

# KNOWING AND SEEING

with reference to Sabbāsava Sutta

Based on a **direct transcript** from the **recording**  
done during the Dhamma talk

Dated 28.11.2014

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# 1 Preface

It is Brother Teoh's **sincere** hope that Dhamma friends, spiritual practitioners, seekers of truth, and cultivators will be able **to make use** of this enclosed **transcript notes** to develop a **better understanding** of the **Dhamma as taught** by the Buddha so that they may **progress along the path of dhamma** to become more **virtuous, noble and wiser** human beings that can be a  **blessing** to all of humanity and mankind.

As these notes were mostly **compiled** based on a **direct transcript** from the recording done, its wordings will be more like those of **spoken language** rather than a **written text**. Hence it is hope that readers will **be able to adjust** themselves accordingly to understand its **true meaning and intent better** and a **good way to do** this is **to listen** to the recordings **first before** reading this transcript notes.

This 2<sup>nd</sup> edition dated June 2021, is to help improve the flow of language to make the book more readable. Pending its reprinting on a later date we for now only edit the soft copy.

For those who want to listen to the recording they can download the talk at this link:

<https://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Teoh-Klang-141128-Knowing-Seeing.mp3>

Or contact our Admin at [administrator@broteoh.com](mailto:administrator@broteoh.com) for further details.

For *more information* on Bro **Teoh's Dhamma activities** and his **Kalyāṇamittaship grouping** please visit

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**Bro Teoh YouTube** : <https://www.youtube.com/c/BroTeoh/videos>

## 2 Acknowledgement

It is the donors' **sincere intention** that this transcript notes be **given free** to all those who are **interested** and have the **affinity** to receive them. I would like to take this opportunity **to thank** and **rejoice** in the **generosity and wholesomeness** of all those **Dhamma friends** or **Kalyāṇamittas** who had donated and helped in the **transcription, typing, typesetting, formatting, proof reading, etc** to make this **free distribution** of dhamma dana possible.

Special thanks should be accorded to Sister Padmasuri Liew who had personally taken the initiative to forward me her draft transcript for my subsequent editing thereby enables this dhamma book to be printed.

By the **power of all these wholesomeness** may all beings be **well and happy, free** from all mental and physical sufferings and dangers and may there be **love, peace and joy** - deep **within** their hearts. And may it also **pave the way** for there to be **causes and conditions** for all dhamma friends who had **donated or helped** in one way or other to realize their **good and noble wishes/aspirations** soonest possible.

With Metta always,

Brother Teoh Kian Koon

(Dated: 19.2.2015)



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## 3 Knowing And Seeing - Dhamma Talk Proper

### 3.1 Introduction And Pre-Pūjā By Bro. Teh

**Bro. Teh:** Good Evening and welcome Bro. Teoh and brothers and sisters in the Dhamma. The title for tonight's dhamma talk is "**Knowing and Seeing**". The word meditation has various meanings and when we look at those words 'knowing' and 'seeing' from a certain conceptual point of view you may find that when you know something you may not really see or when you see something you may not really know. Here we are concern with **meditation practice** and **dhamma cultivation**. Meditation practice involved so many **different methods** and **techniques**, but our concern here is the **meditation practice** and **dhamma cultivation** that **would lead us to enlightenment**, that is our **objective** and I believe you will agree that this meditation practice far **surpasses** any other methods and objectives of meditation practices. Regarding this topic 'knowing' and 'seeing' - when we meditate, we may see things, but do we know? And if we know, do we, see? I think I will leave this to Brother Teoh to explain especially regarding this insight meditation and dhamma cultivation. Okay, and as usual, it is good for us to **chant** the salutation, **take refuge** in Triple Gem and **observe** the **five precepts** via a **pre-puja** before we start.

#### **Salutation to Lord Buddha: -**

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhasa (3X)

(Homage to thee the blessed one, the worthy one and the fully enlightened one.)

#### **Taking of the three refuges: -**

Buddhaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi, Saṅghaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi

Dutiyampi Buddhaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi, Saṅghaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi

Tatiyampi Buddhaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi, Saṅghaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi

### **Taking of the 5 precepts: -**

Pānātipātā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;  
Adinnādānā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;  
Kāmesu micchā-cārā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;  
Musāvādā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;  
Surā-meraya-majja-pamā daṭṭhānā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.

**Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!** (Rejoicing)

## **3.2 ‘Knowing And Seeing’ – Sabbāsava Sutta**

**Bro. Teoh:** Good evening to all, brothers and sisters in the Dhamma. It has been quite a while since my last talk which was one month plus ago. And tonight, we have the **condition** to get together again. Tonight’s topic is more **unique**. I was given this topic by Brother Gan; the title is “**Knowing and Seeing**”. So, I told him this is a good topic, and then I ask him why he ask for this topic. If you do not tell me why, I will explain it base on the way I understand. Then it may be totally different from whatever idea that you may have. He then sent me an e-book, compiled by a very renowned meditation master who conducted a retreat in Taiwan. And because of their, that retreat, they wrote and compiled this e-book. I read the introduction then I came to understand that they had based it on a sutta that the Buddha had spoken before – the ‘**Sabbāsava sutta**’. Have you all heard of this sutta? Oh, so many of you haven’t heard of this sutta? What about the rest of you - heard before? Maybe I will write it on the whiteboard, so that it is easier for you all to understand.

The Buddha spoke this **Sabbāsava Sutta**. Do you all know what is āsava? Yes, ‘**defilements**’, the various types of defilements. There are a few Pali words used to describe defilements. The other Pali word, which you often heard off is **anusaya**. Do you all know what is

this anusaya? Ah, **latent tendencies**. These are strong defilements (negative tendencies) that lay **dormant** within the mind. Living beings tend to have those tendencies unless they are already enlightened/awaken otherwise these latent tendencies are always there. But they **do not arise** when there is **no condition** for them to **arise**, - just like when nobody disturbs you or there is **no condition** for you to react or to activate it. There are some teachers who use different terms to describe them, like **Eckhart Tolle**, he used the word '**pain body**'. The meaning is the same. '**Pain bodies**' are **emotional negativities**, - when you touch it there is pain, there is suffering, there is reaction of mind, can you all understand? According to Eckhart, sometime this pain body is **dormant**. Dormant means you do not feel the pain yet because conditions in life are very conducive, just like when things go your way, and your life is normal with **no bad news** and **nothing to disturb you**. Then you are like okay. You may be having a **good life, happy life, peaceful life**, but then whenever there is condition for it **to trigger off**, like when there are **some bad happenings** or **bad news** that may triggers off because these things affect you. The Buddha called this the **1st noble truth realities**. When you **confront** them **without** understanding, **without wisdom**, it will lead to **suffering**. The 1<sup>st</sup> noble truth of dukkha has **8 conditions** that can cause suffering **when living beings confront them without wisdom or understanding**. This type of **āsava** or **Latent tendency** can lay dormant inside when there is no condition to cause it to arise.

The other Pali word is **kilesa**, - have you all heard this before? This word, kilesa is a very commonly used word. Kilesa are **normal defilements**, and they are associated with the **three evil roots of Greed, Hatred and Delusion**. So, these are the three Pali words commonly used by the Buddha to describe defilements. But in this sutta, the Buddha chooses the word **āsava** because **āsava** carries a **stronger meaning**. These are **strong defilements**. Especially for heedless people with a lot of delusion, a lot of anger, hatred, a lot of

desire, possessiveness, covetousness, lustful type of character, etc. So, āsava is more towards the **stronger** and **very impulsive** type of defilements. It's just like in Cantonese; they say '看你不顺眼' – can you understand? Cantonese has this description '不顺眼' – which means when he sees someone, he is not happy already. He just wants to tell him off, or he just want to react to whatever he sees or hears. So, these are what we call **rather strong out flow of defilements** or **āsava**. When it comes to defilements, there are many stages and types. Āsava is all inclusive, can you all understand? It includes the impulsive and aggressive (whether latent or non-latent); then some become **transgressions**, - which means not only at the thought or thinking level, but it has **actually transgressed into action and speech**, then it turns into **very strong ill will and hatred leading** to all the **evil actions** and **speeches** – which are very negative and powerful.

The Buddha under this sutta, said 'the **complete destruction** of **āsava** can only take place **in one who 'knows' and 'sees',** not in one who **doesn't know** and **doesn't sees'**. That is how this tonight's title 'knowing' and 'seeing' comes about. Then in this same sutta it is also mentioned, - know what? See what? So, this sutta can give us an important understanding for you to develop your meditation in accordance with this rather important understanding. This sutta is **incredibly special**, because the Buddha gave **detail explanation** of the **cultivation** and he also linked it to what He had taught us, namely his **essential dhamma**. This sutta when you understand you can develop the understanding of how his teachings come about and how you should develop it. That is why it is **rather unique**, and **very powerful** and people like to quote this sutta because it is like **an authority**, can you understand? And if I am not wrong, the renounce master like to quote this book, the Visuddhi Magga; have you all heard of this book? – The Visuddhi Magga (7 stages of purification or sattā visuddhi) written by Bhikkhu Buddhaghosa, not

Buddhadasa. They like this book. But the explanation given by them is according to their understanding.

