

THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

The Path to Enlightenment

Revealing The Hidden



Walking The Path with The Buddha

Volume 2

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Why Have I Decided to Reside and Teach in Thailand in Order to Restore The Teachings of The Buddha Back into Humanity and Create “Heaven on Earth”?

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The author is donating 100% of all his proceeds from this book to charitable work to share The Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

You are welcome to freely distribute this book.

Please consider providing a donation to support the continued sharing of these Teachings.

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Learn The Teachings of Gotama Buddha that lead to a stable, calm, and peaceful mind. A more peaceful and loving world where all beings have care and compassion for each other.

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THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

The Path to Enlightenment Revealing The Hidden

Volume 1

Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment

Volume 2

Walking The Path with The Buddha

Volume 3

Foundation in The Teachings

Volume 4

Exploring The Path to Enlightenment

Volume 5

The First Stage of Enlightenment
(Stream-Enterer)

Volume 6

The Natural Law of Kamma

Volume 7

Breathing Mindfulness Meditation

Volume 8

The Foremost Householders

Volume 9

The Six Sense Bases

Volume 10

The Buddha's Way

Volume 11

The Realms of Existence

Volume 12

Lowly Arts

Volume 13

Generosity

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Walking The Path with The Buddha (Volume 2)

Journey through The Words of The Buddha from the beginning of his first Teaching until his “last words” prior to death.

The book, “Walking The Path with The Buddha” is select Teachings from The Buddha organized from the largest and most complete collection of The Buddha’s Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment - The Pāli Canon.

The Pāli Canon, or The Pāli Text, comprises forty-five (45) large volumes of books where Students from the lifetime of The Buddha captured his Teachings. The discourses of The Buddha in The Pāli Canon represent the largest and most complete collection we have of The Buddha’s Teachings in his own words. The Buddha’s Teachings are scattered over multiple volumes of books in The Pāli Canon making it challenging for the average Practitioner to glean the benefit of his Teachings.

The Words of The Buddha book series, has consolidated and organized his Teachings into a series of books, based on specific topics, with explanations of The Teachings from a dedicated Practitioner and Teacher.

You will find books such as Breathing Mindfulness Meditation (Volume 7) that are the consolidated Teachings in The Words of The Buddha related to meditation. The Natural Law of Kamma (Volume 6) provides Teachings directly from The Buddha related to the important topic of Kamma. The Foremost Householders (Volume 8) shares Teachings specifically for Household Practitioners who are pursuing The Path to Enlightenment where the mind is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

The Words of The Buddha book series will provide a beginning, middle, and end with detailed Teachings to develop your life practice and the ability to seek guidance with the author of the book series. Learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of The Buddha, in his own words, with guidance from a Teacher - offered openly and freely to “all beings”.

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Note from Author

This book shares Teachings from Gotama Buddha to guide Practitioners on The Path to Enlightenment.

In various settings, Gotama Buddha is sharing Teachings with either a male or a female - a husband or a wife.

As you learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings from Gotama Buddha, you should consider The Teachings shared as multi-gendered. So while Gotama Buddha may be using a specific gender of he/she, male/female, or a specific title of husband/wife, son/daughter you can apply these same Teachings to all genders and roles of the opposite of which he was addressing his Teachings to in the setting in which The Teachings were originally shared, or use a gender-neutral pronoun.

If Gotama Buddha is sharing Teachings with a man of how to be a wholesome husband, you can relate this same Teaching for a female of how to be a wholesome wife. If he is sharing a Teaching with a male of how to be a wholesome son, you can relate this same Teaching for a female of how to be a wholesome daughter. You have the freedom to apply these Teachings using all genders and titles in use today.

Additionally, Gotama Buddha never used rebirth in the heavenly realm nor rebirth in the lower realms of hell, animal, or afflicted spirits as a way to guilt, shame, fear, or otherwise motivate people to learn and practice his Teachings.

When you come to understand Teachings shared by Gotama Buddha related to these potential future destinations upon rebirth, he is sharing the truth of what will or will not occur based on specific Teachings based on The Natural Laws of Existence. The truth he discovered, observed, and experienced as The Perfectly Enlightened One.

One should in no way consider these Teachings he shared as a way to guilt, shame, or fear one into learning and practicing his Teachings but instead, consider that he is sharing the truth of what will or will not occur ensuring that Practitioners understand the truth related to The Natural Laws of Existence. Gotama Buddha's Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment involve, among other things, the elimination of guilt, shame, and fear. He would not use guilt, shame, or fear to motivate someone to learn and practice his Teachings because his most core and central Teaching of The Four Noble Truths, and everything else he taught, makes it clear that the objective is to eliminate discontent feelings such as guilt, shame, and fear.

Gotama Buddha shared The Teachings as guidance for anyone who chooses to learn and practice without forceful influence. Through learning, reflecting, and practicing his Teachings, one comes to understand the truth as the condition of the mind and the condition of one's life gradually improve.

It is not possible to forcefully influence one to attain Enlightenment and that approach was never employed by The Perfectly Enlightened One, and should never be employed by anyone else. Learning and practicing these Teachings is through personal free will choice.

A Buddha only points the way, everyone else must strive.

While this book series contains "The Words of The Buddha" as the foundation and focus of study, the author has provided you content in which to understand and reflect on his thoughts related to The Teachings shared by The Buddha.

A reader and, thus, Practitioner should not rely solely on the author's content in their reflection on The Teachings from Gotama Buddha. The author's content is to provide you guidance towards understanding but it is you, the Practitioner, who needs to deeply investigate "The Words of The Buddha" to determine the truth for yourself. You should not be limited to only what the author has provided by way of meaning and understanding of "The Words of The Buddha". Instead, learn, reflect, practice, and seek guidance from a Teacher to support you in gaining wisdom. The mind is liberated through wisdom.

To gain the most benefit from "The Words of The Buddha" book series, it is suggested that you start with (Volume 1), "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment". That book will provide a framework to understand all of Gotama Buddha's Teachings in the entire book series. Without reading that book first, a Practitioner will find it very challenging to start with learning from "The Words of The Buddha".

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The Problem - The Wisdom of Enlightenment Has Been Lost

Gotama Buddha lived over 2,500 years ago sharing The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment.

During his lifetime, it was well known to people who were learning, reflecting, and practicing with him as their Teacher, exactly what Enlightenment is and how to attain it.

This wisdom remained for 500 years after the death of The Buddha. But thereafter, this wisdom has gradually declined and diminished to the point where we are today, 2,500 years later. Gotama Buddha predicted this would occur.

The vast majority of the world does not understand what Enlightenment is and how to attain it. The Path to Enlightenment, while once was strong and vibrant during the lifetime of The Buddha, has now practically disappeared.

There are very few beings in existence today who understand what Enlightenment is and how to attain it.

The Universal Truth of Impermanence has drastically affected humanity's understanding of The Path to Enlightenment.

This occurred through the lack of focus and diligence to maintain The Teachings of The Buddha as vibrantly as existed during his lifetime. People gradually and slowly mixed and blended various traditions and thoughts into The Buddha's Teachings which, while perhaps well intended, have only served to dilute humanity's understanding of The Path to Enlightenment and, thus, have made it extremely difficult for countless beings to experience Enlightenment.

Enlightenment is a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy that is permanent. The Enlightened mind no longer experiences any discontent feelings. All discontentedness such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc., has been completely eliminated from the Enlightened mind.

Gotama Buddha's objective is for his Teachings to be shared worldwide so that all beings can experience the Enlightened mental state. However, during his lifetime, it was impossible to share his Teachings worldwide. It has now come to us to be able to actively learn, reflect, and practice his Teachings, in such a way, that they are restored and shining in the world so that countless

individuals can attain Enlightenment today and in multiple generations to come.

But, in order to accomplish this goal, we will need to stay determined, dedicated, and diligent to learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha that he shared over 2,500 years ago. We will need to be diligent to ensure that we are not diluting his Teachings through mixing various traditions and practices that are not part of The Path to Enlightenment.

Every Practitioner will need to decide, are they interested in being part of the problem or part of the solution.

The solution takes time, effort, energy, and resources to be committed enough to restoring The Buddha's Teachings back into humanity, in such a way, that is highly beneficial to countless individuals today and long into the future.

Remaining part of the problem requires no time, effort, energy, or resources. It just requires continued complacency and lack of attention to the active learning, reflecting, and practicing of "The Words of The Buddha". I suggest it would be unwise to remain part of the problem as one will continue to experience discontentedness and the suffering it causes.

The Solution - Restoring The Buddha's Teachings Back into Humanity

If you would like to be part of the solution, I would like to encourage you to actively learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of The Buddha, in such a way, that does not include the diluting or mixing of his Teachings with other traditions. It is The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment, not those that are blended and mixed that only serve to dilute The Path to Enlightenment for all those who aspire to experience Enlightenment.

The primary obstacle or obstruction that hinders Practitioners from the attainment of Enlightenment is ignorance (unknowing of true reality). This is a taint/pollution of mind where the Practitioner lacks wisdom to understand the true Path to Enlightenment. This unknowing of true reality creates an obstacle or obstruction that keeps the mind trapped in the unEnlightened state continuing to experience continued discontentedness and the suffering it causes. The only way to remove this hindrance is to seek guidance with a Teacher in the true Teachings of The Buddha using The Words of The Buddha. It is The Teachings of The Buddha that will awaken the mind to Enlightenment through independent verification of his Teachings to acquire wisdom, thus, removing this obstruction to Enlightenment.

Through dedication to restoring The Teachings of The Buddha within your own life practice by acquiring wisdom using The Words of The Buddha, you are doing your part to contribute to restoring his Teachings back into humanity for the benefit of countless beings that exist now and long into the future. All of humanity can evolve so that everyone can attain Enlightenment creating the most peaceful world we have ever imagined. It will be like “heaven on earth”.

You are invited to join this Community to only learn and practice “The Words of The Buddha”, in such a way, that leads to your Enlightenment and the restoration of The Buddha’s Teachings so that you and countless beings can experience the peacefulness, liberation of mind, and complete elimination of discontentedness and the suffering it causes, known as Enlightenment.

The Words of The Buddha Book Series

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“Thank you” for choosing to learn and practice Gotama Buddha’s Teachings.

You are making the world a better place through developing your life practice based on “The Words of The Buddha”.

Continue to read and understand “The Words of The Buddha - The Path to Enlightenment - Revealing The Hidden” book series that has been laid out for all of us to achieve a better way of life.

You can connect to a group of people in a supportive environment for discussion, sharing, and learning through the Facebook group.

Daily Wisdom - Walking The Path with The Buddha

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DailyWisdom999/>

All members are accepted without judgment. It is a healthy place to talk, discuss, learn, and grow. There are resources to help you further on this Path to Enlightenment accessible online through a Group Learning Program.

Group Learning Program: LIVE Interactive Online Classes, Books, Audiobooks, Videos, Podcast and Personal Guidance are available for you.

Preface

Walking The Path with The Buddha

This book is dedicated to “you” and the complete elimination, destruction, and cessation of suffering or “discontentedness” of the mind. Thus, this book is dedicated to the elimination of discontentedness and the suffering that it causes in the entire world.

The Teachings in this book series, with some effort on your part, will lead you to everlasting peace - a peaceful mind and a peaceful life. It's your personal choices, with these Teachings serving as a guide, that will bring you these results.

We are all walking towards the darkness or towards the light. Which direction you walk is completely your choice.

This book and Teachings are meant to guide you in learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings of The Perfectly Enlightened Buddha who lived over 2,500 years ago.

The Teachings of The Buddha are timeless, meaning they are just as applicable today as they were 2,500 years ago.

Gotama Buddha's Teachings are not a religion but instead, a “better way of life”. Through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings to independently verify the truth, the mind will acquire wisdom awakening to Enlightenment.

It is suggested that you first read “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) of this same book series while seeking guidance from a Teacher. It is that book that provides a Practitioner with a solid foundation in developing a life practice that will lead to the Enlightened mind.

In order to progress on The Path to Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need a Teacher to receive guidance. One would not be able to only read a book and attain the results of an Enlightened mind.

Nothing in Gotama Buddha's Teachings is based on belief. A Buddha has already done the hard work of figuring out how to attain Enlightenment. You just need to learn and practice his Teachings to improve the condition of the mind and your life.

All his Teachings can be learned and practiced to independently observe the truth as the mind “gradually” acquires wisdom through independent verification of his Teachings and through practice of his Teachings.

This new found wisdom “gradually” improves the way the mind functions in the world through eliminating discontentedness of mind. The mind can completely eliminate all discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc. on The Path to Enlightenment.

Through learning and practicing Gotama Buddha’s Teachings with guidance, the mind becomes Enlightened in that you can observe the improvement in the condition of the mind as you eliminate all discontent feelings where the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. You are not believing The Teachings wishing for a positive outcome at some point in the future or after death. Instead, you are observing the improvements to the condition of the mind right now - in the present moment.

Only a Buddha would be able to attain Enlightenment on their own without Teachers. These are some of the criteria that make a Buddha a Buddha is that they discover The Teachings on their own attaining Enlightenment without help from a Teacher, shares their independently discovered Teachings to guide countless others to Enlightenment during the remaining time of their life, and they leave their Teachings in a condition that they guide countless others to Enlightenment after their death.

