it, as a source of feeling. Until wisdom arises then this pleasure, if it does not compromise our integrity is blameless, although we can see it as spiritually unprofitable in the long-term. When the mind has samādhi and wisdom it does not want the pleasures of the body.

Thought

Two sources of thought need to be distinguished. Any ‘functional thought’ has a result in feeling. These depend on the substance of the body to be felt however they do not relate to the body in and of itself but to the function concerned (e.g. we feel hungry – this is a feeling about food and the body, the function of eating).

This is distinct from passive contemplation of the body just in and of itself where there is no intention just an examination and feeling out of the situation. This can generate feelings of desire or aversion which need to be calmed before the mind sees clearly.

Perception

We will come on to this in detail. In terms of perception, the mind of cultivation finds that it actually has to

sort out the confusion of having a body - this sense of confusion in itself is a way that the mind can begin to realize that the body is not self. In practise terms this amounts to bringing together the experience of bodies out there and this one in here. The former is the perception of the bodies of ourselves and others as we see them; the latter is the proprioceptive or postural sense. The usual way in which these come together is through action, movement. This is monitored through its results in feeling. Thus, desire for this feeling is that which sees these movements as actions; they are something that we are doing. Virtue, on the other hand, sees movements as allowed rather than executed. The mind is not acting but supervising an action.

The functional image of the body exists in the dimensions of our actions. It is aimed at defining movement trajectories. These cover the dimensions as points of intention. These points become lines as we move. This is the time-bound perception of actions driven by desire.

Desire-less-ness is time-less-ness. Actions without desire are actions out of time, timeless actions. The desire body is a time-bound perception. **The mental body is a perception free of time.** The image of the body in the mind can open into a three dimensional space to form a mental body - the fine material represents qualities of this space. This is facilitated by movements of the body that are rotational rather than linear and allowed rather than executed.

We also learn to see our bodies as perceptions, as a representation of reality not a reality. We could say we live 'as if' we are the body or its elements.

We say something happens 'as if by magic'. However in Dhamma practice, this 'as if' **is** magic

It is as if we are in the world

It is as if we are not of the world...

Thus it is as if we are free of the world...

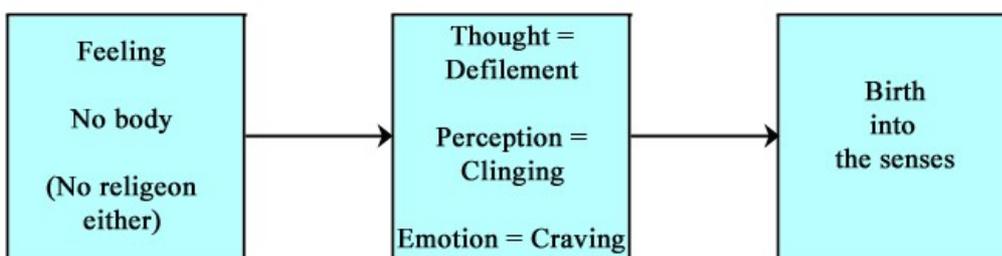
Perceptions of the body

We will go through this in outline before considering it in more depth. We will consider perception of the body in specific terms first and then return to an overall picture of contemplation that is body-centred.

Are you ready? Back to nature, then...

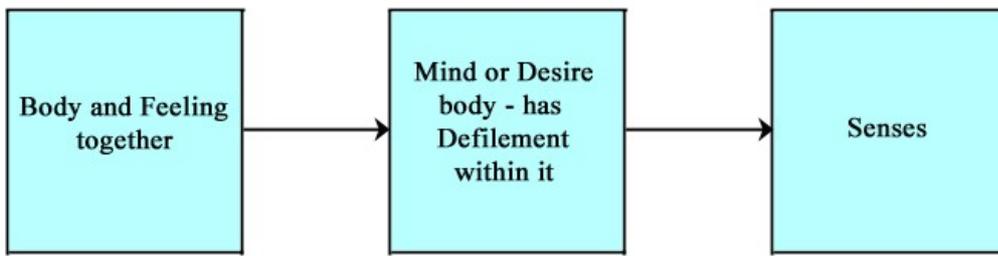
First, let us consider the stages of practice from the perspective of considering the perceptions of the body alone.

Fig. the pre-practice situation = ignorance of the body



I hope this is self-explanatory. The less said about it the better.

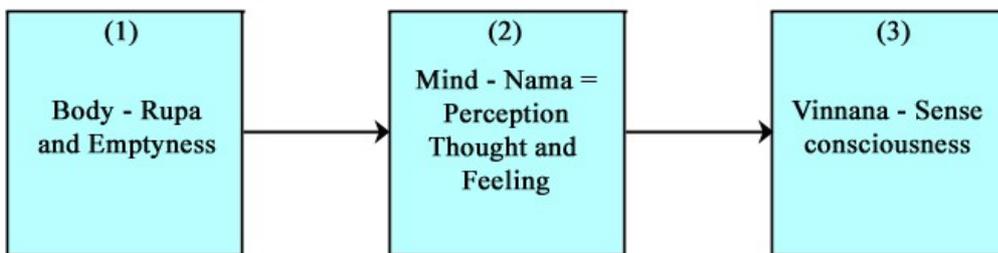
Fig. The trainee mind



At first, the combination of feeling and body makes it seem as though defilement is in the body, driving desire.

In the next step the physical body is allowed into consciousness not sought out by it. If we seek it out it becomes confused with the desire body. As the practitioner becomes more aware then it is seen that it is feeling, not the body that drives the desire. The presence of the body is an anchor and source of perspective. Gradually, the stillness of the body separates it from feeling, which begins to reveal itself, operating more openly within the mind.

Fig. The well practiced mind



As we have discussed, in Buddhist terms, we are investigating the relation between nama, rupa and vinnana.

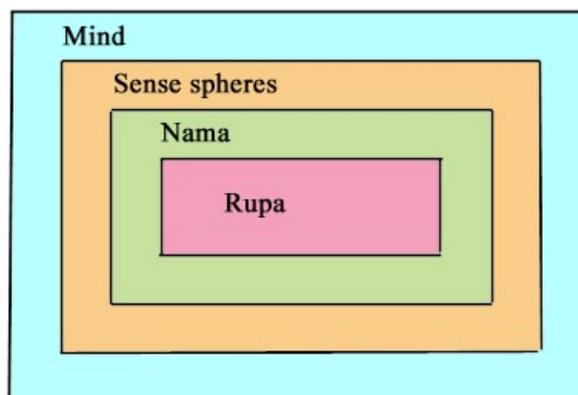
- 3. rupa is a source of sensation
- 4. nama is a source of feelings perceptions and intentions
- 5. vinnana is a source of cognition

We can see that at this point that just through centring our minds on the body we are **naturally** dividing in our experience the empty mind, mind states and the sensory world, as was the goal of our practice. Emptiness arises within the body as it is emptied of thought and mental feeling. Then this inner space unites with the outer leading to a unification of experience and we have no need to divide ourselves off from phenomenon to find peace. The practice of meditation on the body has cleared the perceptual channels to lead to this unification. Also, we have from left to right the still field of emptiness, the movement within stillness of thought and feeling and just movement within the senses - our scheme of practice. Further practice leads us further and further inward.

The result is that the well practised mind is centred in the body and is aware of looking through dirty glasses, so to speak, at the world. The dirt becomes more and more apparent. Through contemplation we clean the glass until it no longer obstructs the mind.

Fig. Very well –practised mind

The unobstructed mind, centred in the extend to encompass both body mind and is bigger than both. There is no make the mind cling to feeling and and mind are now termed name and denote their existence as mind objects entities of any kind, within a larger



body, may and senses defilement to limit it. Body form to rather than frame.

Developing a complete perception

If we apply our scheme to consider the body alone, we see that we are developing three different appreciations of the same object.

1. In experience, this is the sense of the actual physical body as movement or posture, activity - the body here and now. Using physical means toward energetic or motive goals is a particular use of the body utilizing this perception.
2. These are feelings of the body (pleasure and pain) and regarding the body (attraction or aversion) that with practice are revealed to form a 'desire body' in our perceptions with their related thoughts. This would be included in our scheme as perception resulting in, accessible to the artistic view. It is our psychophysical (P/P) pathway.
3. Then there is the body in the other senses as an object seen, heard, tasted, touched, and smelt. This relates to the scientific view. Perceptual skill in relation to the body and physical problems is important. There has been much consideration of what a healthy relationship to the body is like whether in health or illness or toward physical health or enjoyment. There is a vast literature on the subject.

C/B skilful means use perception no. 3.

In terms of an individual's physical problems it is proposed that feeling in our definition of it is the personal measure of impairment. Although in one sense there are obviously processes that we cannot feel that may impair us, we will see our actions or senses as impaired to the extent that we feel them out, to the degree that they impinge on feeling. In terms of pain, for example, we will see impairment as represented by a measure of suffering or distress, which may not be the same as a measure merely of the sensation of pain. Perception no.1 is the personal equivalent of a measure of disability related to sensation alone and perception no.3 a personal measure, appreciation of what we call handicap. This may be by feeling an incongruity between our senses of effort and result.

So we have a disability, we can be variously impaired as a result, these impairments will then handicap us according to the sensory environment in which we find ourselves.

This is actually the best way of making a distinction between our three avenues experientially. The top-down processes of C/B utilize the senses. The bottom-up processes of P/P utilize the sensations of the body and the judgement of pleasant or unpleasant, feeling. The latter can be distinguished from each other. Depending on which one comes first in the mind, this passes information in a particular direction - in practice terms this is very significant. We are looking to see feelings as results, coming second, rather than first, projecting our feelings onto the world.

The first thing to note is that these three perceptions can exist completely independently of each other and function very smoothly. We can have a medical and sexual perception of the body in our minds at different times, for example. Neither may be related to our own body until we look in the mirror. Note also, how easy it is to see our own body as the same as other peoples' bodies when appreciated through the senses (perception no.3) but that this is completely divorced from perception no.1. Therefore, if we are clear what we are doing there is no problem in intervening in all these different ways with different skilful means.

The big perceptual leaps occur when these perceptions come together. The contemplation of the body is aimed at precisely this. However in order to do this all three will need to be worked on. Therefore, we will discuss them separately in a way that is intended to facilitate this process. Then we will bring the whole thing together in examples of contemplative practice.

My own experience

I did all this not really knowing what I was doing in contemplative terms or expecting anything out of it. I was learning about the body from a scientific point of view (perception 3) and practising T'ai Chi (perception 1.). Then one day I realized in a radical way that my body was the same as the ones in the mortuary but that also it didn't seem like it was me. It seemed as though it was merely an object in the space of my mind. The details of this experience are significant. When I realized that my body was the same as the corpse I had just been examining, there was no thought. I felt my legs moving underneath me and all of a sudden saw inside the body in a completely new way. It was as though my body was in a light space. I did not grasp at this space even as a mind or anything. The thought, 'oh shit' was like an interruption of this momentary new awareness. This new awareness was a kind of knowing or intuition. After this experience it seems, looking back on it, that this was the beginning of a new function of the mind. I did not see this at the

time. So similarly in body contemplation we are cultivating a heightened awareness without thought, or where thought naturally is brought to a standstill.

Speaking personally, this event turned my life kind of upside down. Not understanding what had happened, or having a refuge in Dhamma was difficult, although a degree of detachment did occur at the time, there was a lot of confusion later. I hope to guide you on a smoother course.

The practice system

In brief, the recommendation is to begin by:

- i) Strengthening and calming no.1 – this is referred to as P/P practices. We are adding conscious, skilful processes to this pathway. Pure perception 1, is the bare awareness of Satipatana (chapter 5). the development of perception 1 progresses (or regresses) naturally in a certain way. following this enfolding with awareness can enhance the process.

A system of progressive bodily awareness to develop perception 1

Watching over

1. movement as doing
2. posture
3. movement as allowed
4. maintenance of the body as doing
5. maintenance as allowed
6. the breath as doing
7. the breath as allowed
8. repeat 1-7 with the breath in mind
9. elements
10. impermanence

We will talk about the fruits of this practice in the next section. Let us first complete our outline

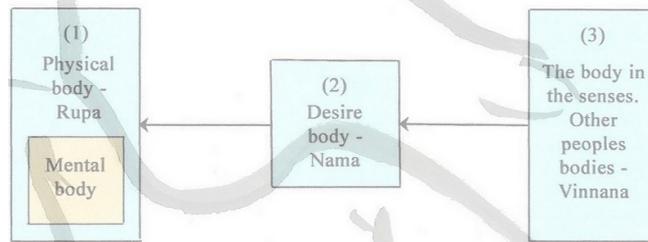
ii) calming, gladdening no.2 - we can say that our concept of Partnership below is the calming and gladdening of no.2 in relation to no.3. our 'scientific' sense. No.2 is essentially the feeling sense of the body and all its ramifications in thought and desires. We return to this also in bare awareness when we consider the mental phenomenon as separate from the body.

iii) strengthening / sharpening no.3 – our 'scientific' view of our own bodies that generates C/B skilful means. I have found medical anatomy books the best for this and have also had the opportunity to see the real thing in pathology departments of hospitals as well as working for many years on the wards..

Then the images from no.3 are compared directly with perception no.1 without the interference of perception no.2. The desire body is what obscures clear knowing and seeing of the physical body. This happens inside the physical body, so to speak.

Fruits of the practice

In this way, ultimately we form a so-called mental body within the physical body. Note that we are reversing the usual movement of the mind, the mind turns back on itself in a sense when insight occurs. This is illustrated in the figure below



In this way, the practice of body contemplation brings all elements of the mind together, sorts them out and ultimately releases the mind. We realize that the map (3) is not the territory (1) not in philosophical terms but in an experiential way. We realize that domain no.1 is the place for religious belief, it is not a thing of the mind or the world, again in an experiential way. We are not trying to mix these views, this is craziness. This is a lot of the craziness of the world, actually.

In this wider sense what these three perceptions teach us in turn:

1. The body represents the nature of calm within activity to the mind, as a stillness that moves.
2. Also, we see our relationship to the desire mind, the movements of it we can control, the movements in it we cannot.
3. Our relationship to nature, our body is no different from that of others or from other creatures.

The mind is tested because dissonance will occur if these three perceptions are confused. If not then there is no suffering. This is the same goal in part as that of a health professional trying not to get over involved or stressed emotionally.

The view that comes together, the mental body, is something completely new both as a perception and existentially. It is like a perception beyond perception. Through it, we realize that the heart is not perception but lies behind it.

this is the culmination of perception 1.

To add a little more detail to the description of the process if you refer back to the system in 5.9d (i) above:

These practices naturally lead on from one to the next as they bear fruit.

We are establishing a sense of relaxed composure in activity first of all. We extend this into the supervision of movement and posture together. As we do this we become aware that there is a higher sense of movement, that of movement as allowed (we allow posture to change and flow) rather than guided. More subtle we also realize that we do not really know what we should do or not do, allow or not allow. Furthering this with regard to the maintenance of the body do we actually know at this level how to look after a body? Actually we are not sure what to do, even more uncertain what to allow or not allow. Strange, we thought we did, perhaps. If we do not, how can this body be our self?

The later fruits of this practice can take it in radically new directions. When our minds come together a brand new sense of the body is born. This may take many forms that are both fruits of the practice in themselves and signs of the way ahead.

For example, when the mind is ready to contemplate the impurities of the body or its impermanence a sign will appear to indicate this such as a vision or 'nimita' of a corpse or bodily organ.

This opens the mind's eye to the body. The function of contemplating the bodies of others or of examining anatomy is not to be able to visualize the parts in our imagination. This can be useful, if we can do it, at the superficial level of asuba contemplation and to calm the mind or to motivate it through the contemplation of death. Such images are superseded when the mind is able to enter the body. This is when effort is replaced by effortlessness as knowing and seeing naturally blend together.

Thus, we do not need to imagine the body in all its parts, it can be seen directly in the mind's eye, the mind can penetrate the body. We see inside it but in a way that is not frightening or depressing because it is clear that it is not what we are, the mind is clearly separate from it.

What could be more depressing, more life-denying, than to see a corpse if we see it as self? What could be

more liberating, more life-affirming if we see it as not self?

There are different words used by the Buddha to describe different perceptions concerning the body. These are describing responses of the mind at different depths of the practice. It is very important not to misuse a term. In this way we can overestimate our practice or take it in a wrong direction. All the terms used for mundane perception involve opposites. In terms of the body an example would be beautiful ('suba') and unbeautiful ('asuba'). Our first step is to find a neutral perception by using the perception of unbeautiful to balance that of beautiful. We take note of a fault, a mole on the cheek or hair up the nose or something, whatever turns you off! This is enough to counteract the infatuation of the perception beautiful. When the mind is calmer and more easily settles in the neutral state then we can try to go a little further into spots or boils, perhaps and so on... This is practicing at the dual level of the thinking mind. Thinking in one way will produce a reaction in the other if the heart is not carried along. It may or may not be, depending on how strong our karma is in this respect.

When there is no thought, the mind is unified the perceptions are of a completely different order, completely new and incorruptible by the hindrances. There are only single words for these, they have no opposites. The reaction of the mind to these perceptions is also new. The perception of disgust or revulsion leads to release, not grasping through aversion. These words are not a description of aversion. We never cultivate aversion, we cultivate dispassion.

The contemplation of the body is a practice of samatha and vipassana together. It calms our desire and presents us with the three characteristics at the same time. The radiance of the mind seeing itself is also present; as we see impermanence we see it with permanence.

The contemplation of the bones can naturally lend itself to this in a further way. Bones are white and therefore the perfect reflectors for the white light of the mind released.

Meditation

In the Thai forest tradition, it is recommended to establish protective Samadhi before the unattractive nature of the body is contemplated. This is the ideal. If we fall short of this in our meditation we take care to generate an attitude of metta (to calm aversion) or dispassion (to calm attraction) when addressing no.3 as is appropriate. Also in the former case, from the point of view of science, the least attractive aspects of the body can seem quite remarkable all the same.