### 3.3 Direct Seeing – Seeing Things As They Are!

I will share with you base on **what I understand**, and **after that** it is quite easy for you to develop the understanding. We can start with seeing, so here seeing means what? How do you see if you want to have **penetrative insight** to develop the wisdom? **How must the seeing come about?** Ah, that is a very good answer, Sadhu! Yes! you must have **'direct seeing'**. So, this seeing is **'direct seeing'**, **not 'mundane'** seeing. Mundane seeing is when you see with the normal consciousness via the mundane mind. This **direct seeing** is very different from **mundane seeing**. Mundane seeing is **when** you see **with** your **thoughts**, with your **memory**, with you **conditioning**, with your **ideas**, **views** and **opinions**, with all the **words and concepts**, etc. Can you understand - which means **you does not 'see things as they are'**; - you do not **see truth**; you don't see the **reality**. Whereas when you see things as they are, **without** the words and the concepts, - that type of seeing is the **'direct seeing'** with the **pure awareness**. So, this **direct seeing** is very important. Direct seeing will **allow you to see 'things as they are'** with **clarity** and without any **distortion**. Which means you can **observe** with the **silent mind** to realize the **truth**, and the **reality** via the direct seeing. So, when you **can see things as they are**, **you see truth** and you see the **reality without** any **movement** of thoughts, - your mind has **clarity**, **not clouded** by any thinking, **not preoccupied** with some **emotion** or thinking/thought process, - meaning you are **heedful**, you are **not heedless**. The **heedless** they are most of the time **lost in thought** whereas the **heedful** are **always mindful**, **aware** and **silent within**. So, this direct seeing is very important.

Then, the word 'knowing' - to me this English word is **not** so appropriate when use in this context. This word should be replaced with the word '**understanding**'. Of course, it depends on how **you use** and **understand these words**. Because 'understanding' is not **knowledge** whereas this 'knowing' comes from the **word knowledge**. What is knowledge? Knowledge is **Rigid**. Knowledge is like when you have certain knowledge about certain things, which implies intellectual knowledge. These are like very commonly accepted society's norms; like the capital of Malaysia is Kuala Lumpur and this is knowledge. But when it comes to **understanding**, it is **not rigid**; understanding means, the **moment you understand, you know what this thing is** and you can approach it from **any direction**, the **understanding is still there**. But knowledge is different, because when situation is different, that knowledge **which is rigid** cannot apply anymore. It is just like one size fits all. How can it be, because Everybody is different, do you understand? You cannot say this is the best size of t-shirt or shorts or long pants because everyone is different. So, when you meet a situation that brings about **different conditions** behind their arising, you need to have **wisdom** (which is **an understanding, not** knowledge to deal with such diverse situation). Because this word 'knowing' is an English translation, so it depends on how you understand it, but if understand it as an understanding or wisdom, then it is okay. Then this word stands. So, '**knowing and seeing**' can be translated as '**understanding and seeing**', you not only understand, but you also understand through the **direct seeing**. You develop wisdom through your direct seeing, through your ability to insight into phenomena. That is why the **three universal characteristics** of **impermanent, suffering state** and **non-self** or **anattā** or **empty nature**, are **everywhere** (amid life and existence), and you will see them as they arise because this **direct seeing's ability to see** is very different from **mundane seeing**. To arise this direct seeing, you need to cultivate **mindfulness** leading to **heedfulness**, which is **beyond** thought, **beyond** mind to see them; you **just aware, fully aware from**

**moment to moment** then you must build it up until it become **upacara Samadhi**. So, this is how the **title comes about**. After this, what I will do is, I will go through the sutta with you so that you can understand better.

### 3.4 The Seven Ways To Root Out The Defilements

According to Lord Buddha there are seven ways stated in the sutta (where you need to develop the wisdom) to **counter/root out** all these āsava or what they called defilements. The **1<sup>st</sup>** way - the Buddha said, you need to approach it with **right attention**, - some books use the words **right seeing** or **right vision**. But **right attention is more appropriate**. Then the **2<sup>nd</sup>** way is – the **destruction** of āsava via exercising **restraint**. There are in fact many ways, in which one can develop wisdom (especially the **contemplative** wisdom) to bring about the **destruction** of these **āsavas**; then the last or **7<sup>TH</sup>** way is through the **development** of the **seven factors** of **enlightenment** which is to be **cultivated**. The **3<sup>rd</sup>** way is to exercise **Endurance** leading to **acceptance**. Then the **4<sup>th</sup>** way is to **exercise proper understanding** of their **usage**; **5<sup>th</sup>** way is **avoidance**; **6<sup>th</sup>** way is **removal**.

### 3.5 The 3 Turnings Of The Four Noble Truths And The 5 Daily Contemplations

Okay, before we go into these, can you roughly let me know how the Buddha teaches one to develop the **requisite wisdom** to counter the **first noble truth, realities/suffering** - basing on what you have learnt thus far? What is the first noble truth? Noble truth of suffering, isn't it? What has the Buddha taught you under this teaching? What are things that you are supposed to develop and cultivate so that you can have the **wisdom needed to overcome**

these **1st noble truth realities/sufferings**? It is an **indirect** answer to comprehend this **Sabbāsava sutta**. What are the **three types of wisdom** as taught by the Buddha under his first sermon, the Dhammacakka pavattana Sutta? What did he mention? Yes! The 'Four Noble Truths', - he said you must cultivate the **three turnings** of the **four noble truths** to develop the **three types of corresponding wisdom**, can you all remember? First turning leads to '**Suttamaya panna**'. After hearing the sutta, if you can develop wisdom, you awaken. The first turning wisdom is call **suttamaya panna**. Panna is wisdom, wisdom borne of hearing the suttas and suttas are the discourses of the Buddha. So, the first teaching is the **three turnings of the four noble truths** and these three turnings teaching is very important. It will give rise to the **three types of corresponding wisdom** namely **suttamaya panna, cintamaya panna** and **bhavanamaya panna**.

Apart from the three turnings, what else did He asked the monk to do? Every day you must do, what are they? Ah, 'contemplate' – contemplate on what? Yes, very good, on the **five daily contemplations**. That is how you will come to know why He teaches this way, - because they are all related to this **Sabbāsava sutta**. If you do not do these **contemplation** and **reflections**, you **cannot** understand what he said under this sutta. But if you do this **cultivation**, you will develop the **contemplative wisdom** that can enable you to have the '**knowing and seeing**', - meaning through **reflection** and **contemplation** and the **three turnings** cultivation; you can develop the **wisdom** to **liberate** your mind. The first turning gives rise to **suttamaya panna**. Suttamaya panna can also be very **penetrative** if you **have cultivated** before. In your past, if you have developed the cultivation before, just like **Venerable Kondanna** - while hearing the first sermon, the Dhammacakka pavattana Sutta, spoken by the Buddha, he became a sotāpan, then after that when the Buddha continue with the **Anattalakkana** sutta, all five ascetics became Arahants. How come it can be so fast? Only through



listening? This is because they **had cultivated before**. That is how it can be **very penetrative**.

Then the 2<sup>nd</sup> turnings wisdom, which is **cintamaya panna** is also the same. The Buddha said, after you had listened to what he had expounded or taught, if you still cannot develop the **penetrative wisdom** because your past *pāramī* is not stable or strong enough, then what must you do? He said, you must **reflect, contemplate** and **inquire** into what He had proclaimed. Under the Second turnings of the four noble truths, the Buddha gave different emphasis to **each of the four noble truths**. First noble truth, he said, ‘this **noble truth of suffering** or **dukkha** is to be **understood**’, and you must inquire, - why did the Buddha say that under this second turning? Then, from there you develop the inquiry; you will then come to understand why he says that? Then after that inquire further as to how can I understand this first noble truth? So, you have to reflect and contemplate on what the Buddha said under this first noble truth, can remember? He said the eight conditions: birth, old age, sickness and death are suffering; when you cannot get what you want that is suffering; when there is separation from loved ones and prized possession or whatever you hold on to dearly, that also can lead to suffering if you do not have the wisdom. Then, when things do not go your way, when your expectations are not met, it can also lead to suffering. Then he **summarizes** all of suffering, - he said, ‘in short, it is due to this **craving**, that condition **grasping** to these **five aggregates of form and mind** that I call suffering’.