The last Buddha currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years ago.

That means you and everyone else will need Teachers on this Path to Enlightenment.

Your journey to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings is significantly improved through making the choice to learn directly with “The Words of The Buddha”.

Today, there are many resources for Teachings described as Buddhist or originating with The Buddha. But, it is only when a Practitioner chooses to investigate “The Words of The Buddha” being sourced directly from the original source, The Pāli Canon, that a Practitioner will come to understand the truth of what The Buddha actually taught and be able to implement these Teachings into your daily life to experience the results of Enlightenment.

Through learning and practicing Gotama Buddha's Teachings, in his own words, The Perfectly Enlightened One's wisdom can penetrate the mind and you can experience the breakthrough to realizing the Enlightened mind.

I have significant gratitude, appreciation, admiration, and respect for Master Teacher Gotama Buddha as his Teachings lead exactly where he said they would. To a steady, calm, stable, and unshakable mind, known as Enlightenment.

There are countless unknown and unnamed individuals who are responsible for these Teachings reaching you in this book series. These Teachings have been preserved throughout history over the last 2,500 years through the tireless efforts of Ordained and Household Practitioners. These Teachings have been preserved and shared from one generation to the next because they work.

It is now up to us to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to experience the Enlightened mind, so that we may benefit from an improved existence while also preserving these Teachings for future generations in our hearts and minds.

While books are an outstanding tool to capture The Teachings and share them worldwide, there is nothing more significant than having massive numbers of Enlightened beings in the world who can directly share these Teachings with those who choose to seek guidance in developing their life practice on The Path to Enlightenment. Each of us individually and collectively, are just one link in a long chain of Practitioners and Teachers spanning over 2,500 years.

What we choose to do in this time and place will determine how vibrant and sustaining these Teachings are for future generations. It is our work and effort to seek our own Enlightenment that we will experience results for our own mind and lay the groundwork for countless more beings after us to experience the same freedom of mind that you are now choosing to pursue.

Many people are interested in improving the world, but do not know how. It is only when we are dedicated to improving our own wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline that we will improve the world. Through improving our own life practice through learning "The Words of The Buddha" then, we will have collectively improved the world.

The problem that the unEnlightened mind is experiencing is not the outside world, but the inner world. Training the mind, the inner world, is what produces a peaceful existence. You can't control other people and what they

do. You can only decide to train your own mind to be unaffected by what others do.

It is a real struggle to exist in a world that the mind does not understand. It is “The Words of The Buddha” that explains The Natural Laws of Existence guiding the mind to acquire deep wisdom to make better free will decisions through a purified mind.



**Master Teacher Gotama Buddha
(The Tathāgata)**

Chapter 1

Words Which Should Be Studied, Learned, and Investigated in The Foremost Assembly

And what is the assembly trained in investigation, not in conceited talk.

Here, in this kind of assembly, when those discourses are being recited that are mere poetry composed by poets, beautiful in words and phrases, created by outsiders, spoken by (their) disciples, the Monks are not interested to listen to them, do not lend an ear to them, or apply their minds to understand them; they do not think those teachings should be studied and learned.

But when those discourses spoken by The Tathāgata are being recited that are deep, deep in meaning, world-transcending, connected with emptiness, the Monks are interested to listen to them, lend an ear to them, and apply their minds to understand them; they think those Teachings should be studied and learned. And having learned those Teachings, they question each other about them and investigate them thoroughly, (asking): How is this? What is the meaning of this? (They) disclose to (others) what is obscure and clarify what is unclear, and dispel their confusion about numerous misunderstandings.

This is called the assembly trained in investigation, not in conceited talk.

And what is the assembly trained in conceited talk, not in investigation.

Here, in this kind of assembly, when those discourses are being spoken by The Tathāgata are being recited that are deep, deep in meaning, world-transcending, connected with emptiness, the Monks are not interested to listen to them, do not lend an ear to them, or apply their minds to understand them; they do not think those Teachings should be studied and learned.

But when those discourses are being recited that are mere poetry composed by poets, beautiful in words and phrases, created by outsiders, spoken by (their) disciples, they are interested to listen to them, lend an ear to them, and apply their minds to understand them; they think those teachings should be studied and learned. And having learned those teachings, they do not question each other about them or investigate them thoroughly, [asking]: How is this? What is the meaning of this? They do not disclose [to others] what is obscure and clarify what is unclear, or dispel their confusion about numerous misunderstandings.

This is called the assembly trained in conceited talk, not in investigation.

These, Monks, are the two kinds of assemblies. Of these two kinds of assemblies, the assembly trained in investigation, not in conceited talk, is foremost.

(Reference: AN 2.47)

During the lifetime of the man we now refer to as Gotama Buddha, there were several communities of roaming Ascetics, also known as “Spiritual Seekers”, whose primary Teacher claimed it was their teachings which led to Enlightenment.

As Siddhartha Gotama left the royal palace to embark on his journey towards seeking Enlightenment, he sought training and instruction from one of these Teachers. He spent time learning the teachings and had mastered the teachings shared by this first Teacher. The Teacher declared him to be able to fully represent his teachings as a masterful student now being declared a Teacher. Siddhartha Gotama observed that while he was declared a master of this community’s teachings in a short time, his mind was still discontent and lacked the discipline to experience the Enlightened mind. Due to his continued challenges of a discontent mind, he chose to leave this community and seek guidance with a new Teacher.

Soon after receiving instruction with his new Teacher, this Teacher also determined that Siddhartha Gotama had mastered his teachings and declared him to be able to represent his teachings as a Master Teacher. But, with this second designation of being a Master Teacher in a second community claiming to have the teachings that lead to Enlightenment, Siddhartha Gotama observed his mind was still discontent.

Realizing that he had spent the last two (2) years learning two different approaches towards the attainment of Enlightenment and becoming accomplished in both disciplines as a Master Teacher, he could observe that the condition of his mind was not yet steady, stable, unshakable, with peacefulness, calmness, serenity, and contentedness with joy.

He had essentially succeeded at mastering the teachings of two different approaches to attaining Enlightenment, yet the condition of his mind had not improved to the point of complete and total peacefulness. He also had not discovered the answers to the initial questions that ignited his motivation to leave the royal palace and pursue the answers to why human beings experienced sickness, aging, and death.

He was no closer to understanding the core and central problem he sought to investigate as he was when he first left the royal palace. While he had mastered two different disciplines of teachings, he had not solved the challenge of a discontent mind and he did not have the answers to why human beings experienced sickness, aging, and death.

So, he decided to leave from the communities of wandering Ascetics retreating to isolation in the forest embarking on a journey of independent investigation of how to solve the problem of the discontent mind and why human beings experienced sickness, aging, and death.

After a total of a six (6) year journey, four (4) years independently, where he gradually discovered The Teachings that do indeed lead to Enlightenment, he then returned to share his independently discovered Teachings with those who chose to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings he had discovered.

Now, a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, Gotama Buddha performed a miracle for five (5) Ascetics who were then convinced, he had attained Enlightenment.

He delivers his first discourse of The Four Noble Truths helping these first five (5) Students understand the problem of the unEnlightened mind, the cause of the problem, the elimination of the problem, and the path leading to the complete elimination of the problem. His Teachings were detailed and eye opening for these first five (5) Students who understood, he was surely Enlightened.

But, a Buddha does not rely on miracles to convince large numbers of people that he is, in fact, a Buddha. Instead, a Buddha skillfully shares his Teachings with others in a humble way guiding those who choose to learn, reflect, and practice his Teachings towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

There is no outward physical indication of one who has attained Enlightenment and a Buddha does not advertise that they are a Buddha, but instead humbly goes about their objective of sharing their Teachings into the world, in such a way, that will guide countless people to Enlightenment during their lifetime, and leaves The Teachings in a condition that after their death, will guide countless more people to the attainment of Enlightenment.

During Gotama Buddha's lifetime in the region of the world he lived, modern day Nepal and Northeastern India, there were several communities of roaming Ascetics that continued to share what they felt were the teachings that lead to Enlightenment. There were different communities that felt they had discovered The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. So, there were many competing views and opinions of what Enlightenment is, The Teachings to attain Enlightenment, and the methods of training that would produce Enlightenment.

There were competing communities of Ascetics with a Master Teacher all claiming it was their teachings that would produce Enlightenment. Various members of these communities would listen to talks on the teachings and applied various amounts of effort to implementing the teachings into their daily life.

Due to the environment of competing views and opinions, along with there being no way to confirm for others that Gotama Buddha was indeed a Buddha, various Teachers shared their teachings throughout the community.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that there are two different types of "assemblies" or "communities" that exist.

- 1.) One trained in investigation of The Teachings, not in conceited talk, and
- 2.) One trained in conceited talk, not in investigation.

He associates those who are learning, reflecting, and practicing his Teachings as a community that is trained in investigation of The Teachings, not in conceited talk. And, he associates those who are interested in listening to the teachings of "mere poets" as a community that is trained in conceited talk, not in investigation.

A Buddha knows with 100% certainty that their Teachings do, in fact, lead to Enlightenment because they themselves are experiencing the results of the Enlightened mind. They (1) discover The Teachings through their own independent journey, (2) share their independently discovered Teachings for the remaining time of their life guiding countless individuals to Enlightenment and (3) leave The Teachings in such a condition that after their death countless more individuals will be able to attain Enlightenment.

Not everyone would be interested to necessarily learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of The Buddha because it is hard work and requires an extensive amount of energy and effort to learn, reflect, and train one's mind to attain Enlightenment.

So, in an environment where individuals are unable to determine that a specific Teacher is or is not a Buddha and the only way to know whether a certain collection of Teachings lead to Enlightenment or not is to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings - there were many people who did not learn from The Buddha, but instead chose the approach of listening to Teachers who were speaking "mere poetry composed by poets, beautiful in words and phrases". These words are easier on the ears and the mind, thus, no hard work ensures the mind can remain complacent.

Gotama Buddha would be interested in encouraging people to learn, reflect, and practice his Teachings helping Students to understand the difference between his Teachings and those teachings of other Teachers doing so using "Right Speech" which includes not disparaging or degrading others.

The Buddha, using Right Speech, led his Students to understand the difference between his Teachings and those of others.

The Buddha, whom not everyone understood was a Buddha, was training his Students in investigation to uncover the true Teachings that lead to Enlightenment to acquire wisdom, thus, producing a liberated mind while speaking humbly - without conceit.

But, if one is speaking "mere poetry composed by poets, beautiful in words and phrases" without benefit of learning, reflecting, and practicing Teachings to acquire wisdom that improves the condition of one's mind and their life, these teachings would not lead to Enlightenment, which would be considered useless by a Buddha as individuals would gain no tangible benefits from the actual teachings being shared.

Chapter 2

One Who Points Out Treasure

Ānanda, I shall not treat you as the potter treats the raw damp clay. Repeatedly restraining you, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. Repeatedly guiding you of what to avoid, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. The truly dedicated will stand [the test].

Regard him as one who points out treasure, the wise one who seeing your faults guides you of what to avoid. Stay with this sort of Teacher.

For the one who stays with a Teacher of this sort, things get better, not worse.

(Reference: MN 122 & DHP 76-77)

In order to share The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment, a Buddha or any Teacher, would need to help Students uncover unwholesome qualities in the mind and in their life practice while pointing out the cultivation of wholesome qualities. A Student will need to put their trust in the Teacher while investigating the areas of improvement the Teacher identifies and shares with the Student.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares with one of his closest Students Ānanda that he will not “repeatedly restrain” him, but instead he will guide him in what to avoid in regards to unwholesome mental, verbal, and bodily conduct along with all the other Teachings that are needed to experience Enlightenment.

The Buddha shares that “I shall not treat you as the potter treats the raw damp clay”. “Raw damp clay” would need to be constantly shaped and molded by “the potter” (i.e. Teacher). The potter would need to form the clay into the ideal object. So The Buddha is sharing that he is not going to “repeatedly restrain Ānanda” attempting to shape him into the ideal person. Instead, he will speak to him and guide him letting him make his own decisions rather than being constantly shaped by The Teacher.

It is a real “test” of the Student’s mind to understand, acknowledge, and improve their life practice based on a Teacher’s guidance pointing out areas of improvement. The unEnlightened mind typically is only interested in hearing pleasing and agreeable words and the ego does not typically enjoy understanding unpleasing and disagreeable words from others. So, hearing a Teacher’s guidance to improve one’s life practice needs to be openly understood by the Student rather than allowing the ego of the unEnlightened mind to feel rejected or disheartened by a Teacher “who points out treasure”. The “treasure” that a Teacher points out are those areas they see for a Student to improve and further progress towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

The “test” is that the Student will need to develop the determination, dedication, and diligence to actively seek guidance for improvement of their life practice. Without

conscious choices to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings while seeking guidance, a Student would have no ability to attain Enlightenment. Without understanding the unwholesome qualities that exist in the Student's mind to eliminate and the wholesome qualities to cultivate through a Teacher's guidance, a Student would have no ability to progress in their practice to the ultimate attainment of a liberated mind.