The metta is kindness for ourselves, we are calming and gladdening (no.2) and need not be felt for the body itself. We do not have to care about the body this will dampen our spirits. That really is a very good phrase in this context. This is important as well in that we do not want our benevolence to lead to attachment. The symptom of this in this context is anxiety. When the two perceptions 1 and 3 come together, there will be an attitude of detached benevolence. Benevolence will be a natural result of detachment. When dispassion arises, this is seeing the beautiful in the unbeautiful. Until this occurs, we balance perception toward the neutral by looking for unattractive or attractive aspects. We can also enjoy the stability of the body as an object. The body in itself does not mind about anything, it can teach the mind equanimity.

The instructions given on Anapanasati should be taken in context as having been given after a group of monks committed suicide having contemplated the body. This can be understood and described in practice speak. When the mind is contemplating the body, Mara can enter the mind through the sense door of feeling so it must be guarded by the meditator. There are many stories in the sutras where Mara is spotted as black smoke. This contrasts with the brightness of a concentrated mind.

In our terms when the mind is engaged in perception no.1 and 3. we are protecting the mind from the influence of perception 2. This can be drawn into our minds or imposed, pasted on to reality.

The goal of body contemplative practice

We will go back to this but just to give a brief idea using our scheme. Douglas Harding describes in his books "On having no head" and "The trial of the man who said he was God" the experience of an appreciation of the body through the senses only in his thought-free view of the world (pure no.3) – the desire body as if frozen in passive observation. The second book aptly describes the psychological result of this but also the result of identifying with the mind that is detached. The result seems like a healthy dissociation in this case. God does not look down in scorn at the mortal flesh. What is particularly useful about it is to see clearly the influence of thought as forming self-view.

(Please, apologies to Douglas Harding if I misrepresent his experience in some way,

Great books.)

This 'satori' experience, as I understand it to be, can be furthered if it is 'brought inside'. Then the experience is one of detachment with no dissociation but instead with release. This occurs naturally, as we contemplate the three characteristics of experience; this can occur without thought. Release occurs at no.1, the Buddha says the body knows the deathless; the more developed no.1 is the clearer the experience. It is as though when letting go of no.3, seeing the impermanence of another person's body, for example, through contemplation the mind falls back, the power with which it does so is the pull of no.1.

Also, we need not to hold to some view of the mind. This has to be allowed to change for the mind to change. In the end, the dissociation becomes an obstruction. The other limitation of such a state of mind is its passivity. It lacks the wisdom and discrimination it needs to act skillfully. To gain this the desire body must be calmed, understood in its application to the world. I think I had such a 'satori' experience myself. For me it came when I realized 'there is only knowing'. I was brought savagely back to the body a few weeks later with a serious back injury. What are known are the present and the results of the past. There was karma still to come in this knowing.

From all this we can also see that the Pure Mind, whose sign is the mental body and the Desire body do not, cannot exist at the same time. When we talk as if there is a dialogue between desire and purity, we must be careful not to imply that they do.

In practice, these will only clearly separate later on, however, as the Path and as defilement. We have to accept that at the beginning there will be a confusing mix in which we end up fighting kilesa with kilesa but hopefully bigger kilesas with smaller ones.

Stated most simply, calm body means calm mind but we do not calm the body through the gratification of desire. Also in simple terms the clearer we see the body, the clearer it is that it's not us; we have to understand, see the nature of the physical body and let it go before you can experience the nature of the mind.

Ultimately, freedom comes, must come, when the mental body replaces the physical, like Ajahn Mun, wild, eh! This is what we will work towards, somewhere way down the line.

*The cool, empty light that encompasses the body's grisly bits
Is purity without conceit.
It is empty
We are neither it nor other than it.
So it is that the body brings purity down to earth.*

Now back down to earth with a real bump. We will go on to take some examples of preliminary practices, attitudes and systems that can come out of working together to address physical problems whether they are everyday or pathological.

SELF IMAGES

(Now let us consider results occurring within the realm of perception 2, the realm of self.)

In terms of the mind, looking at things in a wider perspective, we can begin to see that at different times we may identify with our bodies, thoughts or desires or our will and aspirations, with our family or community. We see that in a sense our 'self image' is a thought or emotion. This definition of what constitutes ourselves also defines what is other than ourselves. In meditation what changes is a person's model of themselves. The converse is also true. Changing someone's view of him or her self by facilitating his or her reflection on the laws of nature in the way I have suggested, can alter someone's state of consciousness. Both experiences can be assessed by considering the resultant change of self-image; both these related processes are documented in spiritual literature but this needs some translating if it is to be used in a doctrinally neutral, demystifying way. This is what this document tries to do. This can then lead on to the free facilitation of models or images of the self within the truths of physical constraints.

We can help people discover images of themselves they find helpful to bring to mind in different situations and what happens when they identify with these images. The latter is seen here as a discrete step that is not necessary if it should prove painful or disempowering. Helpful images can be worked until stable; the freedom to change what is unhelpful can also be recognized.

This is an exercise in being utilitarian with one's own perceptual processes, recognizing that one does have a

choice about how we view our problems.

Further Methods and Results

Meditation - 'loosening up' our identification with the body

Note that the mind of the meditator is not necessarily focussing on or examining the body. When walking meditation as the mind calms to bare attention it can seem like the body is still and the world passing by, like on a moving walkway. This perception further calms the mind, it is a perception of a stillness in which things arise and cease, mirroring the meditative mind. After this one can cultivate the same perception and return to that calm state, like a meditator's short cut (bear in mind that this won't always work). It can also be taught as a skilful means to others.

Other examples would be the perception of the thinking mind as in the head, or as physical feeling as necessarily limited to the form of the body (this commonly breaks down when concentrating on the breath, suddenly it is as though the body expands to fill the room). Or we can see mental feeling as something that travels into the other senses (after this has been centered in meditation we see it move).

As all these perceptions break down new possibilities are seen. The mind is no longer so restricted.

The field opens up and feeling in particular has a much wider scope. Within such scope clear patterns of movement emerge which are like tracks. The tracks of the unwholesome can then be followed, replacing unskilful habit with skilful (to cool it down) or merely learning not to follow, to avoid or step back from the unskilful.

The perceived solidity of things we begin to see as an aspect of the desire body (perception 2). The perception of pleasant or unpleasant firming things up, even the perception of the elements may break down.

Mindfulness and internal and external locus of control

Our self-image can also be formed in the different spheres of life by our locus of control. Bringing awareness into our action in the present, mindfulness, will both empower us and clarify us.

To summarize the situation when we are out of control:

Heedless perceptual contact between this subject and object through any of the senses elicits pleasant or unpleasant feeling. Perception is the action of the mind and the feeling the automatic result. This feeling is then a source of motivation. The mind reacts to this feeling, towards pleasant and away from unpleasant.

This can be contrasted with the cultivation of mindfulness. Here there is conscious monitoring of perception. Neutral perception elicits neutral feeling. There is then no reaction to this feeling and the mind may instead observe throughout the process of conscious action and its result.

In terms of our behavior we can know our intention. Note that ultimately this is what matters in terms of our karma both for ourselves and others. It is only if we have worldly priorities that it is important how well informed this intention is!

There is nothing wrong with having such priorities if we don't attach to them. We do our best and accept that whatever happens, happens.

Contemplation

Let us consider some examples of how contemplation may effect our self image.

BODY

Mindfulness of the 4 postures I take to mean **consciously** sitting, standing, walking, or lying down. We then expand this to include all our actions.

This and the presence of the breath are pre-requisites for contemplating the inside of the body.

At the earlier stage we may find that we already lose the sense of the body as self. Instead we see it as something we use or control. With this loss of identification the body as can seem to develop its own image in the mind in surprising ways. We may find that we need not feel unduly sorry for the body because it curiously seems not sorry for itself.

We need not unduly crave for the body or for its needs. For it does not crave for itself. We need not be either covetous or grieve for the body.

Then with this sense of detachment we can discover that contemplation of the inside of body is not life denying, it is death defying. For seeing this the mind can withdraw.

We do not then take ourselves to be other than the body and enter into a kind of conceit or dissociation

because as the mind withdraws everything that we had taken to be ourselves ceases. There is just the body seen anew, in the field of awareness, as not self. There is a field of awareness that is also not self.

FEELING

The clear separation of body and feelings can also be crucial to this detachment.

To help distinguish these, neutral feeling has a wavering, uncertain quality. What we may describe as bare sensation is still, although its object may be moving. This is the body or rather what helps us develop awareness of the body, of movement, posture or the elements.

In terms of meditation, anapanasati makes the space element a possible basis for feelings. Space may then envelop the body. This takes us beyond physical feeling into the heart or purely mental feeling. As this space becomes more empty, further detached, mental feeling also ceases.

Any of these feelings can form a sense of self. Feeling is the heart's motivation but doesn't realise that the cessation of all feeling is more pleasant than any feeling is. Although feeling is motivation it is not the heart's leading factor. This is perception. We tend to assume that these two must be the same. The purposive nature of feeling can further blind us to perception, which is systemic. This is an example of the more general issue of seeing cause and effect that we will go on to discuss below.

As we widen our view of cause and effect our definition of ourselves as cause or effect correspondingly shifts.

We also unearth radical new causes and effects.

PERCEPTION

To take an example of such a radical cause - the fact that the body is in reality only suffering is the first of the great noble secrets. It must remain a secret until we are ready to let go of it. Otherwise we would end up hating it. That won't do. For the body has another purpose, not of feelings. It can still the mind.

Lets take care here not to introduce a duality, or rather consider how to overcome an apparent duality.

It is not that we have some kind of dual existence, as body and mind. What we experience is just the mind. It is material things that have dual existence, in the mind and independent of it. Material things can effect the mind in both instances as both real objects and mind objects either together or separately.

To now consider in this context the Dhamma in terms of cause and effect, both specifically and in general - We are already attached. The cause of suffering is already present. The Dhamma helps us let go and pre-empt, not resolve, this suffering. Wrong seeing is the original cause and actions based on it are a secondary cause.

Overall we can say that the Dhamma is preventative medicine; dependent origination is a the method of working with causes rather than effects.

This also in itself effects the way we see things. Using the words of Gregory Bateson a directly purposive (self) view tends to be blind to systemic truths. When we work indirectly this is less often the case.

Taking the example of karma, this is both specific and non specific in nature. Particular events can be the result of the past but the whole thing is also swung by the overall balance of wholesome or unwholesome. The latter is a systemic truth and provides a way to resolve something indirectly.

In terms of resolving specific issues from the past (or in the future for that matter) we see these as the causes of suffering in the present rather than focussing on the past or future.

More generally in this respect to merely think of past and future is not yet losing mindfulness. We need to plan or tidy up after ourselves. When **the heart** leaves the present moment this further involves hope or regret.

To consider the cause and effect of seeing itself - seeing is believing; believing is not seeing.

The higher function of believing is also remembering having seen. In this sense believing is a seeing of a different order. Perhaps we can call it Knowing rather than seeing. This Knowing is what can be raised with further seeing (sati) to wisdom.

In the highest case Samadhi can lead to wisdom or wisdom to samadhi. If both come together then insight occurs. The wisdom arises within the samadhi. This can be as a vision or as thought that seems to arise from a new, silent place. The former will see the 3 characteristics. The latter will be insight into the four noble

truths. The same insight from different angles. In both cases it is as though in the presence of wisdom neutral feeling is stilled and and kind of turns into the body.

Either way the result is abandoning mind and body **in their presence** and the job of detachment is done, permanently or temporarily.

Spiritual self image

The spirit of the forest monks' life is to make things as simple as possible. Within that to make as little as possible in the mind of what is left.

We just get by.

But it is as though we walk barefoot everywhere. We feel it all out, taking care at every step to neither harm or be harmed. Like the barefoot doctor we make use of any skill we have to look after ourselves or others, step by step.

Energies –

When we correctly or incorrectly assign energy or power to aspects of our experience this effects our self image. This has direct links with the understanding of the energy systems of the body.

For example, there is no power in desire or anger in themselves; if we think there is then we will invest them with power. They merely add to the power of the issues behind them. Both desire and anger are the result of underlying perceptions. This is where the power is. These perceptions (sanna) in turn give rise to needs and values (sankharas). This is not to see what the perception is but to see the heat in it and cool it down.

Thus to see the underlying, causal saṅkhāra is the first step deeper. To see the operation of perceptions is the second. Our perceptions can emerge when questioned (what am I attracted to or averse to?) but often the perception already changes if we pay such attention.

Then we begin to see our lack of real attention to real things in the present. That we live in our dreams. If we wake up and remain calm everything changes.

Possibly the clearest example we can see is in the management of lust by the spiritual aspirant. Assuming we cannot or do not wish to follow this drive - one reason not to is to investigate how it all works. We can see that if lust arises there is no need to suppress the feelings of it. This is just karma, the result of desire, not desire itself which is a perception. But if we follow and enjoy the feeling we have made karma towards its re-arising. We can just let it go its own way. We need see nothing wrong in sensuality either. It is merely habitual drives toward lesser pleasures that interrupt the seeking of a higher one. Thus if kilesas are not acted on they are merely hindrances to be got around. There can be some cold turkey related to the sense pleasure but when the mind drops we can pick it up. Before we depended on pleasant feeling to do this. When we practice we find we can do it for ourselves. This strengthens the mind. We enjoy the sense of autonomy from which we may reflect deeper on the disadvantage of relying on the things of the senses.

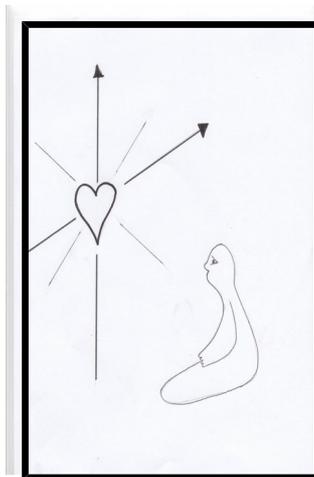
The resultant dispassion is far from depression. It is a carefree, buoyant state. The energy of dispassion is greater than the energy of passion. The latter includes both that of sensuality or of renunciation. Vital energy will have the tendency to flow into rage or sensuality if there is karma in either direction.

To continue with the example of sexuality - There is no such thing as sexual energy per se. It can be channeled in other directions. This can be either directly with yogic practices or indirectly by just putting our energy into other things.

Note also that looking after the body to get energy from it is skilful. If we start worrying about it this has gone too far.

Chapter 3

MOVEMENTS WITHIN THE MIND



A phenomenological frame of reference

Now I would like to propose a systematic structure that we can use, a frame of reference for our own personal experience of practicing the Buddhist teaching in its entirety. Note that this is all to do with clarifying our new and developing experience of immediacy. At this point, I will give a basic outline of the new structure that emerges and the way it may progress over months or years with both philosophical and further practice implications and examples. The structure is the important part to grasp from it all, if you start getting lost in the rest, do not worry, I will come back to it all later on.

Let us follow our experience moment by moment, in a phenomenological way, meaning without reference to past or future and without making entities out of processes. In this way, we guide ourselves throughout Dhamma practice through seeing the presence and absence of suffering in the heart and its causal conditions. When we consider this, we need to be aware that the Buddha took a long-term view of this over many life times. In addition, we need to accept that we may be out of touch with ourselves, with the knowing heart. This means that we may confuse freedom from suffering with its mere amelioration. We may think we are working at the source condition when we are tackling only symptoms - if we recognize this, though, we can look for a reliable symptom that gives us useful information. We will come on to this as we discuss the movements of the mind.

Until realization occurs, we can use 'mundane' skillful means to generate both calm and energy and to inform us in support of this process. We practice all aspects of the 8-fold path with faith that they will come together in virtue and samādhi, our tools for the further development of wisdom, our source of insight. In the mundane path, many forms of learning and healing can be used. The danger is that we will confuse one kind of healing or learning with another. In terms of my personal experience, I practiced various kinds of body awareness and physical disciplines for many years. This also led me on to body contemplation both in a medical and monastic setting. This had results that I am now only beginning to understand by using the Buddha's teachings, having tried to fit my experiences into many other conceptual frames with only suffering and confusion resulting. I hope I can help you avoid some of this confusion. I also hope I can convince you of the value of this practice.

I would like to propose a scheme to avoid such confusion at the beginning that also takes our attention to a point relevant for the rest of the path. **This is based on the principle that all states and actions of mind are associated with movements in the present moment – these are of two kinds, movement of the mind and movements within it.** Alternatively, we can say that some of the movement of the mind will be consciously directed in the present and some will be reactions to an object. The latter will involve skillful and unskillful

reactions. The latter is what we are working to overcome; they are the delusions, the impurities of the mind. We can watch and analyze these movements to help to see what is what in our experience. We see how reactions arise when we do not see with Dhamma. We follow the reaction ultimately to add the necessary Dhamma; we also calm and firm up our intentions to overcome unskillful habit. Thus, moment by moment we can see how the practice and fruits of practice relate to each other within our experience to see what we have achieved and where further work is needed.

Our connection with awareness of the body begins from the start. The body moves in our awareness. Through awareness of the body, we attune ourselves to movement and feeling. At the same time, we become aware of the movements of our mind, which similarly have movement and feeling to them. These two, mental and physical, will also be clearly distinguishable while both are clearly in awareness.

Apart from movement, other indicative qualities will emerge out of our investigations such as light and dark, lightweight and heavy. These are all results or fruits of practice and so need to be judged strictly in context. Our mind can become bright with Dhamma or with greed or hatred, for example.

Although the fruits of the practice, wisdom and samādhi, have energetic manifestation, we must also understand that we cannot produce these directly in the way that we can produce the other elements of the path. We risk trying to do the fruits of practice. This is not possible. This will just be imitation. This is not to say we cannot use wisdom or samādhi. We will discuss this elsewhere.

In terms of the path, therefore, we begin with **just movement**, cause and effect (although we will not yet understand our experience as such). Next, we find an anchor of some sort, a **still point**. If the mind can let go of the senses in some way, this still point can open to become a **still field**. Now we have movement occurring within the stillness of concentration. This stillness can then become dynamic, **stillness within movement**. This is how wisdom manifests. The process of watching the mind can be described as:

‘This is my awareness. There are objects within it. It has movement to it. There is also stillness about it.’

Again, in the context of the body - the body can act as an anchor for feeling, as a source of stillness.

Note that **movement shows us the three characteristics**. Movement is a sign of impermanence. There is no suffering without movement within the mind. Stillness is the cessation of feeling, its non-arising. Independent movement of the mind shows that it is not self. When we can still the mind onto an object, we are at peace with it, we can detach from it.