This final summary is very important. Then you should inquire: Why did the Buddha say that? How can I understand? When you inquire this way, you will come to understand that if you do not understand what is suffering, then what will happen to you when you come to this world? You will become miserable, isn't it? Because you will be caught amid suffering as you confront these eight realities without knowing that they are suffering. That is why the Buddha **wants you**

to **reflect** to **contemplate** and **cultivate** this understanding so that **when you confront them** you know that they will lead to suffering if you do not develop the **requisite wisdom** via the **direct seeing** to develop the **understanding**. It will **torment you**; it will create a lot of suffering in you, you will have sorrow, lamentation, fear, worry and anxiety, unhappiness, etc and all these will afflict you. So, the **teaching is very simple**. If you **know how to reflect and contemplate**, then **all these understanding** will come to you.

Coming back to the **final summary** of the 1<sup>st</sup> noble truth, the Buddha said in short, it is due to our **self-delusion** that conditions our **craving to grasp and cling** onto these **five aggregates of form and mind** that he calls suffering. So, how can you develop the understanding of this 1<sup>st</sup> noble truth, final summary? You must investigate into what he said isn't it? - Because you do not believe him. You need to investigate so that if it is the truth, then it will stand up to the investigation, then your faith can be strengthened. So, how do you investigate? Investigate through what? Through **reflection, contemplation and inquiry**. So, if you must find out whether this **final summary** statement is true or not, what must you do? You must ask yourself - what are these five aggregates of form and mind? Otherwise, how can you put it to test? Then what did the sutta say? It just says rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa, are the five aggregates of form and mind, so very likely you cannot get any 'head or tail' out of it especially so on the **2 aspects** of these 5 aggregates of form and mind **unless** you have **cultivated before**. You can check the texts/books, hardly any book writes about it.

### **3.6 The 2 Aspects Of The Five Aggregates Of Form And Mind**

But if you **inquire, contemplate and reflect into it** you will understand, what this **form and mind** is all about; what this **human**

**being** is all about, what this **living being** is all about? We can break them into the five aggregates as defined and taught by the Buddha. **First aspect:** - as a **human being**; - you have a physical form (this is your **form** aggregate), then you have a **mind**, trapped inside. What can the mind do? The mind has these abilities: - it can **feel**, it can **perceive**, it can arise **thinking** (or thought consciousness), then it can also arise all the views and opinions, all the mental states, mental intention and whatever the mind can do, then it can also become **conscious** of things, so these are the other four aggregates of mind. The physical body and the mind together as a human being form the **first aspect** of the five aggregates. Then you can put it to test, if I attach to this first aggregates of this physical form, do I suffer? You suffer, isn't it? Because if you think/belief this, is you, deludedly, you will worry about it **getting old, getting sick and die, isn't it?** Then you will attach to it, cling on to it, and then if anything were to happen - to this form, you will be afflicted; you are afraid and fear, worry and anxiety arise. That is why old age, sickness and death can be **very traumatic** for people who do not have this type of **contemplation** and **meditative wisdom** borne of the **3 turnings cultivation**. If you **do not** develop the second turning wisdom, through **constant mindful, heedful reflection, contemplation** and **inquiry**, during quiet moments, when you are in a retreat place or when you are at home alone, this **contemplative wisdom** cannot arise. That is why you need to develop the **5 daily contemplations**, the **5 spiritual faculties**, followed by the **7 enlightenment factors**, and use them to investigate Dhamma.

Without **sati**, which is the **first factor of enlightenment**, you cannot cultivate the **second factor of enlightenment** which is **Dhamma investigation** or **Dhammavicaya**. These are sequence that you must abide by. After you had understood what these five aggregates of form and mind are, then you can move on and put it to test, - if I **attach** to all the **feelings** that **arise, pleasant** and **unpleasant** feelings, **painful** feeling, via my **like and dislike**, etc **do I suffer?** If I

have **preference** to a certain type of feeling, **do I suffer?** You can find out yourself, you can investigate into it. Because every feeling that arise, no matter how **pleasurable**, how **wonderful** that state is, it is going to **change**, it is going to **transform**, can you understand? So, if you attach and cling on to all these states and expect it to be repeated and **when you cannot get what you want**, what will happen? **Suffering** will follow you. Then you will understand why I always say, **no matter how pleasurable**, how **fantastic** those **meditative states are**, they are **all condition states, condition arising phenomena**, hence **impermanent**. They will come to pass, then if you attach and cling, thinking that this is **good meditation**, this is what you must realize and have, and if you **equate it as enlightenment** or **progress**, then you will be caught, because every feeling that arise **no matter how pleasurable**, how **wonderful**, is a **prelude** to suffering, because it is going to change, **following nature's condition**; it is in a **state of flux - continuously changing, effervescence, constantly evolving**. So, nothing is **eternally permanent except the unconditioned**. When you start to develop this **contemplative wisdom**, it will give rise to yoniso manasikāra (initial wisdom). Then later, via the **direct seeing** that arise during your meditation (while cultivating the third turning), you will develop a lot of wisdom and understanding, then you will **know what they are**; the **three universal characteristics**, you will **penetrate** them clearly, - the direct seeing will allow you to see them clearly, then you will understand because this direct seeing will lead to awakening. Then when you awaken, via wisdom, it is **no longer** deluded. The **form and mind is no longer deluded**. So, nothing can delude or deceive this form and mind into negativity anymore. That is how the **destruction of āsava** is possible. Can you understand? These **five daily contemplations** help you to **counter all the first noble truth realities**. Now, what are the First three contemplations? Regarding the form, the body, - this body of ours is of the **nature to grow old, get sick and die**. For it has not gone beyond old age, sickness and death. Its makeup of elements only, no

knowing, so cannot be me. **Anattalakkana Sutta** very clearly explained all these because the Buddha asked, “Is form permanent? Is feeling permanent?” – followed by all the other aggregates of perception, saṅkhāra and consciousness. They are all **impermanent**, because from the meditation you will come to know, - they keep on **changing, evolving, come and go, come and go; feeling also same - come and go; perception also - come and go**. But every time they **disappear you never die with it**. So, how can they be **you**. If they are **not** you, and they are **impermanent**, then **who are you? What are you?** That is why you **need to meditate, inquire deep to understand clearly** why these **five aggregates of form and mind** which have this **universal characteristic of impermanent, leading to suffering is not** you. Because they are impermanent, they cannot be a **permanent unchanging entity** for you to **hold on to and cling on to** and say that “this is ‘**I**’, this is ‘**ME**’, **therefore all these can be mine**”. Then, you will come to understand that **these five aggregates of form and mind**, they are **empty**. They are **not really an eternally unchanging** person with the ‘**atta**’ inside. There is no such thing, because everything is ‘**dependent originating**’ following the **twelve links** as explained by the Buddha - you will see them clearly. So, through meditation, all these understanding can come about. Then you will come to understand that this form is made of elements only, no knowing, that is why it cannot be you and **elements go the way of nature**.

That is why we were advised by the Buddha to **contemplate daily** that: “this body of ours is of the nature to **grow old, get sick and die** for it **has not gone beyond** old age, sickness and death”. And because this form is not you, hence you should **endure this natural process** of old age, sickness and death when **confronting** them. And this is the meaning of **endure**. You should **endure whatever pain, whatever unpleasant states that arise through old age, sickness and death**, because **not only you** are subject to **these realities**, but

each living being also, if they live long enough, they have to **confront** and **experience them** (old age, sickness and death) too.

Then the Buddha said you got two choices, 1<sup>st</sup> choice is to **'accept'** this **reality** then **'accord and flow'** with **nature's law**, to **do what you have to do**, to **resolve it amicably**, so that it **does not torment** you so much, so that your **mind state** can be more **peaceful**; If you need to see a doctor to **seek a cure**, you seek a cure, but before the cure come, you **have to endure**, can you understand? Remember, you got **two choices**, 1<sup>st</sup> choice is to accept and be at peace, 2<sup>nd</sup> choice is to **react** and **become miserable** over it.

It will be worst if you **project your thoughts**. Project your thought means applying **wrong attention!** - meaning things that are **unfit for attention** you go and **attend to it**. Like when the doctor confirm that you got certain **critical disease**, or **sickness**, then the doctor does a **biopsy** and confirm that it is **terminal cancer** and the situation is quite bad, then what happen? Instead of having a **second opinion** to confirm this reality, **your thought starts to project to arise** the **fear, worry** and **anxiety**, do you understand? You attend to things that are **no longer a reality**, so that is **wrong attention**. You **project** your thought and trigger off what? Yes! - **Fear, worry** and **anxiety**, then you become **miserable**, but the fact is, these are the 1st noble truth realities of life and existence, and the form will go that way, do you understand? When conditions are not right, disease will arise, and when disease arises, you need to develop the understanding that this is part of the **bodily condition**. Then what did the Buddha said? 'When your **body is sick**, **do not** allow your **mind also to be sick**', remember? This is how you should **reflect** and **contemplate**, but if you go and **project your thoughts** and **worry** about it, then your mind is **sicker** than your body. Then you got fear and what is fear? – '**Negative energy field**'. That's how your **immune system** will go down and everything will go haywire; so, the Buddha said if you continue to **apply wrong attention**, via

projecting your thought to attend to things that are **unfit for attention**, it means you don't have **wisdom** borne of the **direct seeing** and **penetrative understanding**. Because you **never meditate**, you **never contemplate**, you **never develop** this **wisdom** hence the reason why you will **continue to attend** to things that are **unfit for attention**, and then it will bring about all these sufferings. The Buddha gave a lot of examples on what are the things that are **unfit for attention**; afterward, I will read to you, what are the things that are **unfit for attention**, one of them is **thought projection**, which I had just shared with you.