A Student will need to be inviting and accepting of a Teacher's guidance in order to identify areas of improvement and then learn, reflect, and practice Teachings to improve their life practice. If a Student allows the ego to block the guidance from the Teacher while feeling displeasure in the Teacher "pointing out treasure", they will not "stand the test" of receiving guidance from the Teacher to progress towards Enlightenment.

A Teacher would need to exert a significant amount of time, effort, energy, and resources to guide a Student to Enlightenment. A Teacher should not ask for any benefits from their Students, but instead, await what is given as offerings. A Teacher's only goal should be to guide a Student to Enlightenment without any personal gain for themselves whatsoever.

So, a Teacher who takes their time, effort, energy, and resources to "point out treasure" should be regarded as a "wise one who seeing your faults" will help you to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to attain Enlightenment.

The Buddha's advice is to "stay with this sort of Teacher" as things only "get better, not worse". As the condition of the mind and one's life, "only gets better, not worse" when a Student is open to understanding guidance from a wise Teacher who kindly and patiently shares areas for improvement while not seeking any benefit from you - their only goal is to help you. In this type of relationship with a wise Teacher pointing out areas of improvement as "treasure" to be appreciated based on the goal of helping you, you should "stay with this sort of Teacher" as things only "get better, not worse".

Hearing The Hard Truth - Can Trigger Aversion in One's Own Mind

When sharing these Teachings with Students, there are times when a Student either asks a question or makes a statement that a Teacher needs to then respond to, in order to help them, and all individuals, better understand The Path to Enlightenment.

The response, needs to be honest, straight forward, easy to understand, and "the truth", while all being wrapped in loving-kindness and compassion.

Even in doing so, hearing the "hard" truth is oftentimes challenging for a Student and can leave an individual forming a judgment about the Teacher that is untrue and a misperception.

For example, recently, I was teaching at the Temple and when explaining that it is unwise to lie, to tell any type of falsehood, a Student asked me to expound upon this Teaching by providing an example and asking what I might choose to do in that situation.

When explaining how to handle this situation through The Natural Law of Kamma, based in The Teachings of The Buddha, a different Student hastily commented "I will never do that".

My response was along the following:

I shared that each person should feel comfortable to do as they please. That I am not here to convince them of what they should or should not do. Instead, I am sharing what would lead to the elimination of craving/desire/attachment, and produce the Enlightened mental state, where the mind is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy. A permanent mental state.

I mentioned, as part of my answer, that while I understand the Student currently thinks in the way that they currently do, “that they would never do what I suggested”, I explained that with deeper thought, reflection, and consideration, they might change their decision on whether or not they might implement what was suggested.

I also shared, that the reason why their mind is currently experiencing discontentedness and not experiencing permanent peace and joy, is due to the mind not currently understanding these Teachings and how an individual would need to eliminate its craving/desire/attachment to get to that peace and joy. That lying, would never produce a wholesome result (i.e. wholesome Kamma) as it is based in craving/desire/attachment.

The Student appeared to not like to hear this “hard truth” about their own mind and highly disagreed with what was being shared.

The unEnlightened mind does not know what it does not know, and it is oftentimes disinterested in “letting go” of its false beliefs, opinions, views, and unwholesomeness. This is why the “intention of renunciation” is such an important component of The Path to Enlightenment and the second factor of The Eight Fold Path, a core and central Teaching of The Buddha.

So, while a person may be interested in the peacefulness and joy of the Enlightened mental state, the unEnlightened mind is oftentimes truly complacent and disinterested in implementing change to improve, walking The Path to Enlightenment, developing this “better way of life”.

It is very challenging to look inward, realize that one is imperfect, and that there is real work to be done to improve.

Therefore, when hearing the “hard truth”, an individual could potentially decide to push away the very Teachings that are going to help them to experience the peace and joy they aspire to experience. The mind’s craving/desiring to continue to do things the way it currently does, being disinterested to implement change, can produce painful feelings within the mind, then as part of “wrong view” one could see the Teacher as the problem, and choose to exercise aversion, pushing away the very thing that would help them - the Teacher and The Teachings of The Buddha. Oftentimes, this comes with judgment, looking down on the Teacher thinking, that somehow, they are rude, impolite, unkind, unfriendly, or disrespectful. They may even judge them as being egotistical and full of conceit.

When in reality, what a Teacher is doing, is helping the mind of the Student “awaken” to the very wisdom that it needs to hear to make progress on The Path to Enlightenment. But, that wisdom is oftentimes a “hard truth” that the unEnlightened is truly not interested to hear, and due to the mind’s craving/desire and conceit, the mind experiences painful

feelings attributing those to The Teacher, when in reality, they are coming from one's own mind.

Therefore, it is much easier for the unEnlightened mind to blame the Teacher for the arising painful feelings, and judge the Teacher, thinking the Teacher has done something wrong, bad, unwise, or out of their own conceit.

When in reality, the Teacher did the most loving, kind, and compassionate thing they could ever do. They shared Teachings with the Student, without any expectation of anything in return, that are going to help them move beyond what they are currently thinking and closer to this "better way of life" as taught by The Buddha, a peaceful and joyful mental state that is permanent. It is just that the Student is not understanding that "better way of life" and thinking that by the Teacher sharing a "hard truth", and their mind being uncomfortable with that truth, that somehow the Teacher has done something unwise or out of conceit.

It is important to understand, the same things that brought someone to The Path to Enlightenment, oftentimes, are the same things that will turn an individual away from The Path to Enlightenment.

What I mean by this is, it is the mind's cravings/desires/attachments/wants/expectations that have led to all of one's own discontentedness, difficulties, struggles, and broken relationships. The mind's conceit and lack of wisdom, has led to relationships that are not harmonious. The mind's aversion has repeatedly pushed people and situations out of one's life without actually addressing the core and central problem rooted deep within the unEnlightened mind, craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations, and all the other pollutions of mind - The Ten Fetters.

Therefore, in a situation where the mind is craving/desiring/wanting/expecting the Teacher to be a certain way, and they do not meet those expectations, the individual's mind will become discontent, attribute those feelings to the Teacher, judge the Teacher, and then push away the Teacher and The Path to Enlightenment.

This is all unfortunate for the Student, because the very Teachings they need to overcome the pollutions of mind, are no longer accessible to them based on their unwise choice to push away The Teachings and a Teacher.

So, I recommend understanding that a Teacher is going to "point out treasure" for their Students. Value that dedication, time, energy, effort, and commitment that the Teacher is applying to help you, without any expectation of anything in return. Realize, that no matter how polite, kind, friendly, and respectful the Teacher is being, when a craving/desire/attachment is triggered within one's own mind, those painful feelings are not being caused by the Teacher but instead, one's own mind.

Practicing aversion, pushing away the Teacher and The Teachings of The Buddha, is not going to solve the painful feelings. Instead, it will just ensure they continue.

Hearing the hard truth can trigger aversion in one's own mind because it is triggering a craving/desire/attachment to appear perfect, smart, intelligent, or to be talked to in a specific way.

But, the most loving, kind, and compassionate thing a Teacher can do, is give you that “hard truth” so that you know what is “true reality” and have the opportunity to remedy it, solve it, eradicate it, and get closer to Enlightenment. And, if an individual chooses that truth is too hard to bear, due to the painful feelings arising in the mind all caused by the mind itself, and then one negatively judges the Teacher, due to not being perceived by the Teacher and other members of The Community in a certain way, ultimately choosing to walk away from the very help that is going to allow the mind to overcome its challenges, then at least as a Teacher, they will know, “I did the very best thing I could do for this individual”.

“I told them the truth”, no matter how hard that was for them to hear, and perhaps, someday, they might consider what was shared and decide to learn, grow, and evolve based on that “hard truth”.

“I told them the truth” and at least now they can choose whether to walk forward towards an improved way of life or, they can run away from that challenge and “hard truth”, deciding to remain in the “unknowing of true reality” with a lack of wisdom, choosing to stay in the darkness.

The Buddha taught, do "not to shrink back from the struggle". Because, running away from a “hard truth” will never lead to Enlightenment, or any kind of improvement in one’s own life.

Someday, you might hear a “hard truth” from your Teacher. I would like you to understand, that is being shared with the utmost care, politeness, kindness, friendliness, and respect. It is being delivered with the utmost love and compassion for you.

As The Buddha shares...

One Who Points Out Treasure

Ānanda, I shall not treat you as the potter treats the raw damp clay. Repeatedly restraining you, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. Repeatedly guiding you of what to avoid, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. The truly dedicated will stand [the test].

Regard him as one who points out treasure, the wise one who seeing your faults guides you of what to avoid. Stay with this sort of Teacher.

For the one who stays with a Teacher of this sort, things get better, not worse.

(Reference: MN 122 & DHP 76-77)

Chapter 3

Rare That A Tathāgata Arises in The World

Monks, suppose that this great earth had become one mass of water, and a man would throw a ring with a single hole upon it. An easterly wind would drive it westward; a westerly wind would drive it eastward; a northerly wind would drive it southward; a southerly wind would drive it northward. There was a blind turtle which would come to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, Monks, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that ring with a single hole?

‘It would be rare, Venerable Sir, that the blind turtle coming to surface once every hundred years, would insert its neck into that ring with a single hole.’

So too, Monks, it is rare that one obtains the human state; rare that a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One arises in the world; rare that The Teachings and Discipline proclaimed by The Tathāgata shines in the world.

You have obtained that human state, Monks; a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One has arisen in the world; The Teachings and Discipline proclaimed by The Tathāgata shines in the world.

Therefore, Monks, an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is discontentedness’; an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the cause of discontentedness’; an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the elimination of discontentedness’; an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.’

(Reference: SN 56.48)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that the arising of a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, a Tathāgata, is extremely rare.

It is extremely rare and unique for a Buddha to have arisen in the world, for one to have obtained the human state during the lifetime of an actual Buddha, and for The Teachings of a Buddha that lead to Enlightenment to “shine in the world”.

Due to the rare and unique circumstances individuals found themselves in, during the lifetime of Gotama Buddha, he encouraged them to make an effort to understand The Four Noble Truths. A Practitioner making the breakthrough to learn, reflect, and practice The Four Noble Truths will have established “Right View” and be clearly headed in the direction of Enlightenment, and due to the rare and unique circumstances of having a Buddha arise, obtaining the human state, and The Teachings shining in the world, this would be the ideal time for a human being to attain Enlightenment as studying with a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha would be a significant advantage in one’s own ability to attain Enlightenment.

Chapter 4

The Perfectly Enlightened Ones in The Past, Future or at Present, Are All Fully Awakened to The Four Noble Truths

Monks, whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, in the past fully awakened to things as they really are, all fully awakened to The Four Noble Truths as they really are.

Whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, in the future will fully awaken to things as they really are, all will fully awaken to The Four Noble Truths as they really are.

Whatever Arahants, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, at present have fully awakened to things as they really are, all have fully awakened to The Four Noble Truths as they really are.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

Therefore, Monks, an effort should be made to understand: 'This is discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the cause of discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the elimination of discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.'

(Reference: SN 56.5)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that any Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, a Tathāgata, in the past, currently, and in the future would need to awaken to the wisdom of The Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths is what establishes “Right View” and all other Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment are built upon learning, reflecting, and practicing The Four Noble Truths.

A Practitioner would have no ability to attain Enlightenment without learning, reflecting, and practicing The Four Noble Truths, thus, a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha in the past, currently, or future would need to understand and practice The Four Noble Truths as a foundational Teaching that leads to Enlightenment. This Teaching, along with many others, highlights how important The Four Noble Truths are on The Path to Enlightenment. You will need to learn, reflect, and practice The Four Noble Truths in order to establish Right View and progress towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

Chapter 5

The Perfectly Enlightened One

Monks, there are these Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

It is because he has fully awakened to these Four Noble Truths as they really are that The Tathāgata is called the Arahant, The Perfectly Enlightened One.

Therefore, Monks, an effort should be made to understand: 'This is discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the cause of discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the elimination of discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.'

(Reference: SN 56.23)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he establishes yet again, how important and central The Four Noble Truths are to The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment and that a Practitioner should make the effort to understand these truths.

Chapter 6

Encourage, Settle, and Establish for Making The Breakthrough to The Four Noble Truths

Monks, those for whom you have compassion and who think you should be heeded - whether friends or colleagues, relatives or kinsmen - these you should encourage, settle, and establish for making the breakthrough to The Four Noble Truths as they really are.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness, the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness, the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness, the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

Those for whom you have compassion and who think you should be heeded - whether friends or colleagues, relatives or kinsmen - these you should encourage, settle, and establish for making the breakthrough to these Four Noble Truths as they really are.

Therefore, Monks, an effort should be made to understand: 'This is discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the cause of discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the elimination of discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.'

(Reference: SN 56.26)

As one learns, reflects, and practices The Path to Enlightenment, the mind and your life will become more and more peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy where the mind will completely eliminate all discontent feelings upon the attainment of Enlightenment.

Having made the breakthrough to The Four Noble Truths and progressing towards Enlightenment, you will observe how much discontentedness is in the world and beings roam around unaware of the suffering they are experiencing and causing for themselves.