Just movement - When we begin, we start to practice the skills of Dhamma. We do this out of faith, following ideas and practices, using trial and error. We begin with the practice of virtue and generosity; inside and out, we clean up. Simplicity is often won through hardship. Both are the friends of Dhamma. We become more restrained - It is the sense of space that makes restraint pleasant. We need not become self-conscious, think about, or analyze ourselves. Nervous self-consciousness can come out of a lack of self-awareness. We perceive others to be more aware of ourselves than we are. Healthy self-consciousness is a happy sense of moral shame or ‘hiri-otappa’.

If we use skillful means to help us find calm or energy we must do so consciously for this purpose. It is difficult to find a term that covers all these. We must be careful not to confuse ourselves by using analogies drawn from the physical world in describing the phenomena of the mind; we will go on to discuss this later. In brief, first, in Buddhist terms it is mental feeling that we are concerned with, not physical. Ultimately, in terms of Dhamma the power of the mind, of mental feeling, comes from withdrawal, from emptiness. If we experience emptiness, there can be no confusion between this and the energies of the world. There are like opposites, in fact. Worldly energy comes from harnessing, grasping something else with energy. Spiritual energy comes from letting go. In our practice we will find use for both of these; the second we will come on to.

In terms of the skillful use of worldly means to support us, the most useful distinction to make is between skillful means the intention of which is energetic and those the intention of which is informational or to do with the empty mind. As we have between discussing in terms of results these three can come together - this is good, they can enhance each other. However, we need not let this confuse our intentions, which need to be directed through clear understanding of what is physical and what is mental. This is all very important in the end. Although we can get good results from skillful means in the short term, we risk running aground because we are misconstruing our experience. It will always be clear seeing that will lead to lasting release from suffering.

EXAMPLE - The use of hyperventilation to generate energy can be a dangerous one if either we have a wrong understanding or we do not practice correctly. In terms of understanding it is not that

these techniques remove physical blocks to emotions, as many therapists claim. These techniques generate or recreate the states of mind experienced through raising the level of arousal of the whole system. We are turning on the alarm systems of the mind in the absence of outside stress. This can be initially confusing to the mind but if we understand that this is what we are doing we can raise our state of arousal without believing in the content of mind generated. This will make our mental reactions less disturbing and they will gradually subside.

We also need to see clearly that what we are doing is stimulating the mind rather than generating energy. If we learn how to drive the system like this then we understand that we need to learn also how to relax the system.

Furthermore, it is not the case that our emotions are stuck in our bodies we merely experience many of them there. They are stuck in our minds, our memories and perceptions.

We also need to be careful to practice correctly and not induce a chronic over-breathing pattern and hence generate anxiety or restlessness in the mind. So the deep breathing should be followed by a return to a normal shallow breathing pattern.

Getting back to our system, we can call energetic means psychophysical means (P/P) to identify the direction of our intention toward the mind/body complex. Although this is toward what we take to be ourselves we should see this as an outgoing function of the mind in terms of our model. Or we can say it is skillful to treat inner and outer always the same. We will see the real distinction between these later in practice.

We can usefully distinguish psychophysical means from cognitive (C/B) means where our intention is in gathering and using information. Again, it is not important whether this information is from within our minds, as thought or memory, or from others or books or whatever. We can take on skillful religious conventions and beliefs. Although we do not see in the way of Dhamma, yet we can skillfully learn to pretend that we do. Most importantly, we can have the faith to act as though we understand. It is crucial, however, to remember that we are out to examine our experience using the Buddha's teachings. We are not just the investigating the teachings, getting intellectually side-tracked. Our method is simply, first and foremost 'what's this?' The recognition of a phenomenon, bare awareness, is pre-verbal but this does not mean that we cannot go on to consider phenomenon in some way. This can involve discursive thought but to investigate without this is superior, it goes deeper. Notice that the Buddha always suggests looking for the cause of a condition. Very often, it can be counter-productive to tackle the mind directly. Better to be indirect.

To conclude our consideration of skillful means to reiterate if we are going in a good direction these will always be clarifying cooling, steadying, opening as well as energising. This way we gradually find a steadier base.

Finding a still point - To find a still point, however, we need to stop acting and just watch from some vantage point. Our intentions are now not in the world but towards the mind. We have done our best with the suffering of the world already. We are now looking for the source of suffering within, realizing that when we are peace with ourselves we are at peace with the remaining problems. The movement of mind that takes us here can be as simple as taking responsibility, being on our own case, we are aware of being aware in some way, or as highly developed as deep meditative states. What all these states of mind have is a source of stillness within, an anchor. Until now, the mind has been just movement. We are tossed around in the sea of our experience. We can move skillfully with it in our actions, we can learn cause and effect which in this realm is all that there is. When we have some stillness we gain a perspective on movement, we see it in relation to this stillness. Therefore, we have a boat in the sea or we dive deep out of the waves, or we float aloft depending on our individual tendency. We have our own angle or vantage point.

We also see that there are both movements of the mind and movements within the mind. There can be pure movement of the mind without movement within the mind. Delusion (kilesa) always manifests as movement within the mind (experienced as a kind of heat) as well as movement of it. The practices of purifying the mind are like clearing a cool channel by coming from different directions. We actively move in all directions, replacing the movement of reaction with response. It is as though the hindrances are showing us

where we are lacking attention. We may need to address the hindrance before we can move on. The practice is overcoming reactions with responses, when a response is necessary. Skillful ways to approach the hindrances vary according to the situation. Ajahn Chah gives wonderful analogies for these, usually to do with relationships to teachers, children, and parents – usually very soft and patient. Again, notice our approach depends on noticing and responding to mind movement.

If the mind is engaged in some activity, including the practice of concentration, the hindrance can be noted on the periphery of our attention and ‘kept an eye on’ while we proceed. If we confront it straight away, we find it may fight us. So we take our minds in another direction. If calm and mindfulness is established, we have a still point we can greet it, knowing that it cannot cause us to react. When we have a still space we can invite it in, giving it nowhere to stay. We do not go looking (down) for the hindrances; we look instead for useful qualities (look to raise the mind up).

Watching specific movements - These are up, down, in and out. First of all, note that this is why we can see the breath as a universal tool, it moves in all these directions. Following it with a pure mind can both put us in touch with what is associated with these different movements of mind and begin to clean the channel out.

In the vertical dimension - In the absence of karma there is just knowing, pure perception, pure motivation. This originates at the heart, in the middle. This is pulled by new karma and pushed by old as it grasps at thought and feeling respectively. In terms of movement, perception has our motive energy within it that spreads out from the area of the heart. This creates a downward judgment of feeling that connects to sensation, match or no match. Similarly, the judgment of right /wrong rises up to pick up thoughts.

In the horizontal dimension - Craving discriminates out in the world and is the deadly ‘seamstress’ that stitches consciousness to subject and object, so to a death bound body and its senses. Wisdom discriminates inside (this is further in than we have been before) and can then after be extended out.

Considering the UPWARD reactions of mind or passion: we can further still the passions directly following and pacifying their movements to purify that which “comes up”, through samatha practices. We need to be very careful not to blame these on the body.

As we investigate and calm if feeling uproots us, for example, we can see that we have somewhere lost our still refuge. We see that we have grasped at something in the world that has then moved us. We have to investigate what this is and let go. If we are attached to whatever it is, we will not be able to let go unless we can see the danger of the attachment. At the other extreme, we can lose touch with what is happening and space out.

In terms of “what is going DOWN,” we purify our thought to purify that which ‘goes **down**’ or tends to try to pins things down. When we do not do this consciously with the heart and mind find ourselves trying to do it almost physically. Thought can serve us better by gently putting things down in their place. Our thinking, for example, no longer feels suppressive, oppressive or repressive for this reason, also because we are not fighting feeling with it. We can rather teach feeling perhaps, which is our old karma, updating ourselves.

In terms of what comes IN, this is the results of our mental action going OUT. Before we train, we cannot see this, we have no observer of the mind. We may think we do, or rather we try to construct one with our thoughts and perceptions. **When we see truly we realize that our active states of mind have only one direction, out, when we can see this, we gain a new, second perspective. This is the principle fruit of gaining both stillness and a degree of being centered.** We see action and result together, and can therefore truly learn from both, truly see cause and effect. Our mind is unified. This is the beginning of virtue and of wisdom proper.

The still space - If the mind finds a still space this is superior to the still point. This occurs when the mind withdraws or has withdrawn. The clear space of the mind remains and is not affected by the objects within it. If we experience this, we realize that all movements of mind disturb the picture of our contemplation, without them it is like looking into a clear pool, we can see clearly. This requires, at least momentarily, an absence of thought or focal feeling. There are different inner realms where the mind no longer experiences

sensory input. Once we are completely within the mind we have left behind the world of physical action and outward thought and behavior, to the extent that we have this still refuge, we can go on to purify the mind directly without the possibility of movement occurring within this still field. Therefore, we are completely free of any source of confusion or side effects - our mind is unhindered. If there is wisdom, we can extend this outward as wise seeing and have a still space within conditions. (*bliss!!*)

The stillness that moved, how amazing! Letting go of sense objects in their presence is wisdom. It comes out of samādhi, which is using an object to help the mind let go of sense objects. Like samādhi, the experience of wisdom is completely new, different to anything before. It is like the stillness of samādhi extends all of a sudden. Wisdom is itself not thought, it is a cool brightness of mind, although it may arise because of thinking. The sign that wisdom is present is also a lack of hindrances. Once wisdom is present there is no need to turn the senses away (only to rest), our mind has already turned away from, let go the senses. There is no movement of mind, no suffering, while we can sustain this open-ness. Suffering arises again as we see the open mind grasp at something and close down.

Then we have to examine again with wisdom to let go.

We can think of all this as stages of practice, also of different strands of practice. Let us finish this section by considering how these strands may come together in various ways.

Pitfalls to the movement/stillness approach

i) We can blind ourselves to sameness by placing our attention on movement or change in too focused a way. We can in this way potentially blind ourselves to stillness emptiness. Rather with a more open attention this movement reveals stillness.

To tackle a related issue, it is important to realize that stillness cannot be perceived by the senses but only by the heart sense. Only the mind knows the mind, although this mind can enter into the other senses. Thus it only seems as though we can see the mind itself as a form of luminosity. We are not actually seeing it with the eye, it is only in the mind. It does not exist. It is empty. If we do not perceive in this way the stillness is sticky in itself, we have grasped at it, it will grasp back. We will not have a clear field of awareness.

ii) If there is too much emphasis on stillness on the other hand (as an end in itself) there is the danger of settling for the overcoming of defilement through passivity or mindful discipline alone. This will make the defilements go quiet, the automatic pilot of the kilesa is temporarily redundant. They will re-arise when we encounter a situation where our mindfulness needs to be informed, it is not defined by discipline.

The solution is to remember as we observe the suffering of change that what we seek is the happiness and pleasure of stability, in the one that knows the change. Although we cannot grasp at the sense of the mind itself we watch it reflected, released from phenomena. We have to take our minds all the way to this point before it is free, not grab at the first signs of brightness. Before this point we are staying not with a sense of the subject rather than the object but at the point of contact with an object. We make a mistake if we grasp the space. We look for the pleasant feeling of wholesome mind states as they contact and release.

The space of mind that encompasses the mental body is also a space in which suffering does not, cannot arise. Putting this the other way around we see that attachment to the body is the source of all other grasping and hence of all our suffering.

THE PRACTICE COMING TOGETHER

The physical body and realization

Let us consider again the relation between wisdom and the body. Both are only receptive. To go into this a little further: In terms of karma, the desire body is a source of memory. Memory is not karma. Karma is linked to intention. Therefore, if when a memory arises the intention of that moment arises with it, this is karma. If the intention does not arise or another, different intention is present, this is not the arising of resultant karma or 'vipāka'. So it takes more than just memory, body and mind (or 'name and form' together), for karma to bear fruit. This is another way of describing how the wheel of karma continues to turn through the arising of consciousness based on name and form and seeing the essential role of intention in this process.

When there is no craving and no intention, there is no accumulated karma, past or present. There is transcendence. In addition, again, not to blame the body - the kilesas then are not in the body, they are in the mind. Kilesas merely use the body - so conscious control of the body takes this use away from the kilesas. The top down processes of bodily composure and posture sense naturally override the bottom up process of feeling and aids us in putting feeling in its place.

Mindfulness of body also simultaneously improves the ability to restrain the senses without the mind going dull but instead becoming brighter, more spacious.

More subtle than this, in terms of the body, **through our material intention**, we misperceive material form as feeling and feeling as material form. In this way, we are in a sense blind to material form and not just in terms of the body. This misperception binds consciousness to mind and body, to the death bound, or in this context, what is better termed as name and form. This is how deep this connection goes and the potential in breaking it. When we see that body and feeling are not the same the consciousness dependant on them coming together ceases - the mind is liberated from both.

This occurs in two ways; firstly, we examine feeling and see it as different from the body. In order to do this we have to determine to be non-reactive to feeling as best we can so that actions of mind do not interfere. If we understand this, this is the point to take note of, we can also see how we are most lost, how deeply we are lost, when we are just 'doing feelings' so to speak with our minds - when our minds are not calm. We can lose sight of what we are doing and of ourselves. In the context of what we were saying earlier, we have lost sense of both actor and result. This is not the path. The pleasure of renunciation comes always from very clearly seeing what one is doing or letting go.

Secondly, liberation can occur when conditions of mind are abandoned for the physical body in our contemplation. In this context, the still field gives us a completely new way of contemplating the body. I will come back to this in the next section.

Samādhi and Wisdom coming together

Samādhi and wisdom are both manifestations of emptiness, of the still space. In terms of wisdom, samadhi in itself gives signs or 'nimittas' of calm that also reveal the way the mind works. Light nimittas that are in and up mark the cessation of kilesa, which moves outwards and downwards. This Right or 'Samma' samādhi comes out of both virtue and relinquishment. It represents samādhi and Wisdom coming together. Or we could say that Samma samādhi and wisdom are the same thing, passive and active respectively.

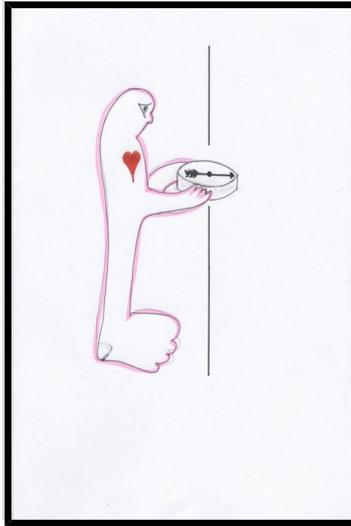
What's it all like? The path of samādhi is like going to heaven (*whoopee!*). When the meditator emerges from samādhi it is still like being in heaven, although one is on earth - until one grasps at something, intention arises. Wisdom can then be used to burn this bridge back to the world. The path of wisdom alone is one of dying before you die. Heaven is brought down to Earth. With wisdom there is never any need to reject anything, we naturally do not pick things up. When we have wisdom, we see things in a way that the hindrances do not arise. When grasping arises, it is clearly seen as such and can be investigated clearly. In terms of such investigation - first with wisdom, the knowing of skilful/unskilful can replace that of pleasant /unpleasant.

When investigation rather than calm is at this edge we can term this vipassanā samādhi, this is because the samādhi is arising out of the act of cutting rather than being at the cutting edge itself.

To come back to the investigation of the body as a vehicle for realization; either the meditator has a still space established with samādhi and is able to examine the body within this space or as the mind examines the body, it gradually becomes enveloped in still space. The space fills it up and overflows it. The second of these is the vipassanā path of wisdom developing samādhi; the first is the path of samādhi developing wisdom. The advantage of the first is that the mind is guaranteed free from hindrance so tends to progress smoothly; the disadvantage is that the space of samādhi is in itself so seductive. The advantage of the second path is that it avoids falling for samādhi or taking the brightness of it to be a self. The disadvantage is that it initially lacks the pleasure of samādhi that takes the practitioner away from the desires of the world. In both cases, what is developed out of the physical body is a mental body. The body can then show us anicca, dukkha and anattā without thought. In this way, it is as though this mental body is freed from the physical.

If all that (or any of this philosophical stuff), just confuses rather than enthuses, never mind. Do not let me get you caught up puzzling over the mind/body problem. Just think that if the body is healthy, get it to meditate (*eh...eh...?*)

CHAPTER 4 – THE STILL MIND



working toward bare awareness within a still field

The more we hoard for ourselves the less we have for God, the less we cling to anything else the more we shall possess God and all creation besides.

Meister Eckhart

It is important to understand what cultivation of mind is **in its purest form**. It comes about through relinquishment. Renunciation turns away from the world of sense desire, the world of entanglement through greed, hatred and delusion. When desire is abandoned through practice the mind returns to its source within the body and is gathered there. It can then extend itself back into the world only now disentangled from it. Desire may arise again but now within a calmer field.

This process happens repeatedly in little ways and big ways. The desires are gradually weakened, as the field of awareness becomes in itself the predominant experience. Desire can be abandoned in many ways, I will go on to discuss some of them.

In this way we are emptying or releasing the mind from conditions, as though we are cultivating emptiness. What we find is that this mind contains within it natural qualities that are not conditions. These Qualities are unchanging and are revealed as it encounters either internal or external conditions. Cultivation is also overcoming reactions and creating conditions for relinquishment in the future.

In its method it is a not controlling or forcing but taming, calming, encouraging what is skilful and discouraging what is unskilful. So if there is greed, hatred or delusion in the mind then these are counteracted by perceptions that lead the mind the other way, back toward the balance point of calm that is the basis for wise action, for seeing the truth and for releasing the mind from suffering. **Seeing is the only doing needed.** In all areas the sequence of practice is to calm, energize, gladden, investigate and release from attachment.

The mind is protected by faith and care as it uses positive perceptions (when attachment is through aversion) or negative perceptions (when the attachment is through greed) to loosen or break attachment. The deliberate use of pain or unpleasant feeling is unskilful but its endurance has many useful lessons for us...

We cultivate the mind by no longer desiring any of the objects within it and therefore detaching the mind from them. We need to separate our experience of the khandas but this is as far as we go. Then all bodies are the same, all feelings etc.