So, if you understand all these, the Buddha said when you have **wrong attention**, you will know **via mindfulness**, because when you attend to things that are **unfit for attention** the **unarisen āsavas** or **defilements** they **will arise** very strongly - like your fear, worry and anxiety, sorrow and lamentation, your insecurity and your doubt to make you panic. Then whatever that is already within you (the āsava that has arisen), it will also increase; **but if you attend** to things that are **fit for attention**, the unarisen āsava will **not** arise and arisen āsava will **cease** to be. Did the Buddha also explained what are the things that are **fit for attention**? Yes! **'Wholesomeness'** is one of them, but the main one is the 3 turnings of the **four noble truths**.

### **3.7 Āsava To Be Abandoned By Exercising Right Attention**

The Buddha said it in the Sabbāsava Sutta, the first way to **fight defilement** is to **only** attend to **things** that are **fit for attention** – namely by **dwelling correctly** into the **three turnings** of the **four noble truths**. I.e., you attend to the **first noble truth** realities via **contemplating: this is suffering**, these are the **realities**; and then you attend to the **second noble truth** via **contemplating: these are the causes of suffering**, which is **craving**, or **attachment** borne of

**self-delusion**; then you attend to the **third noble truth** - suffering can end, **suffering need not be when there is wisdom**. **Enlightenment in the here and the now is possible**, and this is cessation, **cessation of suffering**, - if you attend to all these then you will develop the **wisdom**; then the last one is to attend to the **4<sup>th</sup> Noble Truth** via contemplating - this is the **noble eight fold path** that will lead to **the end of all suffering**. So, if you attend to this and contemplate its **2<sup>nd</sup> turning** which states that ‘this **noble eight fold path** is to be **cultivated**’, you will then cultivate it to develop the **cintamaya panna wisdom**; then also the **3<sup>rd</sup> turning** which states that ‘this noble eight-fold path has already been cultivated’. That is why if you attend to it using the **three turnings** of the four noble truths, the Buddha said, - “**Immediately the arisen āsavas will cease to be**, and the **unrisen āsava cannot arise**. This is how you **abandon** the defilement. It is only possible through the three turnings of the four noble truths. And these **five daily contemplations** are part of the **second turnings**, because this one involves **contemplation**. So, this is part of the second turnings, then there is another one, third one is what?

The Buddha always advises the monks to reflect, - you heard of this word **anussati**? You have not heard of this word? What about **Buddhanussati**, **Dhammanussati**, **Sanghānussati** and **Maranānussati**? It is in the teaching, isn't it? Why does the Buddha ask you to contemplate on the Buddha's nine great virtues via **Buddhanussati** cultivation? Why contemplate on the Dhamma via **Dhammanussati**? Then why **contemplate** what constitute the **Sangha** and their **qualities** via **Sanghānussati**? So that you can develop **wisdom** and **understanding** from such **contemplations** and because the **Buddha**, **Dhamma** and the **Sangha** are the **triple gems** that you had **taken refuge in**. So that you understand **what you are taking**. With these, you will **understand** the **deep meaning** behind **taking of refuge** in the **triple gems**. The **purpose of refuge** is for ‘you’ to **develop affinity** to **connect** to the triple gems and stay with



the triple gems whenever you arise or whenever there is condition, so that the whole cultivation can be very different. Then to contemplate on that means, to develop the **urgency of practice** via wisdom to understand that this life, **you can never be sure**, how **long you live**, so that you will develop the **urgency to cultivate**.

Then the monk also needs to **contemplation** on **alms food**, the **four requisites** that are **offered** to them so that they can check whether they are **worthy** of such offerings. That is why you also have to contemplate on the **proper usage** of all those things just like how the Buddha advised the monks. This cultivation is part and parcel of the teaching.

### **3.8 Āsava To Be Abandoned By Exercising Avoidance**

Then coming to **avoidance**, what must you avoid? The Buddha said if you **don't avoid**, it **will lead to downfall**, it will lead to the arising of āsava – both the unrisen and the arisen, they will increase tremendously. So, what are the things that you must avoid? During your closing puja, every time you made that aspiration, to avoid who? Ah, Yes! - the **foolish** and the **heedless**. Then what else to avoid? The evil, foolish and heedless ones are those with the **3 evil roots of Greed, Hatred and Delusion**. Then the other one is **dangerous situations**.

In life, there are a lot of circumstances or situations that can be **very dangerous** so you don't try to be a hero, because **this form and mind is very fragile**, you **need a lot of heedfulness**, a lot of **understanding** to bring about the **causes and conditions for you to avoid all these**; that's why I always share with you all, - kamma is like that, - whenever there is condition, it will arise. When you **avoid** the **dangerous conditions for their arising**, then there is **no condition**, then the **possibility** of it arising is very, very much lower

or slimmer; that is why with wisdom, you can just **accord and flow** and you will know what to do and you will know **how to avoid all these - only** through **wisdom**, nothing else.

### 3.9 Āsava To Be Abandoned By Exercising Restraint

Then we come to the part on exercising sense **restraint**, this one is very important. The Buddha said, when you **live** your **daily life**, you need to have **daily mindfulness**, you need to have these **three turnings** and **five daily contemplations** wisdom developed, otherwise **every time** when you **see something, hear something, smell something, taste something, tactilely feel or think** during your daily life, you will not have the **requisite wisdom** and **understanding** that will allow you to exercise sense **restraint**. If you are **not restraint** in what you **see**, what will happen? Nowadays **internet technology is so advance** and **very fantastic**, isn't it? If every day you allow the kids to play with their tablet, computer and smart phones (hopefully they just play games), - what happen if they go into **pornography web sites**? I tell you; their whole thinking and thoughts are all in that direction. Then what happen if they do that? Their unarisen āsavas like **lust, desire** and **craving** will shoot up (if you have an index for it), the arisen one will also become worst. That is why you cannot see thing **without sense restraint borne of wise attention**, that is why within the eight precepts, there is the **7<sup>th</sup> precept** which requires one to undertake the training rules **to abstain** from **dancing, singing, putting on jewelry, ornaments** and **perfume** and **watching** all those **UNSIGHTLY** entertainments, which are stumbling blocks to that which is **wholesome** because it can make you **heedless**. So, you must develop the sense **restraint**, do you understand? That is why precepts are all about **cultivating restraint**, just like the **1<sup>st</sup> precept**: - 'I undertake the training rule **not to kill** or **cause harm to fellow living beings**'; to do that you need to **exercise sense restraint**. You see somebody you do not like, then

you get **violent** and want **to wrack** that person, there is **no sense restraint** at all. So, how can you live life that way? These **āsavas** or **defilements**, they are **very powerful**, (both latent and hidden and the one that is **very active** on the **surface**, the **violent type**, **spontaneous/habitual type**). These later ones are borne of **habitual tendencies**, that is why when you see something you **just react very fast**, then whatever your mind is **incline at** it will get accelerated or become stronger. So, when you listen to something, let us say **nice music**, if there is **no sense restraint** and **inner awareness or clarity**, you will develop the **other extreme**, which is attachment, clinging and craving, then what will happen? Let say somebody switch off the music, or it could be your son changing channel, then **without sense restraint**, you get **very angry**. So, that is how all the **āsavas**, or latent tendencies, they can still come out when there is condition.

But, when you read the sutta, **chances are** you cannot understand. Afterwards I will read through the sutta for you, then maybe after my explanation the **meaning** can stand out otherwise you cannot link, because you don't know how the teaching comes about, then you will go and do all those so called '**fantastic**' meditation, and you think that is what '**Knowing and seeing**' is all about and you will be trap, because it is not about all those **conditioned states of mind - focusing or concentration** that enable you to see **very minute** things via **psychic or energy field**. It's about cultivation in **daily life**, in the **midst of life**, without the **conditioned mind** in **appana Samadhi and Concentration**, but instead with a **free mind**: - when all your **latent tendencies** are **not suppressed**, then you **go and live** your life, you **subject yourselves to all the tests** while in the **midst of life**, - at the **place you work**, when you are **doing your daily chores**, when you are **with society**, when you are with your **fellow community workers**; you put **your mind to test**, to see whether these latent tendencies or **āsavas** or **kilesa**, they are **still active or not?** That is why if you do not cultivate **noble eightfold path**, then you **do not have** this ability to live life in accordance with the noble eightfold

path; - meaning the noble eightfold path has not become a part of you yet and you are still far away from becoming what they call noble ones or enlighten ones. These are all in the sutta, in the teaching, so this ability to **exercise mental restraint** while **living life** is very important and with this explanation hopefully you can understand the cultivation better.