You may find beings, whether in personal or professional relationships with you, who might listen to your suggestions that you can encourage them to seek guidance in pursuing The Path to Enlightenment, so they can help themselves eliminate all discontentedness in the mind. Because as you observe the life changing improvements to the condition of the mind and your life, would you really choose to leave those who are closest to you struggling with discontentedness or would you instead choose to skillfully introduce them to the option of gaining access to these Teachings?

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that anyone who is close to us whom we feel would listen to our suggestions we might decide to help them to gain access to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment.

If you choose to introduce the ability for those close to you to learn and practice these Teachings, you may need to consider skillful ways to suggest one learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings as you should not be forceful or pushy in your practice of loving-kindness and compassion to recommending one consider The Path to Enlightenment as a solution to their discontent mind.

1.) Loving-kindness (Pāli: mettā): is active goodwill towards all beings without judgment. A genuine interest in seeing all beings be well.

2.) Compassion (Pāli: karuṇā): is concern for the misfortunes of others.

Those who are not familiar with The Path to Enlightenment and have no exposure to The Buddha's Teachings, or those who are learning through other traditions of Buddhist Teachings may be uninterested or offended in the recommendation to explore options to improve the condition of their mind and their life. If you choose to be forceful or pushy, this would be due to your own craving/desire/attachment or expectations for a certain outcome and will not result in a wholesome outcome.

Instead, if you are going to present the option for someone to consider these Teachings for their life, it is important that you politely, kindly, friendly, and respectfully find a way to suggest that a person close to you read a book, listen to an audiobook, watch a video, listen to a podcast, attend a class, and/or seek personal guidance with a Teacher who can help them learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to liberate the mind to Enlightenment.

Chapter 7

The Four Noble Truths

Monks, there are these Four Noble Truths.

What four?

The noble truth of discontentedness,
the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness,
the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness,
the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

And what, Monks, is the noble truth of discontentedness?

It should be said: The Five Aggregates subject to clinging; that is, the form aggregate subject to clinging, the feeling aggregate subject to clinging, the perception aggregate subject to clinging, the volitional formation aggregate subject to clinging, the consciousness aggregate subject to clinging. This is called the noble truth of discontentedness.

And what, Monks, is the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness?

It is this craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by excitement and desire, seeking excitement here and there; that is craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination. This is called the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness.

And what, Monks, is the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness?

It is the remainderless fading away and elimination of the same craving, the giving up and letting go of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it. This is called the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness.

And what, Monks, is the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness?

It is this Noble Eight Fold Path, that is, Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration. This is called the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

These, Monks, are The Four Noble Truths.

Therefore, Monks, an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is discontentedness’; an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the cause of discontentedness’; an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the elimination of discontentedness’; an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.’

(Reference: SN 56.13)

This is Gotama Buddha’s Teaching on The Four Noble Truths where he explains the problem of the unEnlightened mind, the cause of the problem, the elimination of the problem, and the path leading to the complete elimination of the problem.

A Practitioner who learns, reflects, and practices The Four Noble Truths has deeply established “Right View” and has made the breakthrough towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

This is a primary, fundamental, and foundational Teaching needed by every Practitioner to attain Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of The Four Noble Truths is available in this same book series found in Chapter 4 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

It is suggested that you first learn The Four Noble Truths through (Volume 1). The explanation of The Four Noble Truths shared in that book will help you to gain insight into this important Teaching in a way that can be applied to your life to experience the breakthrough and establish Right View. (Volume 1) provides extensive details on The Four Noble Truths and it is best to learn the content in that book prior to investigating what is shared in this book.

1.) The First Noble Truth titled, “the noble truth of discontentedness”, establishes “the problem” with the unEnlightened mind through an understanding of The Five Aggregates.

The Five Aggregates are what makes “a being, a being”. A living being will have all five aggregates, also known as “elements” or “collections”.

The Five Aggregates

Form: the physical body.

Feelings: results of experiences in the mind through The Six Sense Bases.

Perceptions: a belief or opinion based on how things seem.

Volitional Formations: choices or decisions that are made.

Consciousness: the mind.

It is when the mind “clings” or “holds on” to The Five Aggregates that the mind experiences continued discontentedness. Observing the impermanent nature of The Five Aggregates, a human being can “let go” no longer experiencing discontentedness due to “holding on” to The Five Aggregates experiencing constant rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

Due to clinging to The Five Aggregates and a being coming into existence, the mind will experience discontentedness.

All unEnlightened beings will experience discontentedness.

Discontentedness: Gotama Buddha describes three feelings as discontent. The goal of these Teachings is to eliminate discontentedness of mind providing the mind a permanent place to reside in Enlightenment.

- A pleasant feeling (happiness, excitement, elation, thrill, exhilaration, euphoria, etc.)
- A painful feeling (sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, stress, etc.)
- A feeling that is neither painful-nor-pleasant (boredom, loneliness, melancholy, shyness, displeased, uncomfortable, unsatisfied, etc.)

2.) The Second Noble Truth titled, “the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness”, explains the underlying cause of why the mind experiences discontentedness.

It is craving/desire/attachment that causes the mind to experience discontentedness.

Craving/Desire/Attachment/Wants/Expectations/Grasping/Holding/Clinging: a mental longing for something with a strong eagerness. The mind pulling in a direction for objects of its affection.

The Buddha provides specific cravings that the unEnlightened mind will experience. It is “craving which leads to renewed existence”. Not only does craving cause discontentedness but craving is the fuel that leads to rebirth. If there is craving/desire/attachment in the mind, a being will experience rebirth.

The unEnlightened mind will seek pleasant feelings chasing after the objects of its affection. The Buddha explains this as craving that is “accompanied by excitement and desire, seeking excitement here and there; that is craving for sensual pleasures”. The unEnlightened mind will pull in the direction of the objects of its affection and if it gets what it “wants”, the mind experiences temporary pleasant feelings. If the mind does not get what it “wants”, it will experience painful feelings. Many times the mind does not know what it “wants” and will experience feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant.

Craving/desire/attachment keeps the mind in a continuous cycle of discontentedness never being able to find peace or be at ease because it is constantly chasing after something experiencing pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant.

The Buddha further explains how the mind has “craving for existence” which is a mental longing with a strong eagerness to exist in the world. With the mind holding on to existence, a being will continue to experience discontentedness and discontentedness in future existences within The Cycle of Rebirth due to the craving/desire/attachment in the mind for continued existence. If there is birth, there is going to be discontentedness.

The mind also can have “craving for extermination” or death. This would be a being who is interested in death through suicide or other destructive conduct. If the mind has craving/desire to eliminate life, the mind is not in the middle and will experience discontentedness and rebirth due to this craving.

All craving/desire/attachment will produce discontentedness in the mind. There is no such thing as a wholesome craving/desire/attachment.

3.) The Third Noble Truth titled, “the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness” helps a Practitioner understand that to eliminate discontentedness of mind, one needs to eliminate craving/desire/attachment.

Through training the mind to eliminate mental longing with a strong eagerness, the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy because it is no longer seeking pleasant feelings through impermanent conditions and, thus, welcoming in painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. Instead, the mind is trained to be inwardly peaceful and content or “satisfied with what is”.

The Buddha explains the elimination of discontentedness as “it is the remainderless fading away and elimination of the same craving, the giving up and letting go of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it”.

Through training the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment, the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. Through training the mind to no longer chase after the objects of its affection, it can find inner peace no longer experiencing conditioned temporary feelings that are unsatisfactory. Instead, the mind can experience unconditioned mental qualities such as peacefulness, calmness, serenity, and contentedness with joy.

The inner feelings of the Enlightened mind are not based on impermanent conditions but instead, the mind is always peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy not based on temporary conditions. This is accomplished through training the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment as described in this entire book series.

Through training the mind in this way, the mind can eliminate 100% of all discontent feelings.

4.) The Fourth Noble Truth titled, “the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness” explains that the way to entirely eliminate discontentedness is through The Eight Fold Path.

It is The Eight Fold Path that provides the complete and perfect solution for how to actively train the mind to eliminate 100% of all discontentedness. While craving/desire/attachment is the cause of the problem and the solution to eliminate discontentedness is to eliminate all craving/desire/attachment, there is an entire path one needs to learn, reflect on, and practice to liberate the mind from discontentedness.

The Buddha explains this as “it is this Noble Eight Fold Path, that is, Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration”.

The Four Noble Truths is the primary core Teaching that establishes Right View helping a Practitioner to examine the problem, cause of the problem, solution to the problem, and the path leading to the complete elimination of the problem. It is The Eight Fold Path that is the central Teaching of The Buddha with the vast majority of his Teachings integrating into The Eight Fold Path in one way or another.

It is through learning, reflecting, and practicing The Eight Fold Path that the mind is trained to be able to completely eliminate all unwholesome decisions that motivate unskillful conduct that leads to unwholesome results. Through training the mind in The Eight Fold Path, it is transformed into making only wholesome decisions that motivate skillful conduct that leads to wholesome results.

Through practicing The Eight Fold Path for an extended period of time, the mind and one's life is completely transformed into living "a better way of life" offered through The Buddha's Teachings.

His Teachings are not rules to follow but instead, guidance to help a Practitioner deeply understand The Natural Laws of Existence related to how the mind and the world functions so that through this new found wisdom, one can choose to train their own mind to function through these natural laws. It is a real struggle and difficult to live in a world that the mind does not understand. It is The Buddha's Teachings that explain how the mind and the world functions through The Natural Laws of Existence. Understanding and practicing The Natural Laws of Existence the mind can be peaceful and at ease no longer struggling through countless difficult and complicated decisions but instead, employ the wisdom found in these Teachings through one's free will wise decision making in a well developed life practice.

The Buddha shares training guidance to help the mind eliminate the taints or pollution deep inside the mind that is inhibiting one from experiencing the brilliance or brightness of being able to live with all beings peacefully and in harmony with one another through focusing on training one's own mind and allowing others to do the same.

The Buddha encourages Students to make an effort to understand and practice The Four Noble Truths as the first breakthrough into understanding why the mind is discontent and how to eliminate 100% of all discontentedness through sharing "an effort should be made to understand: 'This is discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the cause of discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the elimination of discontentedness'; an effort should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.'"

An Enlightened being knows the peace and tranquility of living life through this Enlightened wisdom of The Buddha. The mind is at ease and never discontent.

This can only be accomplished through one's own efforts and dedication to progressing on The Path to Enlightenment.

The Buddha nor your Teacher can give you Enlightenment. It is only you who can become determined, dedicated, and diligent to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to experience this transformation in your life.

Through making the effort to deeply understand and practice this new found wisdom, the mind will then understand The Natural Laws of Existence discovering a world and life that you never knew existed. A life where the mind is free from the constant struggles and difficulties of daily life but instead, can function with ease and in harmony with all beings.

Making the breakthrough to The Four Noble Truths the mind can take a few breaths knowing the problem, the cause of the problem, the solution to the problem, and the complete solution to the problem as The Path to Enlightenment.

Without this breakthrough, it will be very challenging for a Practitioner to understand anything else that The Buddha has shared to help you eliminate 100% of all the discontentedness in the mind.

Detailed explanation of The Four Noble Truths is available in this same book series found in Chapter 4 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) and you can seek guidance with the author of this book to breakthrough to understanding The Four Noble Truths.

Chapter 8

The Two-Eyed Person

Monks, there are these three kinds of person found existing in the world.

What three?

The blind person,
the one-eyed person, and
the two-eyed person.

(1) And what, Monks, is the blind person?

Here, some person lacks the kind of eye with which one can acquire wealth not yet acquired and increase wealth already acquired, and he also lacks the kind of eye with which one can know wholesome and unwholesome qualities, blameworthy and blameless qualities, inferior and superior qualities, dark and bright qualities with their counterparts. This is called the blind person.

(2) And what is the one-eyed person?

Here, some person has the kind of eye with which one can acquire wealth not yet acquired and increase wealth already acquired, but he lacks the kind of eye with which one can know wholesome and unwholesome qualities, blameworthy and blameless qualities, inferior and superior qualities, dark and bright qualities with their counterparts. This is called the one-eyed person.

(3) And what is the two-eyed person?

Here, some person has the kind of eye with which one can acquire wealth not yet acquired and increase wealth already acquired, and he also has the kind of eye with which one can know wholesome and unwholesome qualities, blameworthy and blameless qualities, inferior and superior qualities, dark and bright qualities with their counterparts. This is called the two-eyed person.

These, Monks, are the three kinds of persons found existing in the world.

And how, Monks, does a Monk have attentive eyes

Here, a Monk understands as it really is: 'This is discontentedness'; a Monk understands as it really is: 'This is the cause of discontentedness'; a Monk understands as it really is: 'This is the elimination of discontentedness'; a Monk understands as it really is: 'This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.'

It is in this way that a Monk has attentive eyes.

(Reference: AN 3.29)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the three types of people existing in the world shared as a simile connected to the eyes of an individual as skills/abilities one would possess.

One eye is related to wealth with the second eye related to being able to observe qualities to eliminate or cultivate.

Gotama Buddha would oftentimes describe his observations in the world around him through similes discussing various qualities and attributes of individuals so that one can aspire to cultivate these qualities, not as a way of looking at others positively or negatively.