Notice that we are also redefining what is inside and outside the mind in quite a radical way. We are seeing everything we experience as a mind object. We gradually assign all that we thought to be the subject to the

category of object as we see its impermanence or suffering.

Similarly, we attribute no ultimate knowledge to these things; instead they become the objects of our knowledge or our contemplation. This is a change, an advance of our contemplation from the first foundation of mindfulness through to the fourth.

This is important. We must protect our sense of knowing from trying to know things that it cannot. This means also that we cannot always know things in the way we want to. So we cannot know the object of the senses, only see them, feel them, think **about them**. We know them only as mind objects. This occurs when the mind is centred and does not enter the senses. In the seen there is only the seen, for example. We can know that there is no contact because there is no feeling in the sense we have used the word, no liking or disliking. In addition, the spaciousness of the mind remains. It is bright in itself. This is a different kind of brightness from that of a mind brightened by an object, by getting what it wants or sensing power, for example. It is cool and peaceful.

Knowing also occurs when the mind knows itself indirectly, as we see the results of our attention. Directly the mind first sees the mind in relation to objects through the conscience. Later, it reveals itself to itself by the appearance of signs or nimittas. These exist only in the mind. The luminosity of the mind is a sign that the mind has found a footing in a subtle base, outside the senses. These are still subtle perceptions in the world, perceptions of space. This can be experienced within samādhi or not. If it appears outside it this has made the experience of absorption inessential to that practitioner (although it is still useful to rest and strengthen the mind).

Alternatively, we can say that upacāra concentration is sufficient; this is another term for this luminosity. Wisdom and good intention are what maintain this luminosity, this inner knowing. Samādhi is where this luminosity in itself becomes stronger than the objects within it. What still remains to be done are to cool these energies. When it is cool and still it goes 'further inside' to find true emptiness beyond the world. Complete transcendence. We realize that **the mind is changed not by anything outside but by attachment to its own objects. It seems like things are being 'born into' the mind when it is the mind that is being 'born into' things**. It is important to note that this process occurs in calm and stillness, the mind emerging as space around the objects or on withdrawal emerging on its own. There is throughout no conscious movement of the mind towards or away from anything through desire. Interest, concentration, contemplation and wisdom do the work, not desire.

Buddhist Phenomenology

There will be some overlap between this section and our previous articulation of the framework. At this point, I will introduce more Buddhist terms into the phenomenological frame.

To return to our model to provide a frame of reference to our contemplation - in Buddhist terminology, our horizontal dimension represents the sense spheres. These are external, internal and the attachments in between. The vertical dimension is the aggregates or "khandhas" – the part of experience we will tend to see as representing self. In terms of the different pathways of P/P and C/B listed above, these develop into the practices of samatha and vipassanā respectively. It needs to be noted immediately that the word vipassanā is used as a practice of its own as well as that which can develop out of samatha.

Contemplating particular sañkhāra as objects can be done by phenomenological analysis. This has been done up to this point by mapping personal observations onto shared and making a phenomenological statement in terms of process, context, and belief.

In this section, we will put forward a different method that is altogether internal. We are looking to become more independent in our understanding. We are developing a paradigm for the direct observation of the mind in a new way. This further serves to draw the information or insight we have had already deeper into the heart.

Phenomenologically the context for a practitioners experience is the physical body (as we have discussed). We bear it in mind. The process occurring is the mind and the context the things that effect the mind, mind

objects. Meaning is extracted from mind objects. In Buddhism, this is ultimately the three characteristics and four noble truths that emerge from practice experience, rather than being imposed on it - the insight of impermanence from looking for permanence, for example.

PRACTICALLY REVIEWING THE FULL PICTURE

Analysing our intention in the world

Let us begin in the conventional, mundane realm or external standpoints. Let us re-articulate the active side of things in more precise terms. If we do this we can form an integrated picture of feeling and thought that we feed into the perceptual process.

Analysing intentions is done first by assessing benevolence/harmlessness:

1. **Actions** (of physical body; speech / thought and mind), constitute 'designation contact' – these represent responses to our needs (science) and values (art). These can be negotiated and integrated into the above in a framework when skills (a process statement), norms (a context statement) and maps (a belief statement) are specified. This can all be drawn out to prevent confusion of one sort of statement with another and to show connections between different sorts of statements (see also McKay, 1991 on communication).

2. **Results**, 'Impingement contact' or feeling – what appears to come to us, this is seen now as actually the realm of resultant karma also occurring at the point of contact with an object, external or internal.

Simplifying the picture

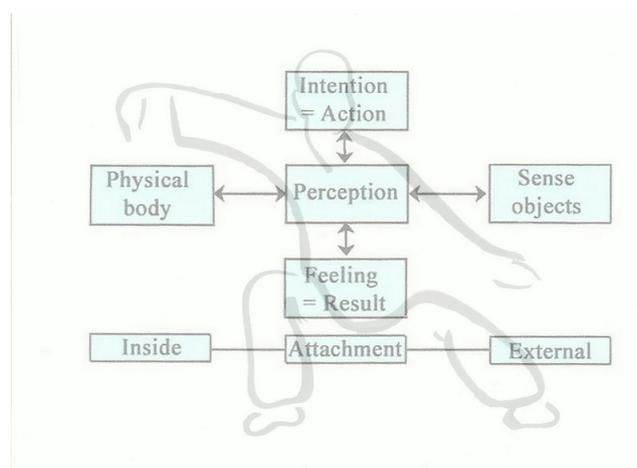
Before we go on over the development of awareness we have described in order to generate practices aimed at different aspects of the process let us pause to consider how we can simplify the whole system through Dharma practices, to make it more accessible. Also, to see how our practice naturally simplifies the picture. To make elements consistent helps us reveal dynamics.

We can:

- Create a system of conduct independent of inner process (e.g. Vinaya)
- Develop processes independent of context (e.g. pāramitās, samādhi) - this eliminates need for self-view or stories to protect control or define ourselves.
- Add the third option of renunciation to our intentions - we just endure the suffering

Generating practice

Fig. 16



We are reviewing the above system with a particular purpose in mind. Therefore, we are looking to replace each element with perception being raised to the level of wisdom. This first arises when the mind is centred on the physical body, through restraint. This whole experience changes. We realize we have been ahead of ourselves all along. Notice this is different from intentionally seeking the physical body out as an object of attention. This will tend to point the passions at it, oh dear. One way of seeing the difference clearly is a particular technique of walking meditation. Normally we would walk trying to keep our minds on the

physical body. Instead we can concentrate on letting the world go by. Rather as the world was moving and we were standing still, as though we were going the wrong way along a moving walkway. So we do not grasp at the world. If you do this you will find that the mind will naturally be centred on the physical body. If we use a mantra we can prevent our minds slipping out of the present. As we watch ourselves, however we can begin to see when our minds have rushed on ahead.

When the mind is so centred, the three processes of the mind become like instruments before the mind, rather than the mind being lost in them, pushed around by them.

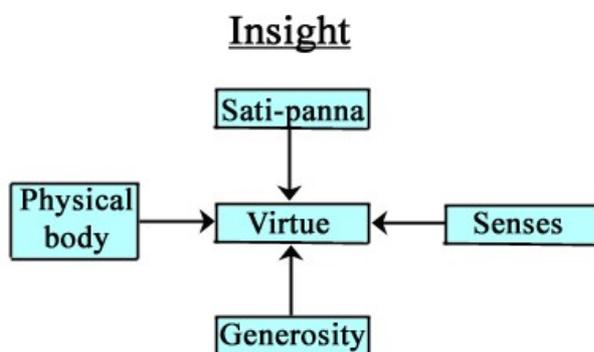
In addition, the experience of the physical body begins to change. It gradually enters the mind so to speak until it becomes predominantly a perception rather than a feeling (feeling remains as a separate sense). A clear perception of the physical body, as it is, is henceforth a radical new perspective or context for the mind. Typically craving will initially fight this like crazy. However, this in turn reveals to the heart the coarse, deluded nature of craving. Therefore, the heart begins gradually to turn away from it. It can find a steadiness initially in composing bodily action. Although many functions of the physical body are not controllable by the mind its movements are.

This restrains the mind and gradually leads it inward. The mind that truly enters the physical body discovers emptiness. This experience is completely transforming. It is like coming home. This experience is the most genuine, powerful drive toward the renunciation of our attachments to the world. These hold us away from home.

Emptiness does not in turn hold us away from the world. It can be extended to encompass it. This is also when we see that this emptiness contains within it all the wholesome factors of mind, naturally. Therefore, we realize that all our desires are based on a deluded perception of the body. We also see that all the constructed states we knew before, although useful, cannot compare to this.

In terms of the other khandhas of thinking, feeling and the senses this opens up the possibility of reversing the direction of the mind. Perception becomes receptive and able to change. Perception remains the leader, the director of operations, but is no longer simply running after feeling. when the direction of the mind is solely inward, the mind converges on perception or 'knowing', then insight occurs.

Fig.17

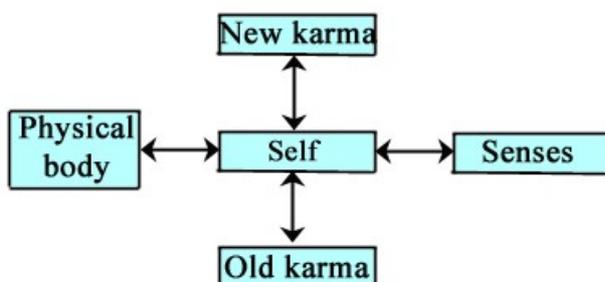


When virtue or wisdom holds sway over the heart the mind is centred on the body and the mind is our way of relating to the world. We are no longer pulled along. We are listening with feelings not to them.

We have no purpose within the instruments so to speak, our purpose is outside them.

In addition, we can reframe our earlier model in simple terms as below:

Fig. 18



We can see how, when the sense of self disappears then our karma also disappears and then there is just the body and the senses. The two pathways of intention and feeling remain as possible carriers of meaning (see Fig. 11)

Inner Standpoints

Most of us have some greed, some aversion, and some delusion in different areas or at different times - therefore no one system or approach that will always work for us. There can be no single answer or fixed standpoint. Although delusion is always the root cause of suffering, so ultimately we need only see, this is

not a single answer. We can only do this from a point of stillness, a clear standpoint and sense object. We need to win this standpoint over the objects that are at issue. When we can clearly see the movements of the mind we do not have to doubt what we see, we can test, act in the kind of ways I will suggest to see if we have seen correctly. We are not presenting theories of the mind but suggesting how it may be gathered together to show itself.

Throughout there is no external standpoint recognized. This is a unified, not a dualistic view. We find our standpoint within. We define it there and then our movements of the mind are seen in relation to it. We can describe and facilitate this process using a map to both track the movements and locate the standpoint. We are not splitting the mind into subject and object but observing the action of the mind, in a particular domain (process) from a given standpoint (context) e.g. thought from feeling or the senses from feeling. Note that our object and standpoint can be the different or the same location on the map. Therefore, our phenomenological point is the crossing of actor and observer dimensions to join them if they are separate. The actions of mind are perception, thought and feeling is the result. It all comes together at the feeling point that feeds back into perception. The standpoints are all tracks or movements, positions within the same system. Our map now also has clear purposes to it. Our principle purposes are the one of active contemplation leading on to the development of bare awareness. A phenomenon arises at a given point in the map and it is drawn into the middle. We look to draw them all together into the centre and anchor them to the body.

Despite our overall purpose, this is an open system and as such has many advantages. From the beginning with this system we do not need to identify with a standpoint in order to have a view, we just have one from wherever we are. We can join in with someone else's standpoint, we can meet them in it.

Both standpoint and object are on the same map, they can therefore swap positions. Dialogue, both internal and external is thus also always a possibility. We are not taking any fixed view. Pain and suffering is not first person or third person but an invitation to a dialogue. We can take either side in the dialogue.

There are no inherent rights or wrongs any more formed by our standpoint. If we see the process for what it is, in perspective, we will see if it is skilful or unskilful, even better we can see something skilful in it, whatever it is. Either way a path will be clear – e.g. is it useful to think about these feelings in this way? or is it just confusing? If feelings and thoughts start to dialogue (do they ever stop!) have we lost sight of the object of it all, what is it all about? Are we blind to the perception that is linking the two together.

Do we still have the perspective of bare awareness, do we see our bodies or feelings for what they are in and of themselves or are we lost in their meaning or their desires?

Often we need to add perspective before we can see. There is a natural perspective, a natural stillness given to us of the body, our first perspective.

There is also a perspective from within if you like, an empty standpoint formed by bare awareness and always present there within things, in their stillness. These two can naturally fall in together as we will see.

We are laying out the position of possible standpoints of the body, thought, feeling, or the senses the crossroads standpoint of perception. Note we do not often see the senses as a possible standpoint but they are a very strong one. The sense bases are a kind of intermediate step in and out. They are sources of karma, of feeling so they effect the mind through this route and sources of thought and perception. We can become aware of the sense bases just as they are, like seeing them as a layer of the glass through which we are looking, they have a brightness to them. All standpoints, apart from that of the body, involve a movement of mind in themselves or a tendency, inclination of mind. The perception standpoint can be anchored, stilled by the body standpoint.

Seeing the standpoint is crucial. We can have only one at a time in the grasping mind and watch our attention jump from one to another. We always try to bring the different standpoints together by linking them with cause and effect rather than letting them have a life of their own. We see feelings as the result of specific mental actions, perceptions and their related intentions.

If we are not relying on an external standpoint for perspective we also have flexibility of mind to move from one standpoint to another. We are not defining a standpoint in order to stand on it. We have to be careful that a standpoint does not become still or fixed, we have to keep it moving - to get different angles on things and form a full picture. When we have a full picture, we no longer need a standpoint.

Until then, perspective relies on a still or calming object or the unification of standpoint with the object. In

meditation, the second can come out of the first.

When we cannot open our awareness to the whole field, our perspective is the still point behind and within. If we are not always moving with things we recognize this point, to the extent that we are disciplined or calm we realize it. To the extent that we have pārami that are stable, unconditional mind states, these act to support the stillness of the mind.

When it is so stabilized, we see that all the contents are changing and moving, to the extent that it is still we naturally see this. It is the natural perspective of recognizing change or movement not a separate position. This much is an anchor within phenomenon not outside of it. The openness and flexibility of such a system gives us many possibilities from the beginning and every possibility in its fulfilment.

Ultimately, if we are not grasping through desire our mind has no source of movement within or without. It is naturally both a still and open field. This is the only way to find a still, open field, the unshakeable mind. The Buddha is the only natural still field. The still mind that no longer has to be held that way. The open mind that has no grasping left in it.

The mind naturally drops into a transcendent state.

Further principles and associated examples

i). Remember this model or map does not exist over time or independent of the territory. It is a snap-shot. By mapping we are not fixing things in place over time, this is not stillness. Let us not attach to or mistake the map for the territory. The map is never an end in itself. It is merely a tool to use **moment by moment**. For example, the mind goes out, away from our meditation object as our standpoint so we try to find it and bring it back. Perhaps we have to take it away from something to which it has attached...

This does not mean that we cannot use a map to put methods in their place. This method goes here, that one there.

ii). **Movement as hidden meaning** - In terms of movement of the mind, this has both an energy and information to it but the energy of it is translatable, if we see what is happening, the meaning is clear, where it is going. We then have a unified experience, we understand.

The energy or movement within the mind is intention displayed in relation to its object. Our intention is to gradually work our way through the superficial appearances and meanings of things, as objects of desire or morality, to the deeper, stiller significance. Still water indeed runs deep.

iii). **Mapping with a particular purpose in mind from the beginning** – We are mapping things to bring things together, not draw them apart. When our minds are running out after something we need to bring it back together at home. We bring it all back to peace and stillness.

If our minds are running away from something we may need to give this mind back to the object, bring it together at the object that it wants to run from. Not to blame the object but to see that if we are clear about it, if we can see it the way it is we no longer need to try to run. Our minds will naturally detach from it. Instead of running, the mind must stay still and calm and extend outwards.

iv). **Conceit** - We could see that our thoughts seem to bear down on things because we have unwittingly assumed a position above things, we are in our heads looking down on things, judging them according to our ideals; perhaps the states of our mind are trying to raise our self above the body, above our karma. We can have compassion, say, for ourselves for wanting to get over things. On the other hand, we could see it as aspiration, our states of mind are trying to be like the pure mind. We could see that feelings only ‘come up’ because we are trying to raise ourselves above them, they have to come up to get us. Perhaps we are trying to cheat in a way, only our virtue and wisdom can raise the mind; maybe the heart knows where it wants to go but does not want to make the necessary sacrifices to go there. We want the best of both worlds. Both of these are a result of fragmentation in the mind or of the mind from the heart.

If we do not raise ourselves above our karma and we are not usurped by the craving that is beneath it. If we are not ahead or behind it. If we accept it and run with it, we have the opportunity to alter its course. Furthermore, it becomes clear that our karma is not what we are, we begin accept it and to relate to it.

Getting back down to earth, the body, through this acceptance neither mind movement up or down needs to happen. Instead of the dreaded committee, we have merely channels of information. When we are in the

receptive place in the middle, at the cool, still heart, our receptivity is empty. Now bare awareness is a possibility. Until now there has been a degree of conceptualization to our attention, we have used this to examine experience, cause and effect. At this point calm observation takes over, we have a still field. If the mind has no intention then objects are naturally seen in a different way. The parts of things become apparent. When the mind is very peaceful, for example, we can look at an electric fan, say – we know what it is but because we have no desire we do not see it only as an object that cools us, do I want it on or off? Instead, we see it is plastic and metal parts, whether it is clean or dirty, perhaps. Ultimately, we view the body in the same way. When we desire nothing from it, then we see hair, nails, teeth, skin and the rest, naturally.

Therefore, when the mind is still, with bare awareness the standpoint and the object are the same.

With bare awareness, we see the body from the standpoint of the body, we can also see the body from within. Feelings we see from the standpoint of feeling, feelings as a kind of feeling. Everything makes sense in and of itself in this way. Up until this point, we are always in a position of having to define action and our observation standpoint to make sense of something. We view feelings from thought or the senses from feelings or thoughts from the senses. Until we have a still field then everything goes is routed through perception. Thankfully, in one way, this can be a great mediator, if it is a clear channel. It is not when there is movement or 'heat', passion within it but we can see this, we know when to trust it and when not to. We know the still, cool mind from the agitated, heated mind.