Every sense experience you must **exercise restraint** because you **had undertaken** the **training rules** to keep your **precepts**, may it be the 5 precepts, the eight precepts, the ten precepts or the monk precepts and the nun precepts, they are the same, you must **exercise sense restraint**, then only you can develop the **requisite wisdom to free your mind**. Then it will **not afflict** you, and āsava will not arise, otherwise, they will keep on arising. Then they will **become active** and the **3 evil roots** and the **hindrances of mind** will keep on arising, then **no amount** of thought based **meditation and retreat** can help you because **in your daily life** you are **not able to exercise** the necessary **sense restraint needed to free your mind**, can you understand?

### 3.10 ‘Yoniso Manasikāra’ And Daily Practices

This, we are referring to, is the **daily mindfulness cultivation in daily life**; how you **learn to put your attention** when you **see** something, **hear** something, **smell** something, or **experience** a sense perception. Every day when you **reflect** and **contemplate** you **must do that**. **Every moment, every instant** when you see something, - the moment of seeing is very important. That is why the Buddha teaches this way, you heard of this word, **‘Yoniso Manasikāra’**? What is the meaning of this word? This word ‘yoniso’ means ‘wise’, and the ‘manasikāra’ means ‘attention’; so you need to have **‘wise attention’** at the moment of **sense experience**; without this, the Buddha said you will have problem, that’s why in the sutta it was

mentioned, that the **destruction of āsava** only happens in one **‘who knows and sees’**. Then the Buddha asked, see what? And know what? - See with **‘Yoniso Manasikāra’**, - the Buddha mentioned this very clearly.

You must **‘see’** and then **develop clear understanding** via the **‘direct seeing’**, - leading to the **knowing and seeing**. You develop **the wisdom** via the **three turnings** of the **four noble truths**, especially so via the **2<sup>nd</sup> turnings’** initial **contemplative wisdom** leading to the **3<sup>rd</sup> turnings direct seeing wisdom**. When you had already developed this wisdom, it means you have the understanding already. When you already have the understanding then you see, what happen? You can then see with **‘Yoniso Manasikāra’**. Then **āsava** cannot arise. Those who do not have **‘Yoniso Manasikāra’**, **āsava** will become very, very strong, very powerful and you cannot deal with it. So, can you all follow? We had completed the first 2 ways to overcome defilements, via the exercise of **right attention** and sense **restraint**.

### 3.11 Āsava To Be Abandoned By Exercising Endurance

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> way** is via the exercise of **endurance**. Just now I said, like you are in a foreign country, let’s say Mount Er Mei (we went there recently), the temperature is actually very nice, but at the summit, which they call ‘Jing Ding’, it’s very cold, but you don’t feel it, because with **mindfulness**, with the **faith**, with the **Saddhā, Viriya, Sati, Samadhi** and **Panna**, there were **so much joy**, so much **peace**, so much **stillness and tranquility**, the **energy** there was **very strong**, the environment, the condition are so **conducive** and because of that, you don’t feel it, you **don’t need** to **endure**. Endure here means, if let say, as a Theravada monk if nobody offers you any food, then you cannot eat, you must **endure** the **hunger**. Can be as serious as that, because I was told by a monk, Ajahn Jagaro, he said,

throughout his don't know how many years of monkhood, may be nearly **twenty plus years**, he only got **2 days without offering** and he has **to endure it**, because after 12pm, he never eats. Of course, he drinks. So, **endurance** means, - when you are in the forest, when you are **cultivating**, you must **endure** the **hunger**, the **wind**, the **rain**, etc if people do not offer you any of the **4 requisites**. That is, if people do not offer, you do not have, then you must **endure**.

### 3.12 Āsava To Be Abandoned By Exercising Proper Usage

If your **pāramī** is good, you will receive, and then you can make use of it; when you make use of them, you must understand their purpose, that is why you must **reflect and contemplate** on the **proper use** of these **four requisites** that people offered to you. The four requisites, you all are familiar, isn't it? What are they? Yes! They are **food, robe, shelter** and **medication**. You must reflect on them. These foods are offered by people who are **very sincere, very generous**, so you should **rejoice** with their **wholesomeness**; you should also be **worthy** of offering via **cultivating sincerely**. That is why you must reflect, then this food is not for you to develop craving. And this food is not for you to beautify your body etc. So, everything is **clearly stated** in the monk's rules, - the purpose of food, how you reflect, how you contemplate and to be worthy of such offerings what must you do in return; then similarly, for the robes, the purpose is to cover your private part, to ward away the cold, flies, insect, etc. So, when you understand their purpose, you have **a lot of gratitude** towards those people who had offered it to you, so that you can **use it appropriately**, so that it is **conducive** for you **to develop the cultivation**, then because of that, there is **sympiosis** because you are **worthy** of the offering, it is field of merits is immeasurable. All these you will start to understand, then the purpose of shelter is to ward against bad weather and all those things, so that you can have **a conducive environment to cultivate**

and **meditate**, then **medicine** is for you to use when you are sick, for you to recover, so that you can be in better state of **health**. Nowadays it may include vitamins/multivitamins, health supplements, etc.

### 3.13 Āsava To Be Abandoned By Exercising Avoidance

Then the 4<sup>th</sup> way is **avoidance**, we had already discussed this, to avoid the **foolish** and **heedless**, - those that bring about **downfall**. Foolish and heedless include those gamblers, drug addicts, all those who have a lot of negative tendencies. Then **dangerous situations** – which I had already explained; you avoid dangerous situations, like when you see a cobra, you don't go and be a hero, by thinking that 'oh! I meditate, and I got mettā so nothing to worry'; I tell you unless you are really sure, don't try, because the Buddha said, if you can, you have to avoid the conditions for things to happen, because you never know, - certain lives, you may, out of ignorant, join a group of people to go and kill snakes. You will never know, - because when I was very young, I almost participated as one of them. A group of us in our village, - one of them saw a snake, then he goes and look for bamboo, last time very easy to find bamboo, he starts to attack the snake, the snake was wounded then everybody like go and kill the snake, I almost took a stick and join them, because as a kid, you think it was fun, but the moment I held the stick my hand shivered, then I felt something, I cannot do it, then I just put it down, I just couldn't do it, then I went off. So certain conditions, if you do not have the **good karmic inheritance** or **past cultivation** or **understanding**, you can have situations through delusion and ignorant caused all these killing, then when you are not careful, you try to be a hero, you reap what you sow, - because you killed snakes and now there is condition, then the snake will kill you. These are conditions **made available** for it to happen. So, all these **avoidances** are for you to develop the

understanding, because under the **five daily contemplations**, which I didn't finish, first three is only about your body getting old, getting sick and die; fourth contemplation is, you - reflect on **separation from loved ones** and **whatever possession** that you **hold on to dearly**, then the 5<sup>th</sup> or last one is what? Yes! - **Law of Kamma**, - "You are born of your kamma, heir to your kamma, condition and supported by your kamma, and you are what you are because of your kamma". And from there, you will come to understand the **importance** of taking care of our kamma thereby establishing the **1<sup>st</sup> right view** with regards to the **law of kamma** because **kamma** played such a **great role** in our **life**; this is how the advises of the Buddha to all beings, to avoid all evil, do good and purify their mind comes about. Then how to avoid all evil? You must keep your precepts. You must train your mind to be **aware**, to be **heedful** to see your **mental intentions** behind all your actions, speech and thought processes; then how to purify your mind? - Via **cultivating the three turnings** of the **4 Noble Truths**.

So, all the teachings are **interconnected** and **interlink**, and they will fall into place when you understand them. That is why these 3: - the three turnings of the four noble truths, five daily contemplations and the anussati cultivations, - they are the **real meditation**. The three turnings cultivation include the cultivation of **noble eightfold path, the four foundations of mindfulness, the seven factors of enlightenment and the dependent origination**, - everything is inside there, because nothing is apart from these four noble truths. This is the **real meditation** and to do this meditation, you only need to have the **five spiritual faculties** that will bring about the condition for the mental **hindrances** not to be there **to hinder** you from **entering** the **meditative state of inner peace, inner calmness and inner awareness** to be **heedful**, that is why they are all connected. Then after avoidance is what? Ah, **removal**.