It would be helpful for a human being to acquire the ability to “acquire wealth not yet acquired and increase wealth already acquired” while also acquiring the ability to “know wholesome and unwholesome qualities, blameworthy and blameless qualities, inferior and superior qualities, dark and bright qualities with their counterparts”.

With these abilities, a Practitioner can improve their life through developing the ability to improve their income to provide for the needed supplies to sustain one's life (food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care) and to help others through a practice of generosity (giving and sharing). And, through being able to identify qualities that are wholesome and unwholesome, one is able to more readily learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment to eliminate the unwholesome qualities and cultivate the wholesome qualities.

He then goes on to describe that Monks would have “attentive” eyes, highly developed eyes, through understanding The Four Noble Truths. Because one who understands The Four Noble Truths can practice this Teaching making the breakthrough to establishing Right View and progressing on The Path to Enlightenment. A Practitioner who understands The Four Noble Truths has developed and acquired important wisdom needed for the attainment of Enlightenment.

Chapter 9

Wholesome Friendship, Wholesome Companionship, Wholesome Comradeship

On one occasion, Great King, I was living among the Sakyans, where there is a town of the Sakyans named Nagaraka. Then the Monk Ānanda approached me, paid homage (respect) to me, sat down to one side, and said:

'Venerable Sir, this is half of the holy life, that is: wholesome friendship, wholesome companionship, wholesome comradeship.'

When this was said, Great King, I told the Monk Ānanda:

Not so, Ānanda! Not so, Ānanda! This is the entire holy life, Ānanda, that is, wholesome friendship, wholesome companionship, wholesome comradeship. When a Monk has a wholesome friend, wholesome companion, a wholesome comrade, it is to be predicted that he will develop and cultivate The Noble Eight Fold Path.

(Reference: SN 3.18)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the importance of developing wholesome relationships as a positive influence for one to progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

If a Practitioner makes wise choices in their friendships and associates looking to cultivate wholesome relationships, they will find their mind will have a tendency to lean towards wholesome moral conduct and activities, thus, improving one's life practice.

Conversely, if a Practitioner makes unwise choices in their friends and associates looking to cultivate unwholesome relationships, they will find their mind will have a tendency to lean towards unwholesome moral conduct and activities, thus, negatively influencing one's decision making and life practice.

Including in your life encouraging, supporting, and motivating relationships is ideal for a Practitioner to develop their life practice and for the mutual encouragement, support, and motivation for the attainment of Enlightenment.

Chapter 10

The Entire Holy Life Is Wholesome Friendship, Wholesome Companionship, Wholesome Comradeship

And how, Ānanda, does a Monk who has a wholesome friend, a wholesome companion, a wholesome comrade, develop and cultivate The Noble Eight Fold Path?

Here, Ānanda, a Monk develops Right View, which is based upon seclusion, freedom from strong feelings, and elimination, maturing in release. He develops Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration, which is based upon seclusion, freedom from strong feelings, and elimination, maturing in release. It is in this way,

Ānanda, that a Monk who has a wholesome friend, a wholesome companion, a wholesome comrade, develops and cultivates The Noble Eight Fold Path.

By the following method too, Ānanda, it may be understood how the entire holy life is wholesome friendship, wholesome companionship, wholesome comradeship: by relying upon me as a wholesome friend,

Ānanda, beings subject to birth are freed from birth; beings subject to aging are freed from aging: beings subject to illness are freed from illness: beings subject to death are freed from death; beings subject to sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair are freed from sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. By this method,

Ānanda, it may be understood how the entire holy life is wholesome friendship, wholesome companionship, wholesome comradeship.

(Reference: SN 45.2)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the importance of developing wholesome relationships as a positive influence for one to progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

He further discusses how a Practitioner who develops wholesome relationships also develops The Eight Fold Path, “maturing in release”.

“Maturing in release” is the experience one may have that as they deeply develop the mind, they may experience the bodily sensation of specific cravings/desires/attachments and/or specific taints/fetters being “released” from the mind.

The more one develops The Eight Fold Path starting with Right View (The Four Noble Truths) the mind can develop the ability to readily, and in some cases, instantly eliminate specific craving/desire/attachments and/or specific taints/fetters from the mind. There is much learning, reflecting, and practicing of these Teachings that is required as a prerequisite to developing this aspect of the mind.

Gotama Buddha is explaining the bodily sensation experienced upon the elimination of these pollutions of the mind as “maturing in release”.

Gotama Buddha is describing beings who are subject to The Cycle of Rebirth (i.e. unEnlightened beings) are freed from The Cycle of Rebirth and discontentedness through the attainment of Enlightenment in this paragraph of The Teaching; “Ānanda, beings subject to birth are freed from birth; beings subject to aging are freed from aging; beings subject to illness are freed from illness; beings subject to death are freed from death; beings subject to sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair are freed from sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. By this method,…” of cultivating wholesome relationships and cultivating The Eight Fold Path.

Three Qualities That Are Needed for a Successful Life Partnership

Selecting a life partner is a highly impactful decision in one’s life. Select wisely, and you can experience a life full of enjoyment and love. Select unwisely, and you would be in for significant hardships, difficulties, and struggles.

If you had invested millions of dollars into building a business and needed to hire a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to lead your company, you would take your time and make a wise selection because, your future is going to be determined by your wise or unwise choice of who to hire for this important position within the company. The success of your company is going to be directly related to the choice you make about who to select for this important position.

Well, selecting a life partner is exactly the same as selecting a CEO for your multimillion dollar company. Who you select as a life partner is a very important decision and, your future is going to be determined by your wise or unwise choice of who to include in your life for this important position within your life. The success of your life is going to be directly related to the choice you make about who to select for this important position of a life partner.

So, what should you be looking for in a life partner and what are the qualities that are needed to create a life of enjoyment and love?

I am going to share three (3) qualities to consider when selecting a life partner that are going to lead to a life full of enjoyment and love.

1.) Your potential life partner will need to know they are a “work in progress” and they “are not perfect”.

2.) It is important that your potential life partner does not “blame you for their discontent feelings”.

3.) Your potential life partner will need to be actively working towards inner growth and improvement within their own life, being willing to do the inner work on their mind that is needed to grow and evolve as an individual.

Let me share these in more detail to help you understand why these are important and to be able to identify these key criteria for a successful, fulfilling, and sustaining life partnership.

Your potential life partner will need to know they are a “work in progress” and they “are not perfect”.

Your life partner is going to need to understand, they are not perfect, they are a work in progress. It is important that you know this as well.

All too often, an individual might cast their hopes and dreams onto another person thinking, a life partner is going to complete you and fulfill all your hopes and dreams.

You need to understand, that any potential life partner is not perfect, they are struggling in the world just like you. It is only an Enlightened being who is no longer experiencing struggles and difficulties in life, and an Enlightened being is not going to be seeking a new life partnership. Therefore, if you are going to find a life partner, they will be an imperfect being currently having various struggles and difficulties in the world, they will not be perfect. Your life partner is not going to fulfill all your hopes and dreams, they are not going to complete you. If you are feeling incomplete, that is coming from within your own mind and your life partner is not going to be able to fulfill your own inner feeling of being incomplete. You need to do that inner work to accomplish that goal.

If a potential life partner understands they are a work in progress, and you do to, then the mind will be less likely to cast all its hopes and dreams onto the other person expecting for them to fulfill those for you. Instead, you need to understand that the individual who you are choosing to be a life partner is going to make mistakes and have challenges with certain aspects of life.

If you understand this, it will help ensure you are not casting your hopes and dreams onto another person expecting them to fulfill those but also, you can practice patience when your life partner is facing certain challenges in their day-to-day life where, instead of being angry and frustrated with the place they are in life, you can offer support and encouragement with unconditional love.

And, if your life partner knows they are a work in progress, they will be more inclined to seek guidance and assistance for growth and development in their life, leading to constant improvement in how they interact with you and others. A potential life partner

who knows they are not perfect is a helpful indication for you that their ego is reduced enough to be actively working towards improvement in their life.

It is important that your potential life partner does not “blame you for their discontent feelings”.

If an individual has penetrated into even the most basic understanding of the human mind, they would understand that feelings and emotions are being caused by one's own mind. It is not the outside world that is causing your inner feelings. It is the mind itself that causes its own feelings.

While this is a basic understanding that can be gained through investigation and examination of The Teachings of The Buddha on The Four Noble Truths, this is not a common understanding in the world so you are going to need to specifically look for this in a potential life partner.

All too often, people are going to be interested in blaming you for their feelings and emotions. If you have a life partner who is blaming you for their feelings, that means they do not have the wisdom to understand true reality and will never be able to improve in what they are experiencing in their daily life within their own mind.

As long as an individual continues to blame others for their feelings, they will continue to experience sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc. for the rest of their life. If they do not have the wisdom to understand the true cause of their feelings, then they would be incapable of eliminating their discontent feelings. Therefore, you are in for a life of being constantly blamed for the feelings and emotions of your partner and that individual is not choosing to get help for their struggles and difficulties in life. Resentment, hostility, and bitterness will exist in their relationships and you will both struggle to ever find harmony.

But, if you and your life partner understand it is your own mind that is causing the feelings you experience and you both take responsibility for those feelings, then each of you can skillfully work towards eliminating the true cause of the feelings deep inside your own mind. This is what will produce peace and joy within your own mind and in your relationship.

If someone is comfortable to continue to blame others for what they experience, then they have not understood the most basic of Teachings that are going to lead to their improvement in life and in their relationships. This type of individual will continue to blame others for what they experience in life, being unwilling and disinterested to see the true cause of the struggles and difficulties they face, their own mind and the decisions they make.

If you are being blamed for your life partner's feelings and emotions, your potential life partner has not seen and understood the wisdom and true reality of how their own mind needs training and improvement. You will experience significant hardships all the way through your relationship.

But, there is a better way.

Each individual can accept responsibility for their own feelings and emotions, not blaming them on others, and then, you will be able to eliminate the underlying cause of the discontent feelings, ultimately getting to a peaceful and joyful mind, life, and relationship.

Your potential life partner will need to be actively working towards inner growth and improvement within their own life, being willing to do the inner work on their mind that is needed to grow and evolve as an individual.

If your potential life partner understands they are a work in progress and that their feelings are being caused by their own mind, then the next logical step is that they would be willing to do the inner work that is needed to become a better individual and eliminate their discontent feelings.

But, this is not always the case.

Someone might understand they are not perfect and that their feelings are being caused by their own mind but, they can be complacent and unwilling to do the needed work to make improvements in their life, as their ego can be sabotaging their ability to seek the help they need.

If your life partner is complacent in their own growth and development, being unwilling to seek resources and guidance to improve, then they are stagnant which means, they are not evolving as a person and your relationship with them will struggle. Their ego will continue to sabotage their ability to get the needed support and guidance to make significant improvements in their life and in their relationships. Therefore, you will experience continued hardships through choosing to select a life partner who is unwilling to make improvements in their life through training the mind.

To experience success in your life partnership where there is enjoyment and love, you and your life partner are going to need to be actively involved in your own growth and development towards constant improvement, becoming a better and better individual.

We are not born perfect and are then functioning as perfect beings throughout our entire life. Instead, we are born imperfect, with a lack of wisdom, and need to be committed to constant and continuous growth through the cultivation of wisdom. If not, you are not practicing loving-kindness and compassion towards yourself and those around you. Instead, you will continue to make unwise decisions that lead to the harm of others and thus, to your own harm.

The most loving, kind, and compassionate thing you could do for yourself and those around you is, to be committed to your own growth and development so you can eliminate the harmful decisions you make that negatively impact those around you and cause harm to yourself.

The work to become a better individual, understanding this better way of life taught by The Buddha, is not easy but it is also not difficult. We can embrace the understanding that we are each born imperfect and our life journey is to become a better individual through the cultivation of wisdom and training the mind.

An Enlightened being will be functioning perfectly but, to get there requires an individual to know they are imperfect, their feelings are caused by their own mind, and be willing to do the needed inner work to grow and evolve into a better individual.

If complacency arises, focusing on how allowing the mind to become stagnant only causes harm to others and yourself can motivate you to arise energy towards ongoing growth and development. Understand that, by allowing the mind to remain unwise in the unEnlightened state means, you are going to be causing harm to others and yourself through your unwise decisions that cause harm and thus, harm will return to you.

This is no way to live a fulfilling life.

The sooner you catch the mind's lack of motivation and enthusiasm towards inner growth and development, that it is attempting to become complacent, the better. It is much easier to pull the mind out of its attempted complacency when it is just getting started to head in that direction, then once the complacency is well set into the mind.

You are going to be unable, and it would be unwise, to attempt to force a potential life partner to do the needed work to grow and develop as an individual. So, it would be wise to ensure that any potential life partner that you might consider to involve in your life already has this quality well established within their own life.

Rather than put yourself in a situation where you are with a life partner who is stagnant in their own growth and development, causing harm to others and themselves, being disinterested in making improvements due to the mind's ego, ensure that prior to making the decision to select any specific life partner that they are already committed to growth and doing the needed inner work to become a better person.

If your life partner does not have this highly important quality to be willing to actively make improvements in their own growth and development, you are in for significant struggles and difficulties as their mind is complacent and their life is stagnant. This means, there will be continuous disharmony in your relationship through constant unwise decisions leading to unwholesome results.