It is when we only have the perspective of bare awareness that we will not only see a feeling as a feeling but also as impermanent, stressful and not-self. The mind will naturally be detached. The body (perception 1. in our scheme) naturally shows these characteristics because naturally the standpoint and object are the same. Bringing perceptions of the body from other standpoints together with this one will also unite and naturally still the other functions of the mind.

When we have a still field then thought, intention and perception all come together, they are unified. The action is clear with a clear result. The result can be seen at the heart even before the action takes place, the intention passes by the heart. We can supervise the heart in this way, stopping any unskillful karma from entering in to influence the mind. In meditation we can see how the latter can overwhelm us coming in through our area of attention if we do not guard it. I had an experience one time of seeing what looked like black smoke in my mind's eye enter the mind up my nose into the eyes. For a moment, before I literally spat it out, I felt hatred for the monk I was looking at while all the time knowing that I was being influenced against my heart's higher inclination. After such an experience we can then relate all our previous perceptions of the mind to this by saying, as the Buddha instructed "The agitation of the mind is all part of the darkness".

This is the heart level.

The heart level

The experience at the level of the heart is a very radical one. We discover here that, in the words of Aj. Mun, the source of suffering is the love that puts a squeeze on the heart, from above and below, making it care for the khandhas. Freedom from suffering is to get beyond such caring.

This can seem dangerous, to get beyond caring, callous even as an idea. In fact, it is callous as an idea which is why the mind protects us from it as an idea, it will only reveal it on the heart level. As an experience, it is liberating to go beyond caring if we stay mindful. We can love all the more because we are not worried for ourselves. Thus the heart is opened by relinquishment when it comes naturally, if it is forced it is not right, it is impatient. When we have such patience, we relinquish, not through austerity, but through the Middle Way that has the compassion, where it can, to appease the basic needs of the body and mind.

This physical form in a sense demands this compassion of us, that we blend our wisdom with it. Therefore, unpleasant though it may be compared with a nice ethereal body (so I am told), it is a good school. If we are 'carried away with ourselves', the body will let us know about it.

Teaching

When we hear a teaching, perhaps we can see the way the teachers mind is moving then we know the standpoint and direction of it and how this relates to our mind. If we can really open to this then we have a dance.

CHAPTER 5

KNOWING AND SEEING WITH BARE AWARENESS - THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS – SATIPAṬṬHĀNA

C'mon let's put those khandhas in their place!

At this point, we can note that our map of experience includes these four foundations and the realm of the senses. Having discussed how these may interact in experience and how they relate to our understanding of the world, we will now look to deepen our contemplation of these in turn. We have already discussed knowing through calm and contemplation and suggested how we may see with bare awareness. **We will discuss how to know and see at the same time.** When we try to do this there is some interference that occurs, we see our knowingness more clearly and know our eyes better; we see remaining attachments and obstacles within the mind.

We are also seeking now to separate these four foundations from each other. The mind is gradually withdrawing and emerging from internal phenomena. To repeat from our earlier consideration of realization it is not that our ordinary mind withdraws from things, our ordinary mind of thinking and feeling is dependant on things, it is all cause and effect, so it cannot withdraw, it can only draw mental objects to itself, use imagination to sustain itself. This is not contemplation, it is this whole process of internal cause and effect that we observe in this contemplation. We are not trying to isolate effect from cause or cause from effect. This is not possible. Therefore, what occurs is not the thinking mind analyzing phenomenon, merely adding further causes, or our emotions looking for something. We are neutral and passive, brushing aside for a time our worldly concerns.

These contemplations are progressive but up to the khandas section need not be mastered at each stage. From this point on the nature of the contemplation is seen as free of obstruction or hindrance.

Introduction

In brief - The physical body is just the way it is!
Feeling = how do I react? what am I liking or disliking?
Mind = how am I seeing things, what underlies these reactions?
Mind object = what thoughts arise?

We can see the phenomenon of the mind as information concerning the world about us or we can see them as phenomenon in and of themselves. Thus far, we have been looking at our experience in the former sense. When we hold wrong views, we do not see clearly what our faculties represent it can be a priority to try to correct this on the hoof so to speak. Otherwise, our misunderstandings can cause harm to ourselves or others. When we have a clearer notion, we can move on to look at things in this second way. Also, however, we can do this at times of inactivity or passivity when we are not looking to these faculties to guide our intentions, our purely contemplative moments.

We naturally see in this second way when we abandon desire for the things of the world. Desire as an internal experience can be described as our covetousness or grief towards the world. The pure practice of satipa ṭṭhāna is just this second contemplation. In practice, unless we have cleared the mind through samādhī, we begin with contemplation that is moving towards this kind of detachment or bare attention rather than representing it. We use skilful methods of attention and reflection to keep the mind calm, clear and balanced in the face of internal phenomenon – there is some overlap in this sense with what we have already looked at but as we change our purpose, the view changes in a gradual way. We gradually withdraw according to the degree to which desire has been let go of and continues to be let go of throughout the process of contemplation. We are describing the path by which wisdom may take us toward samādhī in other

words. This is complemented by the application of concentration. Samādhi can likewise become a firmer platform for contemplation and give the mind a wider perspective and the power and stillness to penetrate phenomenon. Samādhi may also intervene spontaneously in this process and radically change the way we see things.

Whatever route our individual effort takes us in we begin to see mental and physical phenomena as empty in and of themselves – the body is just a body, a feeling is just a feeling, a thought is just a thought – impermanent, un-fulfilling and not master-able in themselves. Therefore, we see that the stuff that we have gleaned from the world, our attachments to it are not something we can hold on to or control. Furthermore, we see that in themselves they have become meaningless to us; that they only had meaning as information related to the outside world.

As they lose their meaning, they lose their power over the mind (and may disappear altogether). This is the crux of the whole thing; this is detachment occurring.

Conversely, if we ascribe meaning to these phenomena in and of themselves, we have missed the point. We are just grasping back at the world with our grief or covetousness, further internalizing the world in fact. Actually as long as we know that is what we are doing it is alright, we maybe need to contemplate our karma. If we have not let go of our desire, we may need to address it. So, this is also not to say that should something arise that has meaning at that moment that we cannot break our contemplation. Like the bell that ends our meditation, for example, or the meal bell that will cut through just about anything. Perhaps a better analogy is that used by Ajahn Chah when asked the classic question whether to continue with the bare awareness offered by the space of calm in meditation, or whether to investigate. He said,

“ If the visitor is an old friend or adversary, stay with your object. If you do not recognize him, investigate”.

That advice can save an lot of doubt. Note that it relies on our ability to recognize, to see below the surface. Gradually through contemplation, we lose our passion for these things that we previously held to as being ourselves but were actually just the constructions of desire, a desire body. We find we can let them go and that as we do so our view of the world changes. We have abandoned the phenomena that we have been relating through and now we can see more clearly, openly, directly. We are using our faculties without grasping on to them. We clean our faculties in a sense. The result is that we are not seeking to take hold of things and pull them in anymore, we can leave them where they are.

What is essential to understand is the difference between the active and contemplative situation. Our feelings do not continue to be meaningless as we become active, we don't walk about in a trance or something or ignore our feelings or continue to look at them as separate from events around us - this just amounts to a kind of blind selfishness, a kind of opposite to the path. We are giving all power to our feelings. We do not walk about looking after our feelings we use them. We realize that before our contemplation our faculties were using us, or perhaps that our desires or defilements were using them. They had power over our minds. We can take that power back and use it for liberation.

Physical Body

We have already talked about body contemplation. We then went on to discuss other means and contexts in which contemplation can occur. Here we will discuss the use of Samadhi in our investigation. This stabilizes knowing, thus it enables us to know and see at the same time. The mental body, in this example, can become a continuous perception in the mind or one that is always accessible and can be investigated in any way desired. The knowing faculty so steadied can so encompass or be directed at the body. Here we have a place for more methods of various kinds to clarify the process and overcome difficulties.

We may develop samādhi prior to contemplation or as a fruit of it. If samādhi has not been developed then contemplation may interfere with the calm of the mind. In this case particularly we need to prepare ourselves.

PREPARATION - Before we begin to revisit the realities of the body, however, to be properly motivated and therefore balanced in our attention, we must get religious and establish some kind

of possibility in our mind that we can get beyond the body, some reasons for wanting to do so. Actually if there were no such reason there would no reason not to live as if an animal, to live life only to satisfy the appetites of the body, would there? I cannot see one.

In other terms, there is a stick and a carrot to take the old donkey training analogy. The stick is the suffering inherent in the life of the body and the impermanence of the pleasure it can experience, also its vulnerability. The carrot is the possibility of life without a physical form; remember the bones of those arahants. Alternatively, we can reflect on the beauty of a mind released from the body in samādhi.

We can reflect in whatever way depending on whether we need cheering up or calming down. Often we begin with the physical body because in this way we avoid delusion by building our mindfulness on the proper context both of the realities of physical life and of the reliance of states of mind on its physical substrata.

Usually it is obvious which emphasis to go for in which circumstance but sometimes not. Sometimes if we feel averse to the body but the mind is strong, it can cheer us up to reflect that it will not last forever. In addition, we can consider the fruits of a lack of concern for the body in our lives.

Let us quickly note that this does not mean there needs to be a lack of care for the body, which is going too far. The best attitude is a sense of **using** the body skilfully (this applies to the thinking mind as well, I think). It is better that action comes from following a form rather than desire thus we can discipline the mind by disciplining the physical body.

In terms of the physical body the middle way is the intention of the warrior. The warrior has to look after his physical body, train and test it to be fit for the battle. If he becomes attached to the body, however, then he will lose courage.

METHODS of deepening body awareness

i) Elements

Initially the physical body is represented in consciousness as a particular set of sensations related to the elements, physical body position sense and activity that are physiologically distinct from the sense of pain or pleasure. This is the body as it begins to emerge in our attention from the desire body of feeling.

Going on to our method the Lord Buddha (bless him) gave the analogy for mindfulness of the physical body as a number of tributaries coming together to form a river that flows to the sea. We can interpret this as meaning that all the different practices listed come together at some point to form a full picture of the physical body in the mind of the practitioner, a mind made physical body. This flows to the sea as this becomes united to its surroundings. For example, the feeling of earth, the solidity of the physical body with dispassion becomes the same as the feeling of the ground. The water element can be thought of as the coolness of dispassion. Also, the boundaries of self and other are lost.

With insight this can become dispassion not only for the physical body but also for the conditions of the mind that rely on it, the khandhas. So this naturally becomes most acute for the coarsest elements of the mind.

We can also see that qualities such as humility, compassion and patience are all natural results of seeing the physical body for what it really is.

ii) USING CONCENTRATION

The placing of a point of concentration within the physical body shows the meditator the influence of intention at a given point. In this respect it has to be noted that there is no directing of attention without intention hence initially there is not any pure or bare awareness of phenomena. It must be recognized that the direct intentional examination of the physical body will involve to some degree or another projection or rather interjections of desire. Thus we are in danger of a sort of karmic vortex.

To avoid this I would propose that such a bare awareness is achieved firstly by noting that some movement within the mind always characterizes desire so that a calm, still mind is a prerequisite for direct investigation. This is a relative thing, not an absolute thing. We can begin by withdrawing intention from both internal and external concerns and place it between the two, traditionally at a

point just in front of the mouth, using the breath to cool and contain the field of intention. Until there is a sense of a light innocence centred at this point that both brightens the eyes and softens their focus. This is where our *śīla* and *samādhi* can come together.

The physical body can then appear first behind this guarding point as a background field of bare attention in which elements can manifest without other perception or feeling. Thus we can expand from a still point to a still field of attention in which we allow the elements to flow, returning to the point to settle the mind again if attachment causes movement within the mind. This dynamic is also the inner expansion of the mind as it follows the breath inward, the appropriate attitude being a yielding of outward intention without dropping the guard.

The mind can flow with the breath like still, flowing water. Any movement within it that comes through defilement (and obstructs our clear view) will be swept along and therefore calmed. Such movement also occurs within, and can be gathered around, the sense of craving for the in breath. If the meditator just relaxes at the end of the out breath. Rests for a moment on the sense of the physical body wanting to breathe, craving gathers there as a sense of 'air hunger' and can be calmed both calming the mind and making the breath more shallow and peaceful.

The elemental sense of the physical body can naturally develop into a mental picture of the internal bodily structure that can be clarified or augmented by the use of mental imaging. Alternatively, if the latter is highly developed in the meditator this can be used more formatively. If we gain a sufficiently clear image the mind will naturally let go of the body.

This is why the Lord Buddha (bless him) saw such mindfulness of the physical body as the source of all wisdom because through it we can divide the conditioned and the unconditioned. Letting go of the physical body or lets go of everything (and the mind enters the emptiness within the body) but then as other phenomenon re-arise, such as thought and feeling this drags us back into existence, so to speak, revealing the nature of the dependence of mind and physical body (*nama* and *rūpa*).

In contrast we see the independence of a consciousness cooled from the passions through examination of the physical body. When the mind is open and calm there is no longer a mind in a physical body but a physical body in a larger, open mind. It is as if a barrier drops away and the physical body is seen and there is just emptiness of mind seeing it. This is what I would understand the Lord Buddha (bless him) to mean by the body in the body.

In other words, clinging to the body produces energy currents in the mind. When there is no clinging, there are no such currents. It is only when clinging is broken and the physical body is clearly seen for what it is in the mind's eye (as a sort of vision) that it is blameless and is a source of cooling dispassion. Otherwise physical body contemplation will have some kind of interference from our attachments. Alternatively, we could say that this whole process of contemplation will reveal the attachment to be worked through.

The repetition of such a practice leads the meditator to prefer this cool and expansive inner state to the knowing of outer phenomena. At the same time this works toward the release of the mind from its attachment to the physical body, showing the meditator the possibility of an abiding without clinging.

This takes us on to the contemplation of feeling. Following on from the above the interaction of the mind with the physical body leading to the re-arising of feeling can help us to both understand and train the mind. When the mind (our intention) is taken back to the physical body then it is clearly seen how the desirous or "little" mind generates feeling. We can see then how our thoughts and intentions affect our feelings in a direct way. Alternatively, we can think and consciously generate feeling. In this way we can clearly see feelings arising as a clear result of thought. We see them clearly as the *vipāka karmā* they represent.

Secondly, it is very important to realize that although these feelings are sensed in the physical body initially that they are separate from it and need to be contemplated in their place as the second

foundation of mindfulness once the first is firmly established to be clearly seen as separate. This means experientially that our mental feelings will always be in a cooler space. Notice also that if we do not prepare the mind for this with concentration practice there is no ability to hold the mind in place to let things clarify. We will furthermore tend to be reactive towards our feelings or believe in them unwisely. If we hold our awareness in place and become more aware of the physical body, we can see this as separate from this feeling. We can still our mind on the physical body.

This can also give an elemental sense for feelings as a kind of heat in contrast to the cool body. At this point, we can if we wish train the mind to be like the elements. Firm like the earth or cool like water for example. This does not so much change the content of the mind but the energy of it.

When there is no outward intention, no little mind, a big, open mind can enter the physical body. Therefore, it seems like a big mind has grasped physical body and mind through intention, and been carried forward as a little mind. Therefore, the passion of intention is very literally like a boil or a dart. We also see that although the little mind obscures the big mind they are the same mind.

The space that the physical body lies in seems like source of pure, calm consciousness. With the lightest touch of awareness the elements shift toward the lighter and the mind less obstructed becomes brighter until it outshines its contents. In this way we can clear out the elements so the physical body becomes like a field of awareness. The mind expands into this space. The physical body is lit up by this consciousness and we can see inside the physical body. Thus, it is directly seen that the physical body is not self. There arises the most sublime calm state.

iii) MEMORIES

Our old karma is in the mind, not in the physical body. The mind is in the physical body and extends out into the senses. Therefore, it can appear that our karma is in the physical body but it is not. We need not to blame the physical body for our suffering, nor attribute to it any mind state we do not like!

Also if we are without awareness, all kinds of partial memories, bits of things accumulate. They are not held as is so often suggested, your fear in your shoulder and so on. However, if the last time you were aware of your shoulder was when it was somehow threatened or damaged then it will remain in a guarded state. When you become aware, it may suggest this state to you in some way but this is not some sort of physical body memory. The event has passed so not all of the conditions are present to reproduce the fear; we will experience only the ghost unless we ourselves recreate the rest. This will recreate the conditioning experience rather than de-condition it.

Anyway, we do not need to deal with the past so much as to come more fully into the present and healing will occur. Often only our curiosity or pride prevents us. We want to know why or how or we still insist on blaming our poor bodies..

and when we withdraw from the senses for that moment, we are free from our karma. The mind goes home into the physical body empty, like white light (*bliss!!*).

iv) Balancing perception

FOR ATTRACTION we can contemplate simply - what am I attracted to?
We can cool the fire with the pimple or the crooked tooth.

FOR AVERSION - What am I averse to?

The cave of wonders that cools the passions?

Cooling centring steadying centring grounding pacifying diffusing collecting, the physical body can make the mind like any of the elements.

v) Difficulties

The difficulty with this work is maintaining concentration and interest within both an impersonal

and neutral perception. The impersonal quality is achieved through wise reflection and carried forward by faith. The perceptual neutrality is achieved by calming the mind and through a skilful balancing of attention. Thus, it begins by balancing different perceptions of the physical body to avoid either attraction or aversion and then as the calm becomes more stable it progresses toward a calm appreciation of the more unpleasant aspects of bodily life. This gives the mind the incentive to let go with wisdom not through aversion or negativity.

This process goes so directly against the craving of the mind that it must be accepted that there will be a lot of resistance, temptation will arise as a counter-force and that in this way a meditator has to work through their karma as part of this process. Moral support and conditions of minimal temptation and distraction will help. A lot of investigation and detailed observation is also necessary to maintain interest. In a way generating this kind of enquiry is what this book is all about!

vi) Dispassion

The physical body teaches the mind equanimity and humility. Ultimately the formation of a complete physical body image in the mind can, at least shortly transcend the sensations of the elements and its resultant suffering. The physical body feels very light. This basis of dispassion will allow the meditator a freer reign without regress and their cool shared presence serve as a reward for the resources their privileged, protected situation has required. Whether or not this can be maintained, the meditator now knows when his mind is clear and when it is deluded and if outwardly contained by moral precepts can continue their contemplation.