### 3.14 Āsava To Be Abandoned By Exercising Removal

Removal is like your four right efforts. The unarisen mental hindrance or āsava (like sensual desire, ill will together with delusion) when they arise, what must you do? You **must abandon** them. **Right effort to abandon** them, then **right effort to prevent it from arising**; that is why you must cultivate in this way **through mindfulness, through heedfulness**, and this one you need **to abandon** them because it **has arisen** already. Then later when you reflect and contemplate, when your wisdom is very strong, very stable, then you can be at the **moment of sense experience** before they arise, this wisdom 'Yoniso Manasikāra' will enable you **to prevent it from arising**. Then even when you see pornography or very disturbing type of show, 'inside' it is totally still, silent and like no reaction at all. Because there is wisdom, it is not deluded by all these external phenomena world of forms, vibration, etc and nothing can cause it to stir anymore, because no more delusion, - the form and mind is **no longer** deluded. So, this removal is more or less like your **four right efforts**. Then the last one - the Buddha said, if after all these first 6 types of cultivation also you still can stir your mind, then you must finally cultivate **via development** the **seven factors of enlightenment**. So far is it okay? I will read to you the Sabbāsava sutta now so that you can develop better understanding.

### 3.15 Sabbāsava Sutta

This Sabbāsava Sutta, the summary of it, the Buddha said:

'Bhikkhu, I said that the **destruction of āsava** is for the one **'who knows and sees'**, **not** for one who **'does not know and see'**. Who knows and see what? The Buddha said, **'wise attention'**, and **'unwise attention'**, means 'Yoniso Manasikāra' and 'Ayoniso Manasikāra'. When one **attends unwisely**, unarisen āsava arise and

arisen āsava increase. When one attends **wisely**, unarisen āsava does not arise, and arisen āsava cease to be. You see, - this is the **final summary**. Then He said: ‘bhikkhu, there are **āsava** that should be **abandon** by **right attention**, there are āsava that should be abandon by sense **restraint**, there are āsava should be abandon **by usage**, there are āsava that should be abandon by **enduring** and there are āsava that should be abandon by **avoiding**. Then finally there are āsava that should be abandoned by **removal**. Then the last one, there are āsava that should be abandon by **developing or cultivating**.

Then the Buddha continues, he said the first way, - āsava that should be abandon by **right attention**: - by attending to things that are **fit for attention**. The Buddha gives this example, he said, **what are the things** that are **unfit for attention** that he attends? He said: ‘there are things such that he attends to them the unrisen āsava of **sensual desire** in him arise, the arisen āsava of **sensual desire** in him increases, the unarisen āsava of **becoming** arising in him, and the **arisen** āsava of **becoming** increases, then He said the unarisen āsava of **ignorant** will also arise in him, and the arisen āsava **of ignorant** increases. So, these are thing **unfit for attention** that he attends to, and what are things **fit for attention** that he **does not** attend to? There are things such that when he attends to them the **unarisen āsava** of **sensual desire**, **becoming** and **ignorant** does not arise, then likewise the arisen one cease.

This is how he attends **unwisely**, - listen, the Buddha gave these examples, (not what I quote), “Was I so and so in the past? Was I **not** so and so in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what did I become in the past? What shall I be in the future? What shall I **not** be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what about the present thus: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where will it go? All these he said, is like **thought projection** into

the **past** and **future** to arise **fear, worry and anxiety** because of the **strong personality view**. Like during occasion when 'you' are diseased or confronting some of the first noble truth realities. So, the Buddha refers all these to **self-doubt**, such that this doubt arises in a **person, attached** to the **personality view** or **sakkāyadiṭṭhi - self-delusion**. When he attends **unwisely** in this way, the Buddha said, the **view of self exists**, and to him they are like **very real, true** and **established**. Then the worst is, the Buddha said, if they attend in these ways, the **'Self' view** will be very **strongly established** in them, because they will come to this view, he said...okay I will read to you the whole thing, that will be better. He said 'when one attends unwisely in this way, one of the **six Self views** arise in him', - 'the **view of self exists for me, arise in him** as true and established, or the view - **no self exists for me arise in him**' as true and established, or the view '**I perceive self with self**' as true and established in him, or the view '**I perceive not-self with self**' arise in him as true and established or the view '**I perceive self as non-self or no self arise in him**' as true and established or else he has some such view as this: (you listen this is the wrong view during that time) – "It is this **self of mine** that **speaks** and **feel** and **experience** here and there, the result of good and bad actions, but this self of mine is **permanent, ever lasting, eternal, not subject to change**, and it will **endure** as long as **eternity**'. This **speculative view**, bhikkhu is called the **thicket of views, the wilderness of views, the compulsion of views, the contortion of views, the vacillation of view, and the fetters of views. Fettered by the fetters of views**, the untaught ordinary person is **not freed from birth, old age, suffering, disease and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair**. He is not free from suffering, the Buddha said.

Then the Buddha continue to emphasize on the danger on this **self-delusion**, thinking that **this 'atta'**, is a **permanent unchanging entity** which they call the **soul** that trans-migrate from one life to another, that is responsible for your thinking, your speech, your action and

everything that you do. Then, he continues, He said, ‘Bhikkhu, a **well taught noble disciple** who has regard for **noble one** and **skillful** and **disciplined** in the **dhamma** who has regard for **true man** and is **skill and discipline in the dhamma** understand what things are **fit for attention** and what things are **unfit for attention**. Since that is so, he does not attend to those things **unfit** for attention and he attends to those things **fit for attention**’. Ah, here we come to the very important point, as stated by the Buddha: ‘what are the things that are **fit for attention**?’ He said he attends wisely, ‘this is **suffering**’, he **attends wisely**; ‘this is the **cause** of the **origination** of suffering’, he attends **wisely**; ‘this is the **cessation of suffering**’ he attends **wisely**; ‘This is the **way leading to the cessation** of suffering’, all these he **attends wisely**; when he attends wisely in this way, **three fetters** are abandon in him, personality view, doubt and adherence to rites and rituals. That is, the first three fetters are severed, and these are called the **āsava** that should be **abandoned** by **right attention** so that one can become a sotāpan.

There is **another version** which I got from another source. In this version the Buddha explained **Right attention** slightly differently. What is right attention? - attending to things that are fit for attention: Like ‘this is the **first noble truth of dukkha** that explain clearly the **realities of life and existence**’, he attends wisely; ‘the origin of suffering is craving, conditioned by delusion’, he attends wisely; ‘this is the cessation of suffering, leading to enlightenment in the here and the now – nibbāna’, he attends wisely; and this is ‘the path leading to the cessation of all suffering, namely the Noble Eightfold Path’, he attends wisely; when he attends wisely in this way, three fetters are abandon: **personality view, doubt** and **adherence to rites and rituals**. So, rooting out **self-views and attachment to rites and rituals and doubts** leads to the realization of the first stage of sainthood or sotāpan.

So, this Sabbāsava Sutta, is **very meaningful**, and the āsava to be abandon via **usage as explained in the same sutta** is also very good. The Buddha asked, ‘what āsava, bhikkhu should be **abandon by usage?**’ Here a bhikkhu **reflecting wisely**, uses the robe for only protection from cold, for protection from heat, for protection from contact with flies, mosquito, wind, sun and creepy things and only for the purpose of concealing the private part; ‘**reflecting wisely** he uses **alms bowls**, neither for **amusement** or for **intoxication**, non for the sake of **physical beauty** and **attractiveness**, but only for the **endurance** and **continuity** of this body, for ending **discomfort** and for **assisting** the holy life’, **considering**: ‘thus I shall **terminate old feeling without arising** new feeling, and I shall be **healthy** and **blameless** and I shall live in **comfort**’. “Reflecting wisely, he uses the **resting place** only for **protection** from cold, for protection from heat, for protection from contact with flies, mosquito, the wind, the sun, the creepy things, and only for the purpose of **warding off perils** of **climate** and for enjoying retreat. Reflecting wisely, he uses **medicinal requisites** only for protection from arising **afflicting feelings**, and for the benefits of good health so that this body that is **needed for cultivation** can be **given sustenance**.

All these the Buddha explained very clearly, then likewise, for āsava that are to be abandoned via **enduring, removal** and **avoiding**. He said: ‘what āsava, bhikkhu should be **abandon by enduring?**’ Here a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, bears cold, heat, hunger and thirst and contact with gadflies, mosquito, wind, sun and creepy things; endure ill spoken, unwelcome words and arisen bodily feeling that are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, distressing and menacing to life. While āsava, vexation and fever might arise in one who **does not** endure such things, there are no āsava, vexation and fear in one who endures them. These are call āsava that should be abandoned by enduring. The reason being **our consciousness is trapped inside** this physical form, understand or not? Whatever that this physical form undergoes, (**as explained** in your **five daily**

**contemplations**, the first three) you need to **endure** them. Sometimes in the forest when they have this disease called **malaria**, it can be quite miserable because they feel suddenly very cold and suddenly like a lot of heat, then pain, and a lot of other feelings that are not easy to endure; then without medication, it is not easy, but many monks they just **endure** through them. If you read those books that record monk's experience, especially the biography of Ajahn Mun, there are a lot of instances where it was mentioned that he endures through the suffering of being attack by malaria a couple of times. No medication, they just endure through, and survive.