There is a better way of life.

Each individual in the life partnership can be committed to their own growth and development, taking responsibility to train their mind by cultivating wisdom.

This will lead to the needed continuous growth within one's own life and in their relationships.

In short, you will need a life partner with, and you will need, these three qualities.

1.) Your potential life partner will need to know they are a “work in progress” and they “are not perfect”.

2.) It is important that your potential life partner does not “blame you for their discontent feelings”.

3.) Your potential life partner will need to be actively working towards inner growth and improvement within their own life, being willing to do the inner work on their mind that is needed to grow and evolve as an individual.

Without these important qualities, you are in for a life full of significant struggles and difficulties.

With these important qualities, you are in for a life full of enjoyment and love.

Selecting a life partner is a highly impactful decision in one's life. Select wisely, and you can experience a life full of enjoyment and love. Select unwisely, and you would be in for significant hardships, difficulties, and struggles.

With these important qualities, you will both be headed towards continuous growth and development within your individual life and within your relationship.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 1-10)

<https://youtu.be/l9UzSQA-Glg>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 199 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 1-10)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--199---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Walking-The-Path-with-The-Buddha---Volume-2---Chapter-1-10-e16l36f/a-a6eg2dd>

Chapter 11

The Noble Eight Fold Path The Way of Practice Leading to the Elimination of Discontentedness

And what, Monks, is The Noble Truth of the Way of Practice Leading to the Elimination of Discontentedness?

It is just this Noble Eight Fold Path, namely: Right View; Right Intention; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Livelihood; Right Effort; Right Mindfulness; Right Concentration.

And what, Monks, is Right View?

It is, Monks, the wisdom of discontentedness, the wisdom of the cause of discontentedness, the wisdom of the elimination of discontentedness, and the wisdom of the way of practice leading to the elimination of discontentedness. This is called Right View.

And what, Monks, is Right Intention?

The intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill-will, the intention of harmlessness. This, Monks, is called Right Intention.

And what, Monks, is Right Speech?

Refraining from lying, refraining from slander, refraining from harsh speech, refraining from frivolous speech. This is called Right Speech.

And what, Monks, is Right Action?

Refraining from taking life, refraining from taking what is not given, refraining from sexual misconduct. This is called Right Action.

And what, Monks, is Right Livelihood?

Here, Monks, the Noble Disciple, having given up wrong livelihood, keeps himself by Right Livelihood.

And what, Monks, is Right Effort?

Here, Monks, a Monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to prevent the arising of unarisen evil unwholesome mental states. He rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to overcome evil unwholesome mental states that have arisen. He rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to produce unarisen wholesome mental states. He rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to maintain wholesome mental states that have arisen, not to let them fade away, to bring them to greater growth, to the full perfection of development. This is called Right Effort.

And what, Monks, is Right Mindfulness?

Here, Monks, a Monk resides reflecting on body as body, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world; he resides reflecting on feelings as feelings, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world; he resides reflecting on mind as mind, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world; he resides reflecting on mental objects as mental objects, dedicated, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside craving and worry for the world. This is called Right Mindfulness.

And what, Monks, is Right Concentration?

Here, a Monk, distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy. And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters and resides in the second Jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, based in concentration, filled with excitement and joy. And with the fading away of excitement, remaining imperturbable (unable to be upset or excited; calm; serene), mindful and clearly aware, he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say:

'Peaceful is he who resides with equanimity and mindfulness', he enters the third Jhāna. And, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the fading away of former gladness and sadness, he enters and resides in the fourth Jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and purified by equanimity and mindfulness. This is called Right Concentration.

And that, Monks, is called the way of practice leading to the elimination of discontentedness.

(Reference: DN 22)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Eight Fold Path.

The Eight Fold Path is the complete solution to solving the problem of the unEnlightened mind and The Cycle of Rebirth. The Eight Fold Path is “the way of practice leading to the elimination of discontentedness.”

Detailed explanation of The Eight Fold Path is available in this same book series found in Chapter 5 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

What are the Jhānas and how can I experience them?

The Jhānas are preliminary phases the mind experiences as it is making its way to Enlightenment, and prior to the first Stage of Enlightenment.

When the mind is in the Jhānas, there are heightened qualities that are experienced, which are needed in order to fully develop the mind and experience Enlightenment. These are referred to as “the Jhānas”.

Without experiencing the Jhānas, a Practitioner would have no ability to attain Enlightenment, or even the first Stage of Enlightenment.

The Jhānas are oftentimes misunderstood, especially outside of Asia.

Oftentimes people think that the Jhānas are only experienced through the practice of meditation and, that the Jhānas are turned “on or off” while in meditation or in daily life. This misunderstanding leads to the inability to experience these heightened qualities of mind, the first Stage of Enlightenment, or Enlightenment itself. Thus, an individual continues to stay trapped in the unEnlightened state experiencing sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc. over and over and over again. The mind is stuck in this continuous cycle of discontent feelings due to its lack of wisdom of The Path to Enlightenment.

I will demystify the Jhānas and help you to understand what they are and how to experience them so that you can escape the constant struggles and difficulties of the unEnlightened mind.

(Please read further if you are interested in learning this important Teaching so that the mind can become free of these strong feelings and others.)

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As mentioned, the Jhānas are heightened qualities that are experienced as one is progressing on The Path to Enlightenment. These are heightened qualities of awareness (i.e. mindfulness), tranquility, concentration, and equanimity, along with other beneficial qualities of mind that are needed to experience progress on The Path to Enlightenment and Enlightenment itself.

A Practitioner would be unable to experience Enlightenment without these heightened qualities developed and acquired in the Jhānas.

The Jhānas are experienced through learning, reflecting on (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing The Eight Fold Path.

The Eight Fold Path is the core and central Teaching of The Buddha, it is “THE” Path to Enlightenment. If you are interested in experiencing Enlightenment through The Teachings of The Buddha, you would need to know The Eight Fold Path, inside and out, backwards and forwards, up and down, left and right. And, you would need to learn The Eight Fold Path through the original Words of The Buddha with guidance from a Teacher while you retain the responsibility for your own learning and growth.

It is putting together all the individual factors of The Eight Fold Path that the mind will move into, and reside in, the Jhānas.

Yes, one will need to meditate to experience the Jhānas but, it is not only meditation that one needs to learn and practice to experience the Jhānas. There are many other aspects of The Path to Enlightenment than only meditation, which are described in The Eight Fold Path, and all of these factors are needed to make progress towards Enlightenment to include, experiencing the Jhānas.

Meditation is one aspect of one factor in The Eight Fold Path. If you did the math, that means that meditation is about 6% of The Path to Enlightenment. There is much more to experiencing Enlightenment than only meditation. There is much more to experiencing the Jhānas than only meditation.

Unfortunately, many people are misunderstanding, thinking that The Buddha sat under a tree, meditated, and instantly got to Enlightenment. This is just untrue and a significant misunderstanding. You can know this is true through The Words of The Buddha and his important Teachings.

“Monks, I do not say that final knowledge (wisdom) is achieved all at once. On the contrary, **final knowledge is achieved by gradual training, by gradual practice, by gradual progress.**” (Reference: MN 70.22)

An Enlightened being would have attained “final knowledge” through acquiring wisdom, by learning, reflecting (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha to awaken to The Natural Laws of Existence, the mind is then Enlightened.

Final Knowledge = Enlightenment

Enlightenment is not achieved “all at once”.

You can independently verify that Enlightenment is not experienced “all at once” or instantly because, everything you have ever accomplished in life has been through gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress, just like The Buddha is sharing in this important Teaching. It took The Buddha six (6) years to attain Enlightenment.

Think about learning to read, write, and speak English, did it happen all at once? Think about the job or occupation that you perform, was your wisdom and skills acquired “all at once”?

No, of course not.

Therefore, you can understand how acquiring wisdom to attain Enlightenment does not occur “all at once”. The Words of The Buddha are sharing this important Teaching and, you can independently verify it for yourself. All of The Teachings of The Buddha are independently verifiable and is how a Practitioner would need to progress on The Path to Enlightenment to actually experience Enlightenment. It is through gradual training and gradual practice that leads to gradual progress of acquiring wisdom and awakening to the Enlightened mental state.

So, Enlightenment, and the Jhānas, are not experienced “all at once” and they are not experienced only in meditation.

These are The Words of The Buddha on the Jhānas.

“And what, Monks, is Right Concentration? Here, a Monk, distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy. And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters and resides in the second Jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, based in concentration, filled with excitement and joy. And with the fading away of excitement, remaining imperturbable (unable to be upset or excited; calm; serene), mindful and clearly aware, he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say:

‘Peaceful is he who resides with equanimity and mindfulness’, he enters the third Jhāna. And, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the fading away of former gladness and sadness, he enters and resides in the fourth Jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and purified by equanimity and mindfulness. This is called Right Concentration.”

(Reference: DN 22)

The Buddha describes the four (4) Jhānas in multiple places within his Teachings. There are only four (4) Jhānas, even though you will see different numbers being taught by other people who have misunderstanding but, The Buddha only taught four (4) Jhānas, as you can see in his original words.

The Buddha describes the four (4) Jhānas in the same way in each Teaching. However, this is a reference to the eighth factor of The Eight Fold Path, Right Concentration. This is where he describes the Jhānas, in detail, and this is where the misunderstandings in the world are originating as people are not understanding what was taught by The Buddha.

Right Concentration is accomplished through a well developed meditation practice and practicing “singleness of mind” in daily life. The Buddha describes how to practice Right Concentration as part of The Path to Enlightenment in many of his other Teachings, which all integrate into The Eight Fold Path.

So, because Right Concentration is to practice meditation and developing singleness of mind, some people are misunderstanding the Jhānas as only being experienced in meditation and is something that is turned “on and off”.

This is confusing many people and leading to the inability to experience the Jhānas and Enlightenment.

As you can see in the original Words of The Buddha, he is describing enhanced qualities of mind that the mind “enters and resides” in as part of his description of the Jhānas.

The mind “resides” in the Jhānas.

He is describing the Jhānas as part of The Eight Fold Path because this is the byproduct or benefit, of practicing the entire core and central Teaching of The Buddha, The Eight Fold Path, which will guide you in training the mind to experience the Jhānas and attain Enlightenment.

One enhanced quality of mind that is experienced in the second Jhāna includes “oneness of mind” or “unification of the mind”.

In the unEnlightened state, there is a conscious mind and a subconscious mind, both of these are polluted and need to be purified to experience Enlightenment. However, the subconscious mind is much more heavily polluted than the conscious mind. A Practitioner in the unEnlightened state will have some awareness of the conscious mind but, they will lack awareness of the subconscious mind until, they are experiencing the second Jhāna.

Oneness of mind, or unification of the mind, is when the conscious mind and subconscious mind have merged. They have become “one”. The Practitioner will have “full awareness” of the entire mind, the mind becomes highly introspective being able to easily look inward. This is sometimes referred to as “the opening of the third eye, divine eye, or inward looking eye”.

When “oneness of mind” or “unification of mind” is experienced, there will no longer be a conscious and subconscious mind but instead, there will be just one mind - “oneness of mind” or “unification of the mind”. And, this enhanced quality is needed in order to purify the mind. You would be unable to purify the entire mind to attain Enlightenment if there was no awareness of the entire mind throughout your entire day.

So, to even get to the first Stage of Enlightenment, and Enlightenment itself, a Practitioner needs to experience “oneness of mind” or “unification of the mind” in the second Jhāna. And, this is an enhanced quality of mind that is experienced at all times during one’s day.

This is not a quality of mind that is only experienced during meditation and it is not an aspect of the mind that is turned “on or off”. Instead, the mind is “residing” in this mental quality. This is true for all the enhanced qualities of the Jhānas. They are experienced at all times and, are not turned “on or off”. As shared by The Buddha, the mind “enters” and “resides” in the Jhānas.

For anyone who has experienced the Jhānas, they know this to be true.

The translation of the word “Jhāna” is “mental absorption” and “meditative absorption” because, to experience the Jhānas, a Practitioner will have mentally absorbed a certain amount of The Teachings of The Buddha and be practicing those Teachings. And, the Practitioner will have conducted and benefited from a certain amount of meditation. The mind has mentally “absorbed” The Teachings of The Buddha, and is practicing The Teachings of The Buddha, to include but not limited to, meditation.

When a mind has absorbed something and is experiencing improved qualities of mind, those qualities are not being turned “on or off” nor only experienced during meditation. These mental qualities are always present, the mind is “residing” in these enhanced qualities.

The Jhānas are temporary, as the mind can regress out of the Jhānas if the mind becomes complacent. However, if one continues to remain determined, dedicated, and diligent, the qualities of the Jhānas will continue to persist in the mind, all the way through to Enlightenment and while the mind is experiencing Enlightenment.

The Jhānas are not something to boast about nor take pride in. If the mind is becoming arrogant or prideful due to experiencing the Jhānas, a Practitioner would be wise to “cut that off and let it go”. Otherwise, the mind is complacent and will ultimately regress out of the Jhānas and, this will hinder any further progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

So in short, you will need to experience the Jhānas to make progress on The Path to Enlightenment and to attain Enlightenment itself, and this is accomplished through learning, reflecting on (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing The Eight Fold Path, the core and central Teaching of The Buddha that you need to know inside and out to experience the Jhānas and Enlightenment.