CONCLUSION

So do not attach and do not be taken in to things and lose the physical body is the down-to-earth message. More subtle we can physically sense how we can extend the mind forward with intention when needed. Also, how we can extend the mind up without losing the ground, for example so we develop our 'practice body'. Here our head is like *viññā ñ*, moving up to knowing, (*paññā*) at the crown. The heart holds the empty mind (*citta*), *samādhi*, just being.

Our belly is like our virtue (*sīla*), holding to the good foundation, our centre of gravity.

If the physical body is seen as it is then feelings do not become craving and they can be acted on with dispassion if necessary. They are naturally restrained in this way from being acted out.

Ultimately, when the calm mind enters inside the physical body just as it is it is humble, compassionate, cool, clear, alert then freed.

FEELING

Feeling is always resultant karma. Take happiness, for example. In our understanding, the feeling is not the happiness as the word is usually used. The feeling is a result of happiness past or present. This is a bit subtle but an important linguistic catch.

In the present, feeling is further conditioned by thought, behaviour or perceptual action. The latter is invisible to us unless the mind is trained to see its subtle movement. Feelings are produced by thought or perception past or present (not the other way round as we often see it) and they are the source of future thought. They mix and merge in perception.

It is as though "the heart has reasons which reason cannot at all perceive" (Pascal).

At this point it is important to understand that feeling belongs to the mind, to the desire body, not the physical body. This applies even to the most powerful physical feeling. The best example, perhaps of this is the extent to which perception as the fulcrum of the mind can be so much the dominant force. Hence, for example, soldiers who lost limbs in battle have frequently been reported to experience no pain. Their over-riding perception was that they had survived and could fight no further; thus different perception, different feeling. We will return to this also when we consider perception.

If we become obsessed by feeling we can miss seeing their causes and see only result, the end will always justify the means. Whenever we lose our mindfulness like this we enter completely into the dark. We do not really know what we think or feel or why. We are back to being blind machines and slaves to our desires. Quite literally all we can see is what we want. Hence Dhamma is always

dependent on morality as its basis.

Perhaps worse, if we think we can sort out our feelings just in themselves we can do just about anything thinking just to clear up the mess afterwards.

i) Pleasant and unpleasant

It must be noted that not all skilful states or actions of mind are initially pleasant. It is a common trap to want to cultivate only the pleasant and not the unpleasant. To the Dharma practitioner then the important distinction to make with feeling is not just its pleasant or unpleasantness in itself but whether it is arising from skilful action or not. In the longer term this is what will determine our happiness or unhappiness. The happiness of greed, hatred or delusion (in the present moment this can be considerable, eh?) may lead to dire consequence of loss, reprisal or disorientation. The fruits of skilful cultivation will be the happiness of goodness and peace of mind or pleasant mental feeling which, as the mind becomes strong becomes more important than sense pleasures and leads to pleasant physical feeling or well-being not of the senses.

Pleasant or unpleasant feelings are not just relative judgements to each other they are relative experiences. You cannot have one without the other. Therefore, the pursuit of pleasant feeling has no lasting satisfaction to it. It is also a constrictor of the mind. Neutral feeling is contrastingly wide and expansive. It is significantly also mildly pleasant to a mind with wisdom, a mind that sees the drawback of extremes. We must take care, however, not to perceive it as permanent - it can feel that way and delude us.

It's a fine line between feeling and craving but a crucial one. As we have stated, feeling is pleasant or unpleasant in itself but actually always leads in to liking or disliking at least in a subtle way, as preferences. Craving is the liking or disliking that leads into desire, it is appetitive. These are the desires of wanting something or the desire to be or not be something.

ii) Mental and Physical

Feeling is of two kinds mental and physical. Mental feelings become stuck when we associate them with and therefore bind them to the physical body. When the perceived connection is broken, they can go their own way.

iii) Feeling in Dhamma practice

Let me go on to notes from practice that give examples of how I saw feeling to be operating at the time. Note that I still say 'our mind' rather than my mind; this is a tricky choice to make. 'My mind' seems too personal and does not really challenge the reader or practitioner to examine for themselves the statement where as to use the term our mind or 'the mind' sounds too knowledgeable, pretentious. The only answer I can see is to take what I write as a reflection. Pick up the challenge. "Is this so?"

If the above is using the mind or attention to train feeling, we can also use feeling to train the mind because movements of the mind are felt. Through wrong view the mind attaches to feeling so all our awareness has a feeling element to it. Because of this feeling becomes the way that the mind is placed and located (*vitakka, vicāra*). In addition, this feeling element entangles us when it generates craving. If we see feeling as an intensification of mental touch, feelings are all *kilesas*. There is no such worldly feeling in *mettā*. *Mettā* is not touch it is open, detached. Wholesome states never manifests as such feeling.

The feeling generated by knowing itself is no different. From both within a person and between individuals the wisdom element can also overcome the feeling of knowing, disbanding it or returning it to its origin at the heart. So even the feeling of knowing (this is *vipassanā kilesa*) has to be abandoned. This feeling can be abandoned by wisdom, by the insight that all feeling is suffering compared to the experience of its cessation (not its mere absence).

For someone who has not experienced the cessation of feeling in *samādhi* pleasant will be better than unpleasant. For someone who has experienced *samādhi* all feeling is suffering by comparison. If feeling ceases through contemplation this is different. The experience causes no reaction in a

mind that remains lucid and detached.

To wisdom, feeling represents a value judgement. Feelings are like pointers. If we try to resist the feeling or contemplate it instead of the object it is judging we just add internal judgement to external. If we investigate our values we can release ourselves.

In terms of the mind if you let go of feeling you have let go of materiality. If you let go of the desire for feeling you have let go of it for good.

Note again that feeling is usually associated with the physical body. It is when we see that it can be sent beyond the bounds of the physical body that we can see the nature of our experience at this point more clearly as a mental rather than a physical one. The association of feeling with the physical body is broken down when there is sufficient awareness of the physical body.

iv) The forces of habit

Feeling can also have an illusory impact on form. Illusion or not when we sense it we can respond in a physical way to it. If we know what to expect we can further brace ourselves from this force of habit. External movements of the mind precede action. They change our balance or equilibrium point of stillness, wherever we may feel this to be. Tai chi and chi kung provide skilful means to calm the physical body in relation to such feeling always aiming towards centring, cooling, expanding and relinquishing. Furthermore, the defilements express themselves as movements within the mind as well as movements of it; we need to move our minds to act but this needs to be with dispassion to be no movement within it.

What we are looking for is not to just maintain stillness but a mind that is free to move, yet is not pushed around by habit. Also that has no movement within it. So what we are looking for in feeling in this respect is balance, equanimity and detachment. Some of these movements we will all know about, others are more subtle.

If we observe these feelings we will find:

Form - this is felt as pushed or pulled by feeling.

Physical feeling – pleasant feeling pulls form forward.

Unpleasant feeling - pushes form back.

Neutral is still.

Mental feeling - this is felt as up/down movement with happiness and sadness or anxiety, restlessness (up) or dullness (down).

Perception - this is felt as the turning associated with being pushed or pulled.

Mental intention – actively pushes or pulls.

Healthy energy can be felt as up the back of the body- so detachment feeds aspiration.

Healthy energy is down the front of the body- this grounds desire.

Posture as a feeling can both express and maintain a stance of greed or hatred.

Upright is a posture of dignity or pride.

The up/down and forward/back are integrated as a circular breath.

v) Notes

Note the contradiction of feeling in different sense bases.

When the mind is calm - 98% of experience is neutral.

Neutral objects help us develop a neutral mind that can then be sustained in the face of any object giving us freedom from desire.

At a different level - To the deluded suffering can be experienced as vulnerability, to the greedy

frustration, to the averse irritation.

Feelings are often seen as the most personal, subjective of truths. Science, however, actually applies better to feelings, when the source of these is identified, than to thought.

A statement regarding feeling is always relative, never absolute.

PERCEPTION

In the Buddha's teaching *saññā* or perception refers to the labelling of phenomenon with words and the drawing of pictures in the mind. This is more than bare awareness or recognition, which is mindfulness or *sati*. There is no correct, fixed perception. What is correct is not holding to a fixed perception but finding a skilful perception. Right view is a matter of the heart, it precedes perception.

Why is it, then that perception is so important, such a powerful fulcrum in the mind? These functions also influence each other, perception always having the upper hand because it is seeing of the world and of thought and feeling. It also has the power of memory that has not been re-framed, it is raw. It has the power also of drawing a picture that says a thousand thoughts or feelings.

Perception is the quickest, thought and feeling gain their influence more over time, nagging away to get in the picture. These are more visible, tangible qualities.

The heart is closest linked with perception in experience although we often see our thinking or feeling as having the motive power, it always hinges on perception. The relation is so close we can mistake the heart for perception; the sense of knowing becomes confused with perception. We mistake understanding and mere recognition or familiarity. The force of memory is taken as understanding when it is mere habit. **Mindfulness raises the status of perception to knowing.** We see perception by apperception – that which is aware of perception. See below.

True to the law of impermanence, perception is that which remembers and that therefore that suffers. When we live in the present memory becomes just a fraction of our experience. It is not sensed as part of us and therefore not so much the source of our feelings. This is one way we take centre stage more in our experience. Also, perception can be invisible. When thought is restrained, in meditation, then perception is the active quality and so we see it more clearly, it is unmasked.

Feeling is just result.

Perception is thus the most powerful of the preconscious processes of the mind and the most invisible. This makes it the most beneficial or most troublesome. It is the force of recognition. It bears the strength of judgements of right and wrong, good or bad as distinct from the less pointed liking and disliking of feeling. When driven by desire it drives us to want to become the things we like, to identify ourselves with them. In addition, to dis-identify and try to get rid of what we are averse to - these are the two sides of our acquisitive nature. The latter need not be confused with renunciation where we seek or relinquish through wisdom not through desire. Detachment is a different response to either attraction or aversion, good or bad. It is the response of a calm, peaceful mind re-establishing itself in the face of temptation or adversity.

The conscience is the way that all this encapsulates itself. Its full function of apperception encompasses the qualities of awareness as well as the objects of awareness. When relatively free of attachment it is expansive and clear. With attachment it contracts and spins the mind, adding a kind of drilling force to desire. It holds the power of consent or restraint over action. Therefore, it is as if it rides on the back of intention.

As a more conscious process, perception can dominate thought and feeling. We see things a certain way and then we feel or think things accordingly. It is often difficult to train the other way and think or feel certain things to the point that we change perception. There are examples, however where thought or feeling has more strength. With the feeling of hunger, for example, we perceive food as tempting but when we feel replete, we do not.

The Buddha identifies the core perceptions of things as permanent, satisfactory and self (including belonging to me or mine, under my control) as the central misperceptions underlying suffering.

Perception can also be the tamer of the mind. With sufficient mindfulness it is transformed into *samādhi* or wisdom. Thus most importantly it is the element that can be freed from the senses. It

then manifests in different ways as pure awareness, having a base outside the sense bases. This has a different quality depending on the degree to which relinquishment has occurred.

Therefore, our approach is first to take ourselves as fully as possible into the realm of perception. This means calming thought and feeling in various ways. Examples are through meditation and virtue that leave the mind clear. The second also takes us to the conscience that is the most tangible of all the functions of perception. The conscience takes us deep into the mind; it is the mind perceiving itself, knowing itself.

This quality of knowing is the characteristic of a mind that we have centred in perception, thought and feeling are always uncertain. We can know in all sorts of ways, right and wrong or deluded and non-deluded. Not knowing can be equally a kind of knowing, we know that we do not know.

In terms of the experience of such contemplation, we can contemplate such things back and forth, back and forth in various ways. So we are using our mind to contemplate the mind, looking for signs of brightening, a lessening of suffering as our guide to the path. It is very important to be able to conceptualize freely, to use terms loosely and see what makes sense through time rather than get too scientific and think that we are looking to get it right from the start - to take examples as experiments rather than formulas and techniques. Therefore, we keep trying to test perceptions, saying to ourselves 'is this so?' Are we getting closer to truth or further from it? This I think we all recognize as a search for truth. The other side of it all that is seldom recognized is the formative nature of our own enquiry – so things take on a form that fits our view. For example the mind that knows it does not know can open up, the mind that sees itself as in the head suffers from a headache. Different truths have different effects and we can choose our truth, within the bounds of virtue, to have the effect that we want it to have.

NOTES

In terms of perception, the perceptions of impermanence, suffering and not self can become tools for releasing the centred mind - in skilled, clear, calm, kind hands. Only apperception can see whether the mind has these qualities.

Consciousness is dependant on the complex interplay of energy and information, depending on both materiality and mentality as its source (Nama rupa). When perception is not yet clear it continually confuses the status of particular phenomena as energy or information and so we interpret our energy and dismiss the information.

A perception of pleasant will cause the mind to try to pull the away. This is vibhava. Trying to make the mind into an object is bhava – actually this is impossible - the mind can only be like something or like something else. The mind is always on just one object becoming like that object and influencing it according to its own function. Therefore, the object is different if perceived in a different way.

The automatic pilot of heedless intention of desire is simply to seek pleasure and avoid pain. This works together with perception, the way we see things, in the present. To break our habits, the questions "what am I attracted / averse to?" breaks this mechanism, redirecting us to the object rather than the subject (when we do this the automatic pilot gets upset). When habit is broken in this way the same system can be reapplied to moral purposes. Thus, we protect the mind by stabilizing and opening up awareness not closing it down.

KNOWING and APPERCEPTION

This is the mind aware that all phenomena are objects within the mind and in this way more clearly aware of its own state. At this level of function all phenomenon are informational in nature, all other functions include energetic and sensory influence. At this level our experience is not of subject or object but of the result of the two, this is what IS - it is a not a function not an entity, it is information manifesting as elements. This consciousness is clearly not independent of conditions. It is still reliant on both energy and information although all that manifests is information

concerning the physical body and the senses in which it exists in mutual dependence. Consciousness can be based in the space element, however, therefore it is possible to empty consciousness completely without it ceasing.

This frees the mind of its attachments to the body all mind objects other than space. This mind will also naturally see the impermanence of conditions relative to its own stability and 'mature in release'. Then there is just the pure mind or 'one who knows'.

Therefore, restraint from contact leading to the cessation of sense consciousness reveals the pure mind. This begins with moral restraint then sense restraint until the empty mind becomes more powerful than its objects and begins to manifest as brightness or luminosity. This knowing of the pure mind affects consciousness through its informational and apparent energy.¹

These relations also mean that when an idea occurs according to the way things are then there is a resonance between energy and information in the mind. Such a knowing of eternal truths is therefore a deathless energy.

i) Release

In terms of perception, this means the mind can find release from objects through contemplation or through absorption in which all externals disappear and there is just mind. After this you can see the relationship between the the pure mind and the world. You find that you can only maintain such release by the continual effort of contemplation of the three characteristics to all that arises and not grasping at the fruit by trying to grasp the mind (by conceiving any 'I am').

The mind is also freed up from attachment to itself by not making anything out of the knowing, by realizing that we cannot conceive of it as anything. Alternatively, energetically, by making nothing out of it, by refining it by conjoining it with more and more subtle objects (classically the breath).

The physical body itself also knows or senses release. This is the first release to happen. We can then similarly look for release from the conditioned mind and dwell independently by seeing misery or uncertainty or dependency, the three characteristics applied to the conditioned mind.

Freedom comes from cycling through the different contemplation at the different levels of function, releasing subject from object, rejecting objects, inner and outer, and finally sense consciousness itself.

ii) Wisdom

From this contemplation, the energy of wisdom is added to consciousness.

Wisdom is a passive inner confidence leading to emptiness and an outer uncertainty leading to dispassion; the combination of these generates a revealed space through non-attention, cessation. Emotionally, we can relate to this original mind as our beloved Lord, intellectually as our liberating truth and outwardly as the dignity of virtue.

NOTES

The different aspects of the mind arise out of its dynamic through time. Mano, citta, viññāṇa are past present and future respectively.

MIND OBJECTS (Saṅkhārās)

"Out of ignorance arises the saṅkhāra". These saṅkhārās are firstly our karmic inheritance from the past, our habitual drives as it were; these can be rekindled by a stimulus in the present.

The mind of desire will always be confused in some way as it tries to mediate between the demands of different senses.

¹ I have already explained why this energy is only apparent.

If we are not seeing clearly in some way in the present then thoughts arise spontaneously in the mind in order to try to clarify, as proliferation. We are confused.

All these thoughts represent the automatic coming together and expression of the other khandhas of body, feeling and perception. It is the automatic turning of the wheel of karma. We may also add further to these thoughts in the present, we make something more out of them. This is the further action of intention which will feed back into the whole process. We can add skilful mind objects (dhammas) to it or unskilful ones. If we are seeing clearly then both of these sources of thought will be replaced by wisdom. Gradually our minds will clear until ignorance is finally resolved or overcome.

i) Sankhara as proliferation

We can loosely define mental proliferation as the mind that answers us back so to speak with thoughts or feelings or a mixture of these. The element of movement, of agitation within the movement of the mind is more subtle but a very important defining factor also. This is firstly because this movement is the initial sign of trouble, we can act on this and avoid the influx of unskilful feeling or thought. This can also help us to clearly see it as different from our skilful thoughts and attention in the present is very important. To see how it can creep in and add desire to the mind on its way out - to see it impersonally like this.

Previously we have described how the mind only really knows itself. Now we see more implications of this and also that the domain of the mind is not a place, a location, it is stillness. Sa khāra are movement, if our knowing moves with them we have stepped out of the realm of knowing. Our knowing will be there but it will be deluded. This stillness is initially found within so truth has its location but if it remains still it can extend.

Another way we can see the nature of the sankhara is through bodily stillness. It is like the passions come to push us around. If we refuse to move with them they can abate quite quickly, even though they return. When I first visited Chithurst Monastery I remember thinking, "Wow! These people can sit still whatever is going on in their minds." I did not realize then just how true and how important this was, what an advanced practice it actually is just to sit through it all.