Then there are āsava that are **abandoned by avoiding**, this one I will have to read to you. "What āsava, bhikkhu, should be abandon by **avoiding**? Here a bhikkhu **reflecting wisely**, avoid a wild elephant, avoid a wild dog, a snake, a stump, a bramble patch, a chasm, a cliff, a cesspit, a sewer. Reflecting wisely, (note: the word is always **reflecting wisely**), he avoids sitting on unsuitable seats, wandering to unsuitable resorts, and associating with fools and bad friends, - if he were to do so, wise companion in the holy life, might suspect him of evil. While āsava, vexation and evil might arise in one who does not avoid these things, there are no āsava, vexation, and evil in one who avoids that. These are āsavas that should be abandoned by avoiding.

### 3.16 Āsava To Be Abandoned By Removal

Then, for āsavas that should be abandoned by removal the Buddha continue by asking, 'What āsavas bhikkhu should be **removed by removal**?' Here a bhikkhu reflecting wisely, **does not tolerate** the arisen thought of **sensual desire**, he **abandons it**, he **removes it**, **does away** with it and **eliminate it**; he **does not tolerate** an arisen thought of **ill-will....**, he does not tolerate **an arisen thought of cruelty.....**, he does not tolerate an arisen thought of **evil**

**unwholesome state**, he abandons them, remove them, does away with them, and eliminate them. While āsavas, vexation and evil might arise in one who **does not** remove such thoughts, there are no āsavas, vexation and evil in one who **remove them**, these are call the āsavas that should be abandoned by removal.

### 3.17 Āsava To Be Abandoned By Development

Then by development, - ‘what āsavas, bhikkhu should be abandon by cultivation or developing?’ Here, a bhikkhu reflecting wisely, (the key word is always **reflecting wisely** via **wise contemplation and reflection**), develops **mindfulness**, enlightenment factor - **sati**, which is **supported** by **seclusion, dispassion** and **cessation** and **ripens** in him **relinquishment** or **liberation**; he **develops** the **investigation of dhamma**, enlightenment factor...., the **energy or vīriya enlightenment** factor...., then **pīti enlightenment** factor...., then the **tranquility or passaddhi** enlightenment factor...., then **Samadhi** enlightenment factor..... And **upekkhā** enlightenment factor, which are supported by **seclusion, dispassion, cessation** and **ripens in relinquishment** or **liberation** of mind. While āsavas, vexation and evil might arise in one who does not develop this enlightenment factors, there are **no āsavas, vexation and evil** in one who **develops** then. So, these are the āsavas that should be abandoned by cultivation or development.

Then towards the later part, as you cultivate you will start to understand why here they use the English word ‘.....**supported** by **seclusion, dispassion, disenchantment** and all those things....’, - **cessation** here is correct, but actually your mind undergoes **transformation differently**, because I remember at that time, you will reach a point of understanding, where the whole of your **brain’s saṅkhāra** is very different and your **mindfulness is so clear**, you can **see them** all and because **your wisdom** is so **stable** you can

**understand** them. Then you will come to know very clearly: **saṅkhāra** is **impermanent** or *anicca*, **saṅkhāra** is **really suffering** or *dukkha*, and they are all **not ‘real’**, but **condition arising, causal phenomena**, they are **all anattā** and **empty**, and the **understanding is very clear**. Then your mind will understand, **‘think also like that, don’t think also like that’**. Then the mind become **very different**, later on as you progresses, as you develop such **sensitivity** and **understanding**, then during every moment of arising of **saṅkhāra**, (even the **moment of perception**, the **moment of feeling**, or moment of **activity of mind**, or moment of **consciousness**), that itself is **suffering**, - the **very fine suffering**, you will feel it **so clearly**, then it is like telling you, **‘if you want to continue to have suffering, then you continue to use or arise your thought’**, - that’s how **cessation will happen**. Everything that arise, you will come to understand their under lying characteristics and there is **no more fear**, but only this **wisdom** and **understanding** which is **so powerful** that it can enable you to feel the **very fine suffering**, the *āsava*, - **so fine** and **yet so clear**; you will know, then this thought, - it is like it **cannot** even **moved**, at that moment even the very moment of **perceiving it** or **knowing it** (**no need to say** go and think, or go and arise any of this attention), it straight away **cannot** continue, because that very fine **suffering state** is **so clear**; i.e. **every moment of consciousness is suffering**, every moment of **contact** is **suffering**. And it is exactly like what the Buddha described in the **fire sermon**, **“the eye is burning, contact is burning, consciousness that arise upon contact is burning, then feeling within that contact is burning, everything is burning!”** and that is the real description in the fire sermon. That is why, that fire sermon, when the Buddha spoke, so many got enlighten, especially the non-humans. So, with this I think I will end the talk.



## 4 Questions and Answers

Do you all have any question? If not, I was told by Bro. Gan via SMS that there was one question. Bro. Gan, can you read out the question?

### 4.1 Question 1 - Are jhāna necessary for enlightenment?

**Question 1:** Brother Teoh, relating to this topic some meditators think that one should cultivate until the **fourth jhāna** to see our past life, to know kamma or understand kamma and this can help one to be on the **path of realization**; do you think it is subject to individual practice or is encouraged by taking into consideration of our modern life?

**Brother Teoh:** Okay, thank you for the question. So, what do you think after hearing this sutta? 'Is that which is been asked, **fit for attention or not**? The Buddha had in the sutta explained it very clearly, so no need for me to explain anymore, can you understand? Is it fit for attention? Clearly, it is **not fit** for attention because it has got **nothing to do** with **four noble truths**, isn't it? You hope you can also be like the Sammā Sambuddha, after he became fully enlighten, - what did he do for the seven weeks after his enlightenment? He saw one birth, two births then countless births, but he never said all these **segmented form and mind** is him? These are the various segments of what he was, and he only make use of it to develop the understanding of how kamma works, do you understand? How with this kamma it conditions this type of birth and this type of beings. He never said wah...last time I am so handsome, I am so powerful, I was the king, I am what and what, - because he was not deluded anymore. He did tell you via the Jataka stories that he was born as what during that life? That segmented life he was born as what? But he understands clearly that those **segmented form and mind** is not

him? He never says it is him. That is why he said you **do not go and attend** to question like, 'who was I in the past? Am I this or am I not this?' What has these got to do with the four-noble truth? If you do not **develop wisdom**, and you attend to all these, then **thicket of views** will arise as per **Sabbāsava sutta**, can you understand? Similarly, for sakkāyadiṭṭhi or self-delusion, - 'oh, I was so and so, and last time, I was such a monk, I cultivate until like that, I got this jhāna, that jhāna...', so you think you inherit everything? Of course, it's recorded in the law of kamma, but whatever that was done before the awakening, has delusion. So, if it is not fit for attention, you better focus on the dhamma, hope you understand? I do not deny that those who can develop all these concentrations have this ability to read mind and see past lives. But what was the Buddha's advice to the monk then? He said, it is against the Pātimokkha to exhibit any of these **psychic abilities**. Do you understand. He said, all these psychic powers, you should not touch because they are **not conducive** to the **holy life**; but if it comes about **as a by-product**, and you **can develop wisdom** and **understanding** out of it, then it is okay. But you must know how to **develop wisdom** out of it. Because if you are **not careful** and you may get yourself entangled with this **energy field** and **psychic training** if you don't have the understanding and perfections like those of the **great Bodhisattva** and **Sammā Sambuddha**, - everything you see, you think is your past life, you will get into big trouble.