Experiencing the Jhānas is like the “lightbulb is flickering”, providing an indication to you that the mind has put together The Eight Fold Path well enough to experience these heightened qualities of mind.

The Practitioner will know they are experiencing the Jhānas because they will notice the improved qualities of mind as described by The Buddha in Right Concentration of The Eight Fold Path.

When experiencing the Jhānas it is a significant indication that a Practitioner is making tangible progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

It would be unwise to become arrogant, prideful, or boastful about anything at all, to include experiencing the Jhānas. If so, those unwholesome aspects of the mind would only create a lack of further progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Once a Practitioner is experiencing the Jhānas, it is time for the real work to begin. The mind is now prepared to fully eradicate all of the pollutions of mind. The needed enhanced qualities have been acquired and it is time to start focusing on the elimination of The Ten Fetters starting with, the first three.

Eliminating the first three fetters/taints/pollutions of mind, a Practitioner will then experience the first Stage of Enlightenment. From the first Stage of Enlightenment, the mind will no longer regress. In the first Stage of Enlightenment, one has progressed past the preliminary phases of the Jhānas, where the mind can regress, and is now firmly in the first Stage of Enlightenment, where the mind will not regress.

But, this is not a time to become complacent but instead, learn, reflect on (i.e. independently verify), and practice the elimination of The Ten Fetters. Your practice will need to pivot towards actively learning, reflecting on (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing to eliminate The Ten Fetters.

A Practitioner will need to know what is each of The Ten Fetters, what are the symptoms, how to eliminate the fetters, and how to know they are eliminated. This can all be learned in one of our annual retreats titled “Purification of The Mind to Attain Enlightenment”. In this retreat, there are individual classes devoted to learning each individual fetter of The Ten Fetters.

The Jhānas await you. These improved qualities of mind await you. Enlightenment awaits you.

The only thing holding you back is your own determination, dedication, and diligence to learn, reflect (i.e. independently verify), and practice The Path to Enlightenment, based on The Words of The Buddha, as taught by The Buddha.

Meditate, Monks, do not be complacent, lest you will regret it later. This is my instruction to you. (Reference: SN 43.1)

Be well and enjoy your journey...

To learn more about the Jhānas please see this recorded online class.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgxpbmW6bO4&list=PLFuun1phKgQn_7rDGqXFDF-Pz4cRrIBa_&index=3

Chapter 12

The World Would Not Lack for Arahants

In whatever Teachings and discipline The Noble Eight Fold Path is not found, no Ascetic is found of the first, the second, the third or the fourth grade. But such Ascetics can be found of the first, second, third, and fourth grade in a Teachings and discipline where The Noble Eight Fold Path is found.

Now, Subhadda, in these Teachings and discipline The Noble Eight Fold Path is found, and in it are to be found Ascetics of the first, second, third, and fourth grade. These other schools are lacking of [true] Ascetics, but if in this one the Monks were to live the life to perfection, the world would not lack for Arahants.

(Reference: DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the importance of The Eight Fold Path.

He explains that if a training discipline does not include The Eight Fold Path there will be no one who has attained the first, second, third, or fourth Stage of Enlightenment associating this to “the first, the second, the third or the fourth grade” much like a traditional school of education would have grades for Students to progress through.

The Path to Enlightenment and The Buddha’s Community of Practitioners is much like a “school” of Students learning, reflecting, and practicing Teachings to progress through Stages of Enlightenment much like one might progress through a traditional school system to higher levels of knowledge and education.

Gotama Buddha explains that if a training discipline does include The Eight Fold Path and the Practitioner lives life to the ideal perfection of The Eight Fold Path, there will be no lack of Practitioners who would attain Enlightenment referred to as an Arahant. An Arahant is an Enlightened being.

In the first, second, and third Stages of Enlightenment, the mind is not yet Enlightened. It is not until the mind eliminates all of The Ten Fetters that one is considered an Arahant and, thus, the mind is Enlightened. An Enlightened mind will no longer experience any discontent feelings. In the first, second, and third Stages of Enlightenment, discontentedness has been significantly decreased, but not fully eliminated.

A Practitioner progressing to the fourth Stage of Enlightenment as an Arahant will no longer experience any discontent feelings. The mind will reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

Chapter 13

The Difference Between The Tathāgata and A Monk Liberated by Wisdom

Monks, The Tathāgata, the Arahant, The Perfectly Enlightened One, liberated by non-clinging through a fading away of strong feelings towards form, through its fading away and elimination, is called a Perfectly Enlightened One. A Monk liberated by wisdom, liberated by non-clinging through a fading away of strong feelings towards form, through its fading away and elimination, is called one liberated by wisdom.

The Tathāgata, the Arahant, The Perfectly Enlightened One, liberated by non-clinging through a fading away of strong feelings towards feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), consciousness, through its fading away and elimination, is called a Perfectly Enlightened One.

A Monk liberated by wisdom, liberated by non-clinging through a fading away of strong feelings towards feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), consciousness, through its fading away and elimination, is called one liberated by wisdom.

Therein, Monks, what is the distinction, what is the disparity, what is the difference between The Tathāgata, the Arahant, The Perfectly Enlightened One, and a Monk liberated by wisdom?

The Tathāgata, Monks, the Arahant, The Perfectly Enlightened One, is the originator of the path unarisen before, the producer of the path unproduced before, the declarer of the path undeclared before. He is the knower of the path, the discoverer of the path, the one skilled in the path. And his disciples now reside practicing that path and become possessed of it afterwards.

This, Monks, is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between The Tathāgata, the Arahant, The Perfectly Enlightened One, and a Monk liberated by wisdom.

(Reference: SN 22.58)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the difference between a Buddha and a Practitioner who attains Enlightenment through the guidance of a Teacher.

A Buddha is one who (1) discovers The Teachings through their own independent journey, (2) shares their independently discovered Teachings for the remaining time of their life guiding countless individuals to Enlightenment and (3) leaves The Teachings in such a condition that after their death, countless more individuals will be able to attain Enlightenment.

As Gotama Buddha explains, he "is the originator of the path unarisen before, the producer of the path unproduced before, the declarer of the path undeclared before. He is the knower of the path, the discoverer of the path, the one skilled in the path."

Through his declared Teachings, countless people during his lifetime and after his death have attained Enlightenment. Each person who attains Enlightenment with the guidance of Teachers is an Enlightened being, an Arahant, but they are not a Buddha.

A Buddha is an Enlightened being, an Arahant, but they attain this mental state on their own without the support and guidance of any Teachers. A Buddha is referred to as Fully Perfectly Enlightened because they have no influence from Teachers that would distort their perspective of what led to their Enlightenment. Their mind is completely pure without any pollution and permeates with wisdom of The Path to Enlightenment being able to guide countless individuals to Enlightenment.

Their independent journey to Enlightenment has produced deep wisdom of The Path to Enlightenment and, thus, prepares their mind for a lifetime of sharing The Teachings with those who choose to seek instruction, be taught, and be guided to experience Enlightenment.

A Practitioner who has attained Enlightenment through the guidance of Teachers is not a Buddha. This person is an Enlightened being, also referred to as an Arahant, but they are not a Buddha.

A Buddha is the discoverer of The Path to Enlightenment while an Enlightened being is liberated through the wisdom of a Buddha. A Buddha is extremely rare in the world and the last one currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years.

Chapter 14

This Spiritual Life Is Not Lived for The Sake of Deceiving People

Monks, this spiritual life is not lived for the sake of deceiving people and persuading them; nor for the benefit of gain, honor, and praise; nor for the benefit of winning in debates; nor with the thought: 'Let the people know me thus.'

But rather, this spiritual life is lived for the sake of restraint, abandoning, freedom from strong feelings, and elimination.

(Reference: AN 4.25)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that learning, reflecting, and practicing The Path to Enlightenment is not “for the benefit of gain, honor, and praise”, for “winning in debates”, nor for the conceited thought of letting people know how wise the mind has become.

As one learns and progresses on The Path to Enlightenment, there is an immeasurable amount of wisdom that one acquires. To progress to the highest Stage of Enlightenment one would need to eliminate the ego and any desire to show off one’s wisdom.

An Enlightened being is not going to seek material gain and benefits through the attainment of Enlightenment or through sharing The Teachings with Students. An Enlightened being will need to sustain their life through acquiring food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care with the understanding that acquisition of monetary wealth and material possessions does not lead to lasting peacefulness or satisfaction of the mind. So, an Enlightened being would not have craving/desire/attachment for monetary wealth but would need income to support one’s life.

Through living a life of restraint and eliminating one’s cravings/desires/attachments, along with learning, reflecting, and practicing many other aspects of these Teachings, one can experience “freedom from strong feelings” and the “elimination” of discontentedness of mind.

An Enlightened mind would not be interested in “debate” or arguments but instead, find that discussions will result in wholesome outcomes. An Enlightened being fully knows the truth of The Natural Laws of Existence and does not have a desire to show off their wisdom through a debate or argument. They are not interested in convincing others of the wisdom they have acquired that led to their liberation of mind but instead, humbly and peacefully conduct their life in a way that does not cause any harm to others.

They are not interested in deceiving or persuading others, knowing that this would only result in unwholesome outcomes, so why do it?

Gotama Buddha is focusing Practitioner's minds on "freedom from strong feelings" and the "elimination" of discontentedness rather than artificial and useless benefits.

Debating Buddhist Teachings - A Misunderstanding

There are many people who believe that Gotama Buddha provided instructions for his Students to "debate the teachings".

There are countless translations of Teachings that use the word "debate" The Teachings and people are led to believe they should debate Buddhist Teachings.

There are even some traditions of Buddhist Teachings that pride themselves on debating The Teachings among each other or with other traditions of Buddhist Teachings.

I would like to suggest, that the translations using the word "debate" are not helpful to accomplish the goal of your own Enlightenment and the goal set out by Gotama Buddha for the entire world to experience Enlightenment.

We are now currently in the process of *gradually* accomplishing the objective for all of humanity to attain Enlightenment and I would like to offer a better solution for you to understand what Gotama Buddha was sharing that will lead to more effective development of Buddhist Teachings so that you and the entire world can attain Enlightenment.

The goal of Gotama Buddha is for you and the entire world to experience Enlightenment.

Enlightenment is a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy that no longer experiences discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, anxiety, stress, etc. Enlightenment is a permanent mental state that is unshakable.

Let me explain more...

When human beings "debate", this is typically conducted as an argument where there is a winner and a loser.

Debates are often intense as two sides with opposing views argue back and forth with those observing the debate judging who is the winner and who is the loser.

The word debate is commonly defined as: argue about a subject, especially in a formal manner. A competition in which teams of people, often students, discuss a subject and the team that is judged to make the best arguments win.

I would like to suggest to you that, two people or groups of people who are arguing about Buddhist teachings to determine who is the winner and who is the loser is missing the point and objective set out by Gotama Buddha on The Path to Enlightenment.

And, due to their misunderstanding (i.e. unknowing of true reality) if they continue to argue attempting to determine a winner they are actually hindering and inhibiting their own Enlightenment.

Let me continue to explain further...

An Enlightened being has no craving or desire (mental longing with a strong eagerness) to “argue”. An Enlightened being knows that there are no benefits in two people intensely arguing back and forth.

An Enlightened being has no craving or desire (mental longing with a strong eagerness) to “win”.

An Enlightened being has no “arrogance or ego” to be classified as a “winner”.

An Enlightened being knows the goal of Gotama Buddha is for the entire world to attain Enlightenment, thus, it is not about a specific person winning but instead that we only “win” when we are all Enlightened and arguing does not lead to Enlightenment.

An Enlightened being is not interested in being distinguished as “the winner” but instead is interested in all of humanity winning as we are all *gradually* learning and practicing The Teachings progressing on The Path to Enlightenment so that “all beings” can experience Enlightenment.

To accomplish the goal of us “all winning”, I submit that we can and should “discuss” the teachings but not debate, argue, and attempt to determine a winner and a loser.

A discussion is very different than a debate.

A discussion is where two or more people come together to politely, kindly, friendly, and respectfully have a dialogue without arrogance and ego recognizing that they most likely do not have all the answers while being open to learning and understanding from others in the discussion.

A discussion is defined as: the action or process of talking about something in order to reach a decision or to exchange ideas.

Through peaceful and calm dialogue a discussion can lead to better understanding by all those who participate.

An open discussion where all involved are willing to share, listen, learn, understand, and admit another person’s opinion and view is wise can lead to improved understanding of The Teachings through an exchange of ideas.

And, a discussion can commence and continue even where there is disagreement and even finish with all people being polite, kind, friendly, and respectful to each other during and after the discussion. A discussion would involve not attempting to force another to be convinced of their opinion and view but instead share openly while being willing to understand another opinion and view through the exchange of ideas.