Sometimes we can see how if we look with our full attention there is no greed or hatred, we cannot do it however hard we try. As soon as we lose our confidence or mindfulness there is some movement and it again taints the mind.

There are occasions with insight that the mind speaks to us uninitiated, this is not proliferation but it comes out of stillness or silence. It is very different so in one sense, the definition seems a bit academic but in another way revealing of the way things work. We can see that if we are to have insight, proliferation has to stop. We have to be very careful not to create unskilful karma. We must learn patience and endurance so that we can put a brake on desire. We have to find ways of weakening it and its influence over the mind. Beware! This thing has a mind of its own. If we do not find some way of cutting into it, the same old stuff will keep spewing out day after day, lifetime after lifetime.

Satipaṭṭhāna

In terms of their dynamic, mental proliferation or sa khāra is always defilement. Sa khāra are formed by grasping, past or present. Their nature is that of attachment the root of which is delusion. This is a very important fact; we can dismiss them as valid information and yet we have to get to the root of them in order to dispel the delusion or uproot the attachment. If we believe them, it leads to delusion. This is different from believing our thoughts, of course we believe in what we are consciously, intentionally thinking in the present. If we did not we would not think it.

We believe what we think until we are proved otherwise. In this way, natural thought tends to be inductive rather than deductive in character even if it is deductive in content. This is what we are calling functional truth. It lends itself very well to religious convention that is held in faith. It is vulnerable, however, to the intrusion of proliferation and hence delusion if mindfulness is weak.

The ideal is thus to hold an element of uncertainty at all times as a protection to the mind from this vulnerability. This is not a wavering uncertainty. We keep an open mind. This is a function, a fruit of meditation. Our minds can be open and remain firm, placed clearly on an object and calm despite not knowing. Faith need not be affected by this. We are merely willing to change our minds. We do not have a fixed view or dogma. This is also important with regard to the influence of perception from thought. There is no such thing as a single, correct perception. Perception has many facets to it. It is motive as well as rational. Food looks great when you are hungry. This is not correct or incorrect. Therefore, there is flexibility there. We find with meditation that we can choose skilful perceptions. Perception is also a function that can be naturally inductive.

In terms of a healthy attitude towards saṅkhāra, we don't have to feel bound down - the saṅkhāra arise and disappear, completely. We can see however that if we grasp at proliferation, it grasps back. We need instead to think deliberately rather than going on to automatic wherever possible. We must at least have a questioning attitude toward proliferation, not believing in it.

In terms of our emphasis on the body - the mind and the physical body are two different things. Where they attach to each other, these are the saṅkhāra.

We can adopt many ways of approaching the saṅkhāra. I will go on to discuss a few of these beginning with the most active, positive, channelling approaches and then becoming more passively contemplative.

ii) Guiding intention

A saṅkhāra is what is formed in the mind through intention, past and present. These mind objects can be seen as functions not entities. They bring mind and physical body or speech together. Therefore, this is the active component of the mind and consciousness. Knowing is both the field of action and the permission to act.

Skill at the level of saṅkhāra is a unified attention on a given function that brings the mind together into a particular wholesome function. In this way, it can be discovered that love can be brought into life by doing something lovingly where it cannot be by trying to be loving or have or get love. This is because the mind cannot function in two places at the same time with the love in here and the person out there. This is how grasping onto either ourselves or the other person confuses the function of loving. We can apply and train skilful attention onto simple objects. If we think of holding this object in some way then we have created a duality that separates us from the object. If we think instead of doing a function in a particular way, the mind remains unified. This is complete when unified attention is applied to all four foundations of mindfulness as the function of sensing (physical body), feeling, knowing (mind) and choosing (mind object). In this way the mind can function in every aspect of what is taken to be ourselves and the tendency to create 'me and it' can be defeated.

NOTES

The process of letting go is:

HAVING to DOING to BEING to KNOWING

The qualities developed are:

GIVING VIRTUE COMPOSURE

WISDOM HUMILITY and DEVOTION

THE HINDRANCES

These obstruct dialogue, wisdom and samādhi. Everything we talk about is in one sense the development of a mind without hindrance but we have not tackled these directly. This is deliberate.

We do not want to give undue attention to these rather than to the wholesome mind that is revealed by their absence. We are well advised to look around them until we have the strength to face up to them.

Then, as obstructions to our path we can get round them, cut through them or recognize we have lost our way. In the last case, we can find our way back to the path through turning away from the hindrance or balancing our practice, recognizing that it has arisen through turning too much in one direction.

We have already discussed some approaches in general, here I will give examples of a few specific skilful means that have worked for me. It is skilful to make sure as well that you can just be aware of a hindrance, just tolerate it, have patience with it.

i) Ill will - This is a seldom-used but well-chosen term. It is anger with hatred behind it. It is important to note that anger can also have a benevolent motive. However when expressed heatedly often the response is not good. In fact, any negative or critical response is likely to elicit a negative reply whatever its motive. Therefore, we have to be very careful of our problem-solving minds.

When the mind is in such a critical space trying to generate care is difficult. Generating qualities like this from scratch is difficult anyway. Better to do something with the required quality in mind. So do everything you do with care to prevent irritation arising.

Actually, it is often just patience that is needed with irritation that has not yet turned into outwardly directed anger and ill will. Wishing harm upon another is another step but an easy one. Calming attention to the breath, be aware of the out breath most of all, is good to cool the energy of it.

Always listen sympathetically to the angry mind to see what the underlying problem is and try to act on it rather than act it out.

ii) Anxiety - Anxiety can be the wisdom of the kilesa; anxiety toward conditions is justified (this anxiety will often be appeased if agreed with) but symptomatic of attachment.

Anxiety towards the mind is not justified; it is delusion (and is dismissible by faith or sometimes, alternatively, by teasing i.e. "that got you worried").

These two kinds of anxiety can be confused with each other - with the first of these, knowing is also present; with the second knowing is absent; it also has a different feel / movement to it. Another approach is to out worry the worry with the even uncertainty (or wonder) of wisdom.

Awareness of the body can also help steady the mind. Uncertainty naturally takes you to feeling, the physical body feels uncertain to the mind, when stilled the body becomes the host, a presence that is nothing to do with sensation, beyond worry.

iii) Restlessness - Sense restraint and relaxation seems to work although it may be the last thing you want to do. Try lying down in a warm, darkened room.

iv) Sloth and torpor - The Buddha's advice to Mogallana says it all in the 'acute case'. More chronically, torpor can be a cover up of something else or just be the result of turning away from a lot of stuff. Therefore, a bit of wholesome entertainment is in order to give the mind something to turn into. Chronic sloth can also develop into depression. Take care to fully wake up after sleep or rest (cold shower or exercise!) if you feel yourself sinking.

v) Sense desire - I decline to comment on this one - better for everyone to make his or her own mind up. Just ask yourself, "How does it or the desire for it, (whatever it is) really feel?"

Is it really worth it?

Is it addictive or not?

vi) Doubt - Have faith and give it a go if it is wholesome. Alternatively, look to answer your doubts. One or the other.

More generally speaking: the hindrances are all types of desire: if you do not feed them, they stop coming to call. Also, remember, as obstructions we only have to find a way past them, by a forest path as well, we need not build a motorway.

THE KHANDHAS

If we have done our work well up to this point, as the khandhas now re-arise there is no stickiness left in the mind which is open and **uninvolved**. So they are seen simply as arising and ceasing, “such is the body, such its arising, such its ceasing...”

A few reflections to help us along this path:

i) Khandhas compared –

When clearly seen closely in relation to the moving body – *viññāṇa* is like sight, *sa khāra* like movement, *saññā* like orientation, *vedanā* like taste, *rūpa* like touch.

ii) Khandhas arising and ceasing

At this point in *satipa ṭṭhāna* we penetrate the existence of the khandhas as grasping and grasped phenomenon. They are grasped as self, examining their impermanence reveals them not to be so. As they are let go of in this way they also cease to be qualities that grasp. The khandhas are outwardly directed phenomena, goal oriented that have their unity in their intention. Without grasping they are also receptive qualities that are centred in Knowing. The goal is in terms of awareness, learning, listening rather than outward action.

It is usually only sorting things to their place that is necessary. When we can see the movements of our minds clearly then the confusion starts to be sorted out.

Training the mind with the breath can still be useful as it acts to discriminate and balance in and out, open and closed.

iii) The Khandhas as not-self

We have already said that that which knows only internal or external does not yet really know, does not have both sides of the story. Alternatively, in more Buddhist language, more evocative of the actual dynamic that occurs in the mind, we could say that the other khandhas do not belong to the *citta*, to the knowing of the mind, they belong to the objects of the mind from which they originate. In Buddhist practice we give the khandhas back to their objects or we choose a meditation object to give them to and then we observe them. Thus we see how the khandhas are effected by the object we give them to.

That which sees and knows this whole process of conditionality is the knowing faculty of the mind, the *citta*. Alternatively, we can say that the space of awareness that is aware of both internal and external is what belongs to the *citta*.

If we do not enter into contemplating the Khandhas with this understanding established we can try to find some kind of psychological short cut on the eight-fold path. We are trying to sort ourselves out independent of our actions and speech. However, by turning inside like this, we are blinding ourselves to cause and effect. We enter into something that is not resolvable, we will just keep getting burnt. We cannot have what might seem to be the best of both worlds, to be able to do what we like and then sort the mess out somehow internally.

These khandhas are meant to be used; they are functions of the mind not entities within it. Perhaps, loosely speaking, if we do not use them then entities can grow in them in a way. Also that if we appreciate them as entities then our mental proliferation, the mind that answers us back, also becomes an entity. We have the typical suffering of the never-ending inner committee or courtroom drama in which everyone tries to find out who is to blame for suffering.

Thus, we watch our minds not to try to sort them out in themselves but to use them in the most skilful way we can, to see things in a wise and compassionate way; it is in this use of the mind that it is sorted out. Contemplating the khandhas like this we both learn to use them and let go of our attachment to them, seeing too that when grasped as self they are always suffering - the grasped khandhas are as though red hot, we cannot touch them, as much as we want to, without being

burnt.

Ultimately what this requires is that we do not become anything that we are watching or the watcher, we do not grasp at any of it. As we do so the different kind of awareness that we have discussed develops.

iv) Relinquishing self

In this way the light of pure knowing develops. This naturally has no sense of self. The sense of knowing replaces the sense of self. Although there is a source of stability in this, in the brightness of pure awareness, we have to give this knowing back to virtuous conduct where it acts as a sense of restraint and keeps our mind pure. We need not to try to hold its stable element and somehow separate it off. This is often what we want to do. This is our grasping shifting from the objects to our sense of the mind. We grasp for purity too early. So far, our mind has stability but not openness or wisdom. It is a still point, not a still field. (Do not be deceived if it is spacious, its quality of awareness is still a point of feeling.)

The second fruit, which is love, comes out of this giving back. Or rather it is this giving back or it is love that gives it back. Actually, perhaps it is all three of these, a bit like the holy trinity or the triple gem. I get a little fanciful yet this quote captures the spirit:

“God appears and God is light to those poor souls who dwell in night but does a human form display to those who dwell in realms of day.”
William Blake

This can ripen into samādhi that has both stability and genuine openness - it is a still field. When empty there is no suffering. When it encounters conditions, however, it can still suffer and grasp, or grasp and suffer, either way it still suffers. This love we also give back into contemplating the impermanence of the objects of the senses in order to develop our third fruit of wisdom.

Alternatively, the mind opens first with wisdom and then is extended through compassion. Notice here, very significantly, that the body is not like the other khandhas, it does not ‘belong to anything else’. It can be part of the first fruit that links to the third of wisdom, the second fruit of samādhi coming last of all. This is in a way as though the mind can turn back on itself without grasping, just with restraint (the sense of the body emerges out of restraint).

This return to the body is how we can separate the mind off and abide independent of conditions, detached, not in any other way, not by trying to grasp at the pure mind in any way. This seems that it is the end of the path, it is unshakeable. The mind has found us a base of support for consciousness beyond being effected by conditions.

The result of grasping the first fruit of sati we could call dissociation. The result of grasping the second fruit of samādhi we can call conceit. There is no awareness independent of some object. To say that awareness has a quality-less-ness about it is better. The perception related to bare awareness does not have grasping in it. This is the correct perception of an open mind.

The sense bases

The unshakeable mind experiences reality merely as the six sense bases, they operate empty of any self. The empty mind is based beyond these. There are six internal and six external bases related to the five senses, the sixth to the mind as a sense. The latter is our imagination. Each has its own class of contact, feeling and craving. Consciousness arises at the meeting of the bases with their objects in the world.

We can understand this to mean that each sense has its own store of memory and knowledge of

meaning. When this is related to new sense input then thought arises in relation to that object. It is like electricity. Unless both poles exist, there is no flow of electricity. When there is no flow, there is nothing. It can seem that the negative and positive poles are something and the conduit but the whole system is completely useless, empty of life until all are joined. Therefore, there is no way that consciousness itself can store these things. They merely pass through it. Both the store and the source of stimulation lie outside of it, although it is the product of both of these.

This is most significant a fact concerning rebirth. The Buddha is saying categorically that we can take nothing of the senses with us from one life to another. These sense bases are just doors; entry points or rather passages that remain empty. It follows then that if we are heedless, lost in the senses, then to this extent it is like we are already dead. This part of our consciousness is doomed to perish when the object changes or is absent. Therefore, it is sensory craving that binds us into this impermanence. This is not to say that that flow of information does not affect the passage through which it is channelled. This channel is formed by that flow. This channel can affect other channels of information by the formation of further meaning or truth. It may be possible for these channels to have a base outside of the senses.

For example, the practice of mettā bhāvana is linked to sense objects but through this practice the mind develops qualities that have a base beyond the senses, it culminates in the base of nothingness - similarly for the other brahmavihāras. These bases have no internal and external poles. No connection is required. The state of mind can transcend its objects. Only volition is required but this is enough to make the state impermanent. Wisdom that is born of the senses can find Nibbāna as its base naturally - no volition is required.

Also, in terms of realization, through contemplating our experience in terms of the sense bases we see clearly that the sense of sensory impingement is actually resistance. Without resistance, there is only the sense bases. We see that impingement is actually also a consequence of designation. When we see this, we also fully realize and clearly see that there is no longer any actor and observer but actor and result. We have stripped away all attachment and extraneous information. Hence, we are ready to grasp fully the four noble truths, if we have not already. If we have not, chances are we have not fully developed the enlightenment factors, the skills of release.

CULTIVATING THE ENLIGHTENMENT FACTORS

These are mindfulness, investigation (which is what most of this writing is), energy, rapture, calm, concentration and wisdom. We will discuss the first two of these, the rest arise naturally dependant on these as we have described.

i) Mindfulness or SATI

Mindfulness is the condition for Knowing to arise. Let us reflect on some of the qualities of knowing:

Knowing is strongest with familiar things but is itself more familiar than any thing. Therefore, attention to the familiar, the ordinary takes us to it and it takes us to familiarity. Knowing is here, everything else is there.

Knowing is receptive. Meditation on the breath is helpful to train this receiving. The in-breath can be received by the stillness of knowing, and it can be taken right into the space of it easily because the breath is in itself like space. Thus when the breath hits this space fully, when there has been no reaching out and when only knowing is there to greet it, pure and without expectation, then there is the joy of recognition of space for space.

Knowing discriminates all the objects of mindfulness first as other than it. Seeing impermanence as part of this "not it" reveals knowing as relatively timelessness. Seeing the thing with dispassion reveals knowing as relatively satisfactory. The recognition of everything, including all those things

identified with self as "not it" reveals knowing as not self. The practitioner sees that nothing is here except a Knowing presence. On examination this seems to be the source of the pāramitā in that they arise when needed in its presence.

The steadiest abiding for Knowing in terms of a view is uncertainty, you can always be uncertain, so uncertainty is a pleasant state to Knowing. It is an unpleasant state to self. Therefore abiding in uncertainty, while this Knowing is present, is a powerful vehicle to take one away from self toward Knowing.

The second way that Knowing discriminates is by differentiating movements of mind one from another in relation to its own stillness. This allows more contact in order to serve, to bring suffering to stillness. If we can see the suffering we will not have the suffering. This requires a level of dispassion to remain centred - not to try to take the Knowing out to help and hence move away from it (it does not, cannot move although within the brahmavihāras it may extend itself) or for our attention to be taken away from Knowing.

It can be at two levels, just distinguishing movement and calming this movement. The latter is keeping it simple, that all suffering is the same, that it can all be calmed. The second is to distinguish one movement from another, which is more refined in a sense but may be necessary if the movement is way out, to find where it has gone, so to speak.

Equanimity and mindfulness are the prerequisites to wise intervention. Where this is not present the practitioner is wiser to practice acceptance inwardly and bring uncertainty back to the fore outwardly.

Knowing does not initiate anything it allows or restrains. Therefore, in action it is the quality of care and restraint or control. It is strengthened by discipline and by care as well as sharp attention to the moment, strong mindfulness.

From the practise diary: Our first experiences of a transcendent Knowing can be very empowering. It can lead to a clinging reaction that can affect our mindfulness, draw us out of the present moment and therefore undermine its very foundation.

Alternatively, through conceit we can neglect our sila and do the same.

When this knowing arises we must not ask what it is but instead ask what does it know.

If we do not understand what and how it knows we can draw in all manner of objects to cling to it, to be sure of its security. We can try to open it wide to include all, to become dependant on all rather than part to secure it only to find the mind restless. We may try to create still or constant images, powerful patterns or archetypes. To fix it on and empower it with this constancy only to see it always moves away from an object and our satisfaction thwarted by an underlying separation or to see the images falter or the attention drop. We may give transcendent or interpersonal significance to such objects or bask in the creative power of them, when they are merely the creations of our continued craving. This is all the result of release from grasping as self but continued craving.

It may give transitory happiness.