They may not be what you think because of **thoughts projection**. When you use thought **without** wisdom, thought can become very, very '**shrewd**'. There was one incident, during the Buddha's time, there was one person who came and see Venerable Ananda then he wants to approach the Buddha and asked the Buddha because - he got one teacher who told him this: '**If every life you make offering via slaughtering the chicken and offer it to the king of Tavatimsa heaven** (if I am not wrong), you will **take rebirth** up there and join him to become like him. This teacher he got psychic, so he checks, ya,

for the last do not know how many births he took **birth up there**, and every life, what he did was also the **same type of slaughtering of chicken** and *making of all these similar offerings*. Do you know what happened when the Buddha checked it up? The Buddha told this person, 'You go back and tell your master, if he offers one more time, he will go into Avijji hell, because that kamma that condition those births **were from another previous life**. According to the Buddha, when he was a monk in that life, he has this psychic ability too. This abhiññā, or psychic ability, then he saw, there were a few monks, (I think eight or nine monks) trapped in a desert storm very cold and almost dying, then he **used his psychic to help them** and because of that **he got these nine births** up there; it is mainly because of his craving, his desire, to be born up there and his wish was fulfilled. That is why if you do not understand and you simply go and say oh, I saw this, this must be from my past life, my previous life. I did this, that is why eight times also I take birth up there. Ha! Ha! You think it is from those offerings, but because you are not a Sammā Sambuddha you can be mistaken. Like the Buddha say, **kamma is very complex**, you cannot rely on what you see. What you see are **mostly thought's projections**. Your own dream also you cannot understand, and you want to see past life. Not to say I discourage all these, because it is your choice. Meditation is entirely your choice; you are free to develop any type of meditation. I respect you for what you are, but be wise because **nothing 'free you, except wisdom'**. Without **'knowing and seeing, understanding and direct seeing** leading to **'Yoniso Manasikāra'** or **wise attention** at every **moment** of sense experience **to live** your daily life, you cannot **liberate** from the āsavas. The only thing that **can liberate** your mind is **wisdom**, borne of the **direct seeing**. Through the **direct seeing** you awaken, through the **contemplative wisdom** you understand, and then you penetrate. Then you develop the **type of wisdom** that will protect you; - with **every moment of sense experience**, every **moment of attention**, the mind that **has the wisdom** and the **enlightenment factors** will understand. Without the enlightenment factors, if you **do only jhāna**,

you **cannot understand** because: - what are the five jhanic factors? What are they? The 5 jhanic factors, - cannot remember? I gave a talk on Samatha and Vipassanā earlier on, so what are the five jhanic factors? Those who do jhāna, they will know, what are they? Ah... **vitakka, vicāra**, then **pīti, sukha**, and **ekaggatā**, these are the five jhanic factors. Out of these, which one is the enlightenment factor? Ah...**only one** - pīti, can you understand. So, if you develop only this, then where do you end up? You are still short of **six enlightenment factors**; **Sati** which is the 1<sup>st</sup> factor of enlightenment factor also not there yet. And when you are with these jhanic factors abiding while in these jhāna, your mind is so calm and so still, the **energy field is so strong**, everything is **suppressed**, do you understand? All these **latent tendencies or anusayas**, they are all **suppressed, cannot surface**; that is why you cannot **put them to test**. You cannot know what your actual mind state is. You are like an enlighten being, but you are not. Whatever you attend to, inside your heart there **no movement** at all because I went through that before during the early years - about thirty over years ago, or may be more than that, because it was the year I entered university Malaya - in the year 1975, so it is thirty-nine years ago.

That first night at the University, I meditated and I went into the formless jhāna and then I was stuck there for so many years, because at that time, really, the **mettā was so strong**, the **energy** was so **strong**, my **concentration is so strong**, my **mind state is so still and strong** but I didn't go into one-pointedness, instead I went into **continuous mindfulness** leading to the absorption of mind and yet I was trapped, because I did **ānāpānasati** which I inherited from my past. I went into all these absorptions, then here around the **heart area**, it is like **one cylinder of energy**, very still, nothing can move it, lightning strike also cannot cause even the slightest movement at the heart area, it was so still. And that time, really, wah, you think you 'Cow Tim' '搞掂' already. Later on, when I graduated, four years later, I came out to work, then when I started touching money, and when I

also don't meditate so often, then I started to see this heart area, starting to stir again, then there is still craving, like want to become **financially very successful**, want to **study law**, want to do this, want to do that, then I realize something not right, so I inquired – 'what was going on?' - Because the **materialistic world** can lure the anusaya or latent tendencies (which were **not rooted out as yet**) to surface, then later on I met this monk, a very good monk, **Phra Ajahn Yantra**: - he told me the **real meditation/highest meditation**, so I thought it must be something fantastic, but instead he just said very simply, "**we choose aware, every action, every movement in the present moment**", then I looked at him, and I was **full of joy**. I told myself, 'No wander, I **have yet to do the real meditation**, because I have been doing ānāpānasati, and I only focus and concentrate my mind to develop the **absorption** and **never do the daily mindfulness**, because I never went into the **four foundations of mindfulness practices**', then from **that moment onwards** I determine to do it. Then because of my past, I was very lucky, - within **two weeks**, my **daily mindfulness** came, then I reversed my whole cultivation, **I came out from that absorption and concentration**, I relinquished everything, I start from **square one** again. Then I go into **daily life**, then I realize **daily mindfulness** is **not that difficult**, it can be done, it can be done! You must have the spiritual faculty of **saddhā or faith**, then you must understand the **teaching very clearly**, then it can be done.

Okay? So hopefully by now you can understand. So, **do not go and argue** with people, because **right and wrong got no meaning** and it **won't solve your problem**. We must respect everyone for what they are. If they believe that is the way, we wish them well. So, everything is the same, if you know how to develop them, it will lead to the awakening, provided you are very **truthful, sincere**, and you have **the faith**. You will find out for yourself, because there are so many possibilities/approaches to enlightenment, and everyone is different. If you do not have delusion, you are not driven by **greed**, you are not driven by **wrong view**, then you will find the way.

Dhamma is **ever waiting** for the **sincere cultivators of the way**. They will develop the understanding and finally awaken. Okay, anymore question? Is it clear?

‘Clear?’ - Good, because this sutta is **not easy** to understand. I spoke this sutta, nine years ago to another group in the year 2005. There was another sutta, I forgot the name already, also very interesting, and if I am no wrong it is the ‘**Vammika sutta**’. It is about the **analogy of the ant hill** - that is a very difficult sutta. Not many people can understand that sutta; it was said, “the **mind is like the ant hill** - ‘**smoldering**’ by the night and ‘**blazing**’ by the day”. The Buddha said the human mind is like that - when you are **heedless** with all the **five mental hindrances**, with all the defilements, with all the wrong views, he said, your mind is **heedlessly blazing** by the day like, none stop arising of thoughts or saṅkhāra.

So, all these are in the sutta and when you understand them, it is very meaningful, very beautiful, but this sutta is not easy to understand. If you just read this Sabbāsava sutta, and if I do not explain to you, chances are you cannot link to this part, then you will find it very difficult to comprehend what the Buddha is trying to tell you? One moment **right attention**, next moment **restraint**, next moment **endure**, next moment he talks about the **proper usage**, then next moment **avoidance**, next moment **removal**, then next moment **cultivate seven factors of enlightenment**, then you will say, why so ‘麻烦’ (ma Fan) or troublesome and confusing one? And then you may just comment – ‘Cultivate the seven factors of enlightenment is already enough’, but it’s not like that, because **certain wisdom need to be developed** through **contemplation**. Of course, when you are able to have the seven factors of enlightenment developed, you will also have all the **contemplative wisdom** and **understanding** as well, because these are enlightenment factors that will bring about enlightenment.

The first two enlightenment factors of **sati** and **dhamma investigation** are most important, because without sati and dhamma investigation, you cannot do **all these three turnings** cultivation especially so the **2<sup>nd</sup> turnings**. Then of course without **passaddhi** you cannot go into the **four foundation of mindfulness cultivation**. That is why **vīriya** and **pīti** are very important enlightenment factors needed for you to develop **passaddhi**, which is the 5<sup>th</sup> enlightenment factor; then with **passaddhi**, Samadhi will allow you to see things as they are. Sati, passaddhi and Samadhi, need to be understood. **Passaddhi** is the **silent mind**. That is the reason why **every time I tell** you all to **just silent** your mind, while **meditating**, remember? The **silent mind is passaddhi**, the **meditative mind** which is just **stillness** of mind, the **tranquil, still, and unmoving mind without thought**. Then we develop **equanimity borne of wisdom** - that is the real **7<sup>th</sup> enlightenment factor**. The one in jhāna is a **conditioned state**. That fourth jhāna **equanimity** is just a **conditioned state**; it is **not the 7<sup>th</sup> enlightenment factor upekkhā**. The conditioned state that held it in that state of upekkhā, - in this state the **latent tendencies** are all **still suppressed** because the **energy field** is very strong, and it prevents the **anusaya** from surfacing or coming out. That's why you must go into the **daily mindfulness** cultivation, and you must **release all concentration** back to **normal awareness** and develop the **continuous mindfulness** until the stage of upacara Samadhi, then you can penetrate the Dhamma. Then you will understand, because **with mindfulness** it will allow you to understand a lot of things. Then Dhamma investigation will be like **automatic**, - you will know **how to attend** on to the **four noble truths**, its **three turnings**, the **five daily contemplations**, then the **three types of corresponding wisdom** will **keep on arising, like non-stop**, then the **seven factors of enlightenment** will also **keep on arising**. Then you will start to see very clearly the **dependent origination**, the **four noble truths**, the **three evil roots**, the **essential Dhamma** - all these will **become very clear** to you, then you will have a **lot of joy**, then you start to

**appreciate** so much, because the Buddha is **so wise**. Okay, we got to end because it is already 10.20pm. Sadhu! sadhu! Sadhu!

## **5 Closing Pūjā**

Okay we will do the **sharing of merits, transfer of merits, invoke the blessing for our nation then you all can make your aspiration via invoking the power of your merits.....** End



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