Alternatively, we can identify with Knowing, a more constructive conceit, or pay homage to it - not as something different from the awareness of any creature, nothing greater or more special, rather to recognize all awareness as sacred. Only the last will lead to the perfection of mindfulness and equanimity as the obvious priorities of life - beyond pleasure or happiness. We train this Knowing above all else so that it can become independent of the khandhas as support, first in terms of identification with them, then clinging, craving or knowing them. Therefore, the free mind is one that does not look to know anything beyond itself but rather receives the world into its stillness, discovering its emptiness, that it was only movement after all. So release is not going anywhere, it is rather staying put. This stillness can exist among things but not in things. .

It is a caring humility. In this way our care sanctifies what we do. Haste takes the spirit out of life, as does carelessness or pride.

Sati and "reality" - Experience is our reality, the reality of direct experience.

This always lies between subject and object, never reaching either. Delusion is the jumping of the mind between constructions of one or the other. The framing of reality as the five khandas is the examination of everything as direct experience. Dharma practice is staying with direct experience and learning from it.

Sati as release - Initially apparent or momentary release comes through the mind entering fully into the senses in the present. We then get confused because we associate the gratification that comes from this release with the experience that leads to it and the momentary gratification of desire can bring the mind into the present then immediately drag it away again toward the next experience. We need wisdom for true release.

Sati and brahmavihāras - The brahmavihāras offer the experience of union in which the mind is fully in the present and there is no self.

Sati and energy - The mind loses its power when it gets lost into past or future or 'out there' and 'in here'. In terms of direct experience there is only the present, only as the knowing in between. Past and future, here and there, subject and object will always remain beyond experience. Therefore beyond our reality, therefore not what we really are. Therefore, this knowing can exist in relationship between subject and object, dependant on it or go beyond it, standing on its own because it never actually is either of them. Viññāna tries to discriminate between or join subject and object, the helpless task of saṃsāra.

Sati of process - Experience consists of processes: forming or rather appearing, feeling, perceiving, mentally fabricating, and knowing. All of these occur at each contact; however knowing can centre on any one of them. While consciousness is grasping it can only act to pick up one of these, one of the foundations of mindfulness at a time and therefore a fragmented picture occurs with many intrinsic contradictions. When this receptive phase is not driven by desire then the mind can center on the physical body, which receives all these impressions and is their anchor. In this way experience becomes reflective. It opens to receive a clear impression, a whole picture.

From the practise diary: This is the function of the sama a, to present this perspective, this pure wonder. This wonder, when all pervasive is a state of awareness bound to no object. This non-dependant quality is citta.

Through contemplation this quality can gain the maturity of release from all objects.

Sati and problem solving - The Western mind tends to pick up problems to work with. You do not have to pick them up but some response is needed, of acceptance or of renunciation otherwise you become separated from your experience; you become two. There is only one experience, one process so a verb is always unifying like sitting, walking, sensing, and feeling. Then, rather than problem-solving the work is to prioritize the most stable positive elements, the less outwardly conditioned mind states to allow some sort of steadiness to develop and discipline that runs across all conditions.

Sati and contact - Liberation occurs at points of contact. This point is neither subject nor object. Grasping jumps from subject to object continuously. To overcome this we can use this same system to identify energy and informational components of the system. Conventionally the subject is the expression of energies, the object of information; ultimately the subject is the truth of space and silence that receives without bias, energies merely movements within it.

Sati and unifying the mind – from the practise diary:

Life is the interaction between energy and information.

Mind is the informational component.

Mano is the interaction of present energy with stored information.

Viññāna is the resonance of present information with an energy momentum connecting past and future.

Citta is where the information and energy resonate in the present.

Mindfulness is like timing, it is unifying because “timing is the single unified control of a functional being.”

(Hannah.T)

Sati and dependant origination - Dependant origination means that nothing arises or ceases purely within or without. It would be wrong to say that anything arises or ceases only due to internal or external causes, we neither create the world, nor does it create us. Philosophically/existentially, there is the tendency to either reason as or feel oneself to be the victim or the creator. This can lead to either helplessness or the over-estimation of either power or responsibility. This is a way to understand anatta.

Anger, for example is never just of internal origin, it relies on some provocation past or present, real or imagined. The opportunity that The Lord Buddha (bless him) offers us is not to take responsibility for it all, to see it as all our fault, but to recognize that there is always an internal element to suffering that can be abandoned. This is a skill that can be learned and cultivated both for our own welfare and to cut the chain of conditions that generate suffering both for us and for others. This is the highest skill.

Sati and discipline, the spiritual dimension - Sati is where attention is centred not standing back or pulled forward. The spiritual intention or aspiration is then guided by enlightenment factors that further act to cool psychological and emotional energies from the endless matter formed by the interplay of opposites to the stable, to the united core of truth and liberation.

Sati as dynamic samādhi – samādhi, purity mind is not the goal but the path. It is born of withdrawal and then maintained through non-attachment and discipline, firmness of mind. This supports unconditional intention (discipline, attention (acceptance), or impression (belief). It is stabilized against the influence of contrary information or energies by the pāramitā or spiritual qualities that are also unconditional qualities of mind. This is how the spiritual super-cedes the psychological. It is the same way that the psychological forms out of the physical where shifting local energy and information inherent in order become relatively stable information, available to feedback control systems. On the human plane, the interface here is between emotional energy and perceptual information, creating either subjects or objects out of experience.

The purest, spiritual dimension in contrast rests on universal commitment, information or truth, applicable to all conditions and therefore in itself unconditioned. This can also then feed back into psychological or physical systems as a stable ground to awareness. This becomes completely stable as wisdom develops from sati.

Sati and equanimity – from the practise diary

Equanimity comes from seeing impermanence. Flowing comes from equanimous engagement. Union comes through flowing. Direct experience comes through union. Direct experience elicits knowing. With knowing there is presence. Presence shows the khandhas as not self. The centring of this presence gives authority over the mind moment, freedom of attention and intention from moving with greed, hatred or delusion.

Sati is presence of mind, knowing just presence; presence is a light touch that is the balance between holding and withdrawal

Notes

All you ever have to deal with is the khandhas, not reality

Greed hatred and delusion are defilements because they take you away from the nature of the mind, which is pure presence; they take you out of the present moment.

Don't analyse the dream, wake up. With sati, you do not have to make anything out of anything.

We are not trying to be independent but dependant on nothing

ii) INVESTIGATING DHAMMAS

To give a further overview (with some repetition) introducing more Buddhist terms and attitude: Life is the complex interaction between energy and information in the present moment. Order or form represents the first level of information. When inanimate this possesses no feedback system or reader of information. Mind is the reader, the extractor of the informational component. Information is all that reaches the mind. The energies only reach the body. To talk about energy that effects the mind is not correct, we are in this sense giving energy to conditions. This is also not to say that on a different level the mind has no energy of its own, it seems that this is the case. We must be very careful to define on what level we are talking otherwise we can misperceive and invest things with power over us that they need not have. To say that emotion or desire has energy to it is an example. This is only the energy of habit.

Ignorance divides or scatters the mind into three. Mano is the interaction of present energy with stored information, with the past. Viññāṇa is the resonance of present information with the energy momentum connecting past and future. Citta is where the information and energy resonate in the present. In higher animals an interpretive, discriminative consciousness is also present that offers the possibility of a higher, unified mind and skilful, ethical behaviour. The purpose of wise reflection is to both unify and complete the experience of consciousness in the present moment, the citta, drawing all energy and information into the present, making us both fully alive and aware. This is not to maximize our free will as opposed to our habit. Good habits are good. It is to direct our full attention to goodness and delight in it.

In terms of phenomenological philosophy there are three aspects to a phenomenon considered in the present with no reference to any underlying cause or entity, thus there are the same three aspects to the free mind. These are to reflect on process, belief or meaning and context. In terms of The Lord Buddha (bless him)'s teaching this corresponds to the three ways in which a sankhara operates in consciousness: firstly process as intention and attention, context as contact/feeling, thirdly perception as meaning respectively.

These are what constitute information (Nama) or the appearance of behaviour as distinct from energy (rūpa) or the behaviour of appearance. The inability to distinguish these two comes out of ignorance. It produces a causal vortex that can trap the mind. Within the perceptual level, this is our blindness to the significance of our own labels and symbols as potential forces in nature and the energetic limitation that this traps us in. Mind is mistaken for sense consciousness or the mind is limited to sense consciousness.

On the level of form, name is also the reader of order, the information implicit in form. The reliance of the mind on form can be another twist of the causal chain.

The presence of the conscience in the present is the mark of a conscious awareness that can take us beyond both of these traps. It raises all the information we receive to a higher level or "logical type". This is marked particularly in the human being's ability to restrain and check the carrying forward of the momentum of ignorance particularly by the formation of belief systems and/or discipline. So a paradox, free will in discipline; also the possibility of a truly transcendent attention. To consider how we may go on to use this attention, we can postulate that The Lord Buddha (bless him) emphasized a transcendent attention to the nature of conditions (their movement or

behaviour), rather than of the conditions themselves. I see the four foundations of mindfulness as a precise list of the discrimination that is possible to this mode of attention. It tells us what we can distinguish in terms of physical body, feeling, mood and thought purely by their movement thus guiding us with no involvement, leading to the possibility that we may 'abide independent' of transitory conditions. Satipatthāna is, therefore, both the way towards and description of a transcendent mode of attention, Dharmavicaya.

Insight is strictly not into conditions; not somehow knowing things directly in some absolute way - to claim this is merely conceit. It is to see the **nature of** or Dharma of conditions. Ultimately, there is no direct, absolute or shared view of phenomena but there can be of the **nature of** phenomena in conscious experience through the conscience and through wisdom.

Our conceited views of others or ourselves are merely conceptualized desire or aversion. Our conceit or curiosity is further often what binds us even more closely to conditions, blinding us to the unconditioned. Insight is the realization of our being as within conditions but not of them. Insight is into the ineffable, imperturbable context, as well as the ever changing, uncertain contents. This is why the four noble truths are described as noble. A better translation is the truth of the worthy ones - the ones whose sīla has allowed the entry of their minds fully into the present. Those whose awareness of a continuity has revealed the ineffable nature of pure awareness from which all phenomena can be seen as impermanent, as suffering and as not-self.

Revisiting perception and feeling

In terms of the aspects of feeling and perception they can be thought of as more primitive forms of awareness that nevertheless have their purpose in survival. Feeling can be skilfully considered as a sort of protective force field and early warning system of potential physical danger. Perception, which is what forms the ramble of associative thought, is more like an automatic pilot that gives out readings based on sense data of our habits. These are both super-ceded by awareness. The practice consists both of establishing awareness and of relinquishing attachment to feeling/perception. This can be by the deliberate cultivation of wise reflection and investigation but is also the natural consequence of bringing the mind fully and calmly into the present moment.

The nature of being conscious

Conscious experience is our reality, the reality of direct experience. It is of the appearances of sensory things as brought to us by the senses (conditions or khandhas), not of things. There are no things in it, never have been. Therefore, our being does not consist of things. This is not to say that the sensory world is illusion, it is not, but it has no such being in it, it is empty of being, just cause and effect. So we are in the world (conditioned by it) but not of it. This is not to deny the existence of a consciousness that is dependant on things (vinnana) but to see the possibility of an element or faculty of consciousness that is not dependant.

This is not to deny the possibility of the unconscious; the khandhas do have a life of their own outside of attention or intention. This is what The Lord Buddha (bless him) describes as outflows (āsava). In this way identification with the khandhas is a trap for consciousness that pulls it back in repeatedly. The opposite process is an investigation that empties the khandhas of self.

Most importantly in terms of cultivation, the conditioned and unconditioned elements do not represent a dualism in the sense that emptiness is not opposed to form.

THE SATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA REFRAIN

In the satipa ṭṭhāna Sutta, the Buddha instructs us, once we have seen these things clearly, to contemplate the arising and ceasing of them and see them both internally and externally. We have already considered this to some degree. Here I will outline the particular significance of these instructions as I see it from my own practice.

i) Arising and ceasing - When we examine the arising of things compared to their ending we see that arising is always stressful compared to ceasing. If we can then take this sense into the whole cycle of arising and ceasing, we will not get lost in the arising of things. We will want to follow them to their end, to complete things. This can further lead us to want to simplify life so that we can do what we do properly. This is both calming and sharpening of attention.

ii) Internal/external - We have already discussed this dynamic. We will review it again with respect to the particular order of contemplation suggested. As a starting point, we will understand internal to mean our own experience, external to mean that of others.

The worldly way of looking is to see things out there first we see an object of desire out there and want to get it. We see people and then compare ourselves with them. This is the mind driven by desire into making what we could see as purely sensory preferences. The practitioner reverses this order **seeing what is here first (with respect to the five khandhas) and then seeing how this changes with contact with the outside**. This will act as an antidote to delusion that is fooled by an object out there before it has been felt out so to speak - in the context of its results in the heart. As information feelings are saying to us, "This is the result of seeing things the way we do."

It is feeling that can confuse us as to what is internal and external, we can get lost. Very importantly, **feeling is not the body**. When the Buddha emphasizes the body as the first foundation of mindfulness, this is not to centre us on feeling but on humility. This is in itself a very powerful realignment of the mind; our feelings are never the same again.

In terms of the relationship between the body and feeling, although some feeling arises at the body as touch, there are feelings associated with all the sense bases, including the mind base that can seem to be in the body or elsewhere. Internal does not mean inside our bodies but within our mind or especially within our intention (cetana), wherever it happens to be in our field of attention. **If we take feeling only as physical, we are unable actively to connect to the world with it**. If we try to connect with others through bodily feeling in a passive way then we will tend to then take ourselves to be the inevitable recipient of something.

Also, our reactions or responses will always be divorced from their stimulus, from the other person; we will be forced into some kind of analysis to bridge the gap between them. We will also miss the sensitivity of the other sense bases. Often we are led to this approach through the desire for a particular feeling. However, we cannot generate a particular feeling we may wish to have without some stimulus. If we direct our attention to the feeling we cannot direct it to this stimulus. We can learn to initiate states of mind directly that lead to a certain feeling, similarly when we can enter fully into this field of 'knowing' we can also add qualities to this knowing process. The stimulus need not be an external one. In fact, such ability is one of the major benefits of practice. We become less and less dependant on the conditions of the world to find love or happiness.

Our field of cultivation is changing perception, however, not feeling. The difficulty is that perception can take a long time to **permanently** shift, it is still at the mercy of our karma. Therefore, we enter into a situation where our Dharma gradually becomes stronger than our karma.

iii) Internal and external together - In terms of relationships with others we can only truly empathize with others when we see as they see, look at the world through their eyes for a moment to some degree. This is not the usual attempts at empathy that are a kind of blind reaching out for a feeling. This also prevents egotistic judgement. We cannot look down on someone through their own eyes. We can also gain a clear perspective on ourselves when we see how something looks in another person but not if we are being too judgemental. If we are judging like this, we will not have the humility to use this observation as a source of perspective on ourselves. It is easy to see the

faults of others and not in ourselves. This is what we are carefully trying to avoid.

This is not to say that we cannot use a frame of reference when we communicate. This is necessary to get the words right and not to get crossed wires and answer thought with feeling or feeling with thought. We have this frame of reference in the four foundations of mindfulness. If we are looking for the cause of a particular feeling, we need to watch how our feelings react as we change the object or mode of attention. We learn from the dynamic.

And we learn to let go when the stimulus has gone. A feeling in and of itself is just a feeling. As a resultant phenomenon, it has no life of its own – although it can seem like that. In Buddhist terms the kilesa are not feeling, they use feeling or result in feeling. We have contemplated body, feeling and thought **in and of themselves** and seen them in this sense to be transitory, unsatisfactory and meaningless out of context so we do not have the same desire for them, we do not grasp them for themselves, hold on to or try to get rid of them. Thus, they can be seen clearly and used purposively in contemplation. They can connect us with others and the world in a way that has no desire inherent in it.

There are coarse and refined levels of this contemplation. With samādhi images are fully internalized. At this level we can see that all images formed by the mind externally, those in the imagination, have some desire attached to them and we see that peace arises from restraint where the mind no longer goes out to label phenomenon - the mind stays with its internal sense that does not form images in the imagination.

This is seeing from the point of view of wisdom. Wisdom is the cutting edge that is leading the way. Seeing the same phenomenon from the point of view of the path of samādhi we are comparing the pure internal image with that which we are seeing externally back and forth until one matches the other.

For those that like emotion, to reassure you there is no stifling of emotion. A completely new set of emotions come about based on a completely new set of perceptions.

Again, to conclude, let me stress the point, to take us away from an analytical mind set. We do not need to do any rethinking or analysis in terms of our experience, merely clear seeing and clear mapping out of our subjective experience is what is needed. Cultivation is the very natural result of observing our reactions to the world and of seeing how these same phenomena change as we withdraw from and reconnect with the stimulus. The only technique is the calming of feeling the meaning of which is already clear, calming the results of the past to allow a window for seeing things afresh. As we progress, however, it becomes important to understand the results of our observations, to have a clear frame of reference for them. All the theory is for that, the practice is just to stay in the present, watch, and listen with an open mind. The Dhamma is part of nature; it is there for all to see.



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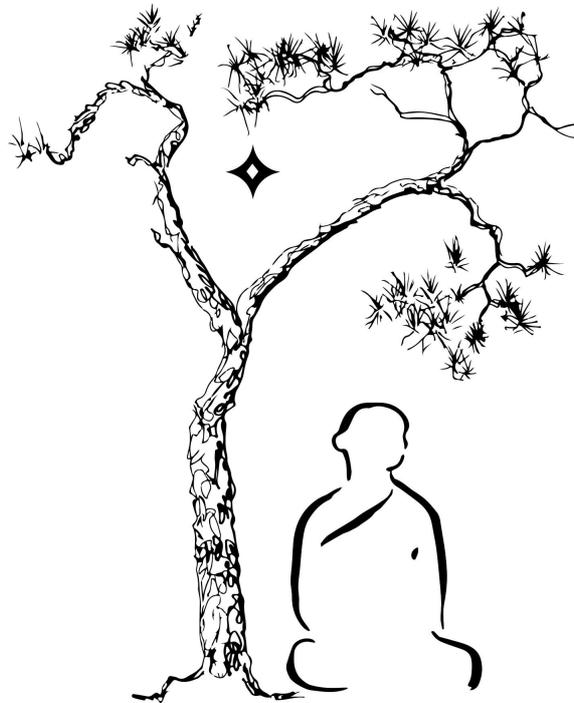
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