A debate where all parties are attempting to “win” can, therefore, oftentimes lead to intense arguments as craving and desire (longing with a strong eagerness) leads to hatred and anger (pushing people away potentially with hostility). A debate may not be able to maintain polite, kind, friendly, and respectful dialogue. A debate does not involve an

exchange of ideas where all people are open to learning and understanding each other but instead, a debate is attempting to convince another side or an audience who is more intelligent and who has “won” which oftentimes involves arrogance and ego.

In this world where the goal is to eliminate hostility, hatred, anger, resentment, jealousy, and other discontent feelings for “all beings” along with eradicating arrogance and ego for beings to experience Enlightenment; a debate would not accomplish this goal.

The goal is not for one person or another to “win” but the goal is for us “all to win” and we only accomplish that goal when we are able to share, listen, learn, understand, and admit another person’s opinion and view is wise leading to improved understanding of The Teachings on this Path to Enlightenment.

So, I suggest you do not debate but instead that you have discussions. I suggest that you do not argue but instead that you have discussions. I suggest that you do not attempt to be the winner but instead that you consider that we have all won when we are successful at having discussions, dialogue, and sometimes disagreements politely, kindly, friendly, and with respect. I suggest that you consider that we have all “won” when the entire world has experienced Enlightenment through each individual choosing on their own to pursue and progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Disagreements do not need to lead to hostility, hatred, anger, resentment, jealousy, and other discontent feelings with arrogance and ego where you push people away from you (i.e. aversion). The mind can be trained to disagree while having an exchange of ideas politely, kindly, friendly, and with respect.

But to do that, you need to learn, understand, and practice the true Teachings of Gotama Buddha with guidance from a Teacher so that you can come to understand debating provides us no benefit but discussions lead to the entire world liberating the mind experiencing Enlightenment.

May you have a wonderful day and may you experience the peaceful liberation of the mind taught by Gotama Buddha known as Enlightenment.

Chapter 15

Both Formerly and Now What The Tathāgata Teaches Is Discontentedness and The Elimination of Discontentedness

So saying, Monks, so proclaiming, I have been baselessly, pointlessly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some Ascetics and Brāhmins thus:

The Ascetic Gotama is one who leads astray; he teaches the obliteration, the destruction, the extermination of an existing being. As I am not, as I do not proclaim, so I have been baselessly, pointlessly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some Ascetics and Brāhmins thus: The Ascetic Gotama is one who leads astray; he teaches the obliteration, the destruction, the extermination of an existing being.

Monks, both formerly and now what I teach is discontentedness and the elimination of discontentedness.

If others abuse, criticize, scold, and harass The Tathāgata for that, The Tathāgata on that account feels no annoyance, bitterness, or sadness of the mind.

And if others honor, respect, appreciate and venerate The Tathāgata for that, The Tathāgata on that account feels no happiness, excitement, or elation of the mind.

If others honor, respect, appreciate, and venerate The Tathāgata for that, The Tathāgata on that account thinks thus: They perform such services as these for the sake of what had earlier come to be fully understood.

(Reference: MN 22)

As mentioned in other chapters of this book series, during the lifetime of Gotama Buddha there were many other roaming Ascetics in communities claiming to have discovered The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. There were also Brāhmin priests performing rites, rituals, ceremonies, and worship encouraging the “belief” in countless superstitious and unproven claims.

Brāhmin were part of the caste system who were born into families who were responsible for providing rites, rituals, ceremonies, and worship services. The common person would need to pay a set fee to the Brāhmin for their service. The community was taught for many generations to believe they were unable to prayer or worship on their own for any

beneficial outcome but instead would need to pay a fee to this special class of people, the Brāhmins, who would provide the service of praying on their behalf.

Gotama Buddha observing this system of payment for prayers and promised beneficial outcomes understood this would not lead to Enlightenment of the mind. There are no rites, rituals, ceremonies, and worship that will produce wisdom in the mind that would lead to liberation of the mind. He also observed corruption as with an entire population of people believing they were unable to pray or worship on their own but instead would need the services of a special class of people. This special class of people, the Brāhmin, could demand any sort of payment they wished and if the people were interested in prayer and worship on their behalf, they would then be motivated to provide the payment.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that he has been misunderstood of what his Teachings are and the result of his Teachings stating “I have been baselessly, pointlessly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some Ascetics and Brāhmins”.

Those who are not practicing non-judgment of others nor Right Speech might talk negatively of Gotama Buddha misrepresenting his Teachings. The individuals who misrepresented his Teachings were most likely not actually learning, reflecting, and practicing his Teachings, therefore, they would not understand what he did and did not teach or the results experienced. So, it would be easy for someone who is not practicing non-judgment and Right Speech to, through their own false perceptions, misrepresent what Gotama Buddha was sharing as Teachings.

Gotama Buddha goes on to explain that his mind is unaffected by the praise or blame that might be shared as a result of his Teachings. Not only is the Enlightened mind not affected by harsh negative speech of others that might be considered degrading and disparaging, but the Enlightened mind is also unaffected by praise and admiration.

“If others honor, respect, appreciate, and venerate The Tathāgata for that, The Tathāgata on that account thinks thus: They perform such services as these for the sake of what had earlier come to be fully understood”: The Buddha is sharing that if someone chooses to “honor, respect, appreciation, and venerate” him, this is because they have come to “fully understand” that he teaches discontentedness and the elimination of discontentedness. The individual understands clearly what he actually teaches.

Understanding this Teaching, a Practitioner can apply effort to not be affected by praise nor blame in daily life. Should others praise or admire you for anything at all, do not allow the arrogance, pride, and other unwholesome mental qualities to arise. Should others degrade and disparage you for anything at all, do not allow anger, hate, and other unwholesome mental qualities to arise. When sadness or elation arises in the mind, cut it off or let it go residing peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy.

The Enlightened mind has been deeply trained to be unaffected by impermanent conditions such as praise or blame. The Enlightened mind would be steady, calm, and unshakable in the best or worst of circumstances or situations. There is no one nor nothing that could shake up the mind of an Enlightened being especially that of a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha.

An Enlightened being, an Enlightened mind only needs to walk with wisdom and a smile.

Chapter 16

Words That Are Just So Not Otherwise

From the night he fully awakened, Monks, until the night he attains Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment), in this interval, whatever he speaks, talks of, and explains, all that is just so, not otherwise; therefore he is called The Tathāgata.

As he speaks, Monks, so he does; as he does, so he speaks.

(Reference: AN 4.23)

In this Teaching a disciple of Gotama Buddha, shares that Gotama Buddha is referred to as “The Tathāgata” from the night he was considered to be “fully awakened” (i.e. Enlightened) until he attains “Final Nibbāna” (i.e. death).

Nibbāna = Pāli Language

Nirvana = Sanskrit Language

Enlightenment = English Language

One can attain Enlightenment during their lifetime where the mind will be peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. One can still experience physical pain associated with injuring the physical body, but the mind will relate to the pain differently than in the unEnlightened mental state. The Enlightened mind will not be shaken up by the physical pain or experience any discontentedness associated with the physical pain. Instead, the mind can continue to reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy while understanding the impermanent nature of the physical pain.

The physical pain is there for a reason to notify the mind that something needs to be addressed in the physical body and actions should be taken through wise decisions to eliminate the physical pain. Physical pain will not be eliminated through the attainment of Enlightenment but it will be significantly reduced as the mind does not experience physical pain in the same way in the Enlightened mental state.

It is not until “Final Nibbāna” (i.e. death) at the break up of the body where the mind and the physical body separates that the mind will experience “Final Nibbāna”. The final attachment of the mind existing in the physical body will be eliminated and there will no longer be any rebirth. An Enlightened being has escaped The Cycle of Rebirth.

Gotama Buddha would most often refer to himself as “The Tathāgata”.

The term Tathāgata is often thought to mean “one who has discovered the truth”, “one who shares the truth”, “one who has thus gone”, or “one who has thus come”. This is understood as signifying that The Tathāgata is beyond all coming and going - beyond impermanence sharing the truth of The Natural Laws of Existence that lead to

Enlightenment. There are, however, other interpretations and the precise original meaning of the word is not certain.

Gotama Buddha is quoted on numerous occasions in the Pāli Canon (the source of his Teachings) as referring to himself as “The Tathāgata” instead of using the pronouns me, I, or myself. This may be meant to emphasize by implication that The Teaching is spoken by one who has transcended the human condition, one beyond the otherwise endless Cycle of Rebirth and death, (i.e. beyond discontentedness of mind).

The term Tathāgata has a number of possible meanings.

Gotama Buddha understood the use of the pronouns, me, I, or myself is unfitting to refer to the human condition as there is “no self”. You will find detailed Teachings on The Universal Truth of Non-self in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) of this same book series in the chapter titled “The Four Noble Truths: Establishing Right View” and “Dissolving the Ego: Ego Serves No Purpose”.

The term Tathāgata is a way to refer to himself without using the pronouns me, I, or myself.

Other meanings for the term Tathāgata include:

- He who has arrived in such a fashion, (i.e. who has worked his way upwards to perfection for the world’s good).
- He who, by the path of wisdom, has come at the real understanding of things.
- He who has won Truth.
- He who has discerned Truth.
- He who declares Truth.

Additionally, it is inaccurate to say that Gotama Buddha attained Enlightenment in one day or one night. While there are several people in the world that might believe that Gotama Buddha sat down under a tree, meditated, and instantaneously attained Enlightenment, Gotama Buddha himself when speaking on this topic describes his Enlightenment as a “gradual practice and gradual progress”. You will learn these Teachings for yourself as you continue to investigate more chapters in this book and other volumes of this book series. Anyone who is familiar with Enlightenment through The Teachings shared by Gotama Buddha will understand that an Enlightened mind takes significant effort and work to attain. It is not possible to attain Enlightenment in one day, one night, a few days, a few nights, or a few months.

Gotama Buddha himself took six (6) years to progress to Enlightenment and ultimately became known as The Perfectly Enlightened One from a certain day going forward. However, he did not attain Enlightenment in one day, but instead was considered to be Enlightened from his 35th birthday going forward.

The Perfectly Enlightened One was born, attained Enlightenment, and died all on the same lunar day over the course of 80-years.

He was born in the year 563 BCE, attained Enlightenment in the year 528 BCE, and died in the year 483 BCE. You can visit the physical sites of his birth, attainment of Enlightenment, his first discourse, and his death in Nepal and Northeastern India as a way to pay tribute, respect, and gratitude to his lifetime of dedication to help the world understand The Teachings that lead to complete peace and tranquility of mind known as liberation of the mind or Enlightenment.

Chapter 17

The Tathāgata's Speech

So too, Prince,

(1) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be untrue, incorrect, and unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others: such speech The Tathāgata does not speak.

(2) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others: such speech The Tathāgata does not speak.

(3) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, but which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others: The Tathāgata knows the time to use such speech.

(4) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be untrue, incorrect, and unbeneficial, but which is welcome and agreeable to others: such speech The Tathāgata does not speak.

(5) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be true and correct but unbeneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others: such speech The Tathāgata does not speak.

(6) Such speech as The Tathāgata knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others: The Tathāgata knows the time to use such speech.

Why is that? Because The Tathāgata has compassion for all beings.

(Reference: MN 58)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares his choice of practicing in such a way as to ensure his words are well received in all situations and to ensure he is practicing Right Speech.

It is The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech that provides the specific details of how one can drastically improve their practice of communicating with additional Teachings to further help a Practitioner fully understand Right Speech in other areas of his Teachings.

Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech

Monks, possessing five factors, speech is well spoken, not badly spoken, it is blameless and beyond reproach by the wise.

What five?

- (1) It is spoken at the **proper time**;
- (2) What is said is **true**;
- (3) It is **spoken gently**;
- (4) What is said is **beneficial**;
- (5) It is spoken with **a mind of loving-kindness**.

Possessing these five factors, speech is well spoken, not badly spoken; it is **blameless** and beyond reproach by the wise.

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Through practicing The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech one ensures they are not causing harm through their speech and, over time, one will experience more and more successful personal and professional relationships because you will be communicating in a way that does not cause harm.

The more you communicate using these five factors, you will observe that more and more people will respond to you in the same way that you practice. In addition to these Teachings from Gotama Buddha on The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech, you can remember to always be polite, kind, friendly, and respectful to “all beings” to help guide you in practicing Right Speech.

The Teachings shared in this chapter can also be applied to more deeply refine one’s practice of Right Speech, but it would be suggested that you first train the mind to practice The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech before looking to incorporate The Teachings of this chapter into your life practice.

Through practicing The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech, one would be incorporating The Teachings of this chapter into the five factors ensuring speech is “true, correct, and beneficial” as well as knowing the “proper time” to speak. Also, remember to ensure your speech is blameless.

This Teaching is highlighting that special care needs to be taken to understand when speech is “unwelcomed and disagreeable to others” and when speech is “welcomed and agreeable to others”.

The Buddha's Teachings can be thought of as layers. He is layering more and more Teachings to help a Practitioner gradually see more and more “what is Right Speech”, for example.

The Five Precepts provides details on Right Speech along with The Eight Fold Path, The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech, this Teaching, and others. He is gradually pulling back the layers of his Teachings for Practitioners to see more and more clearly “what is Right Speech”. The Teachings in The Pāli Canon are spread out over forty-five (45) volumes of books without any clear organization leading to the development of one's practice. This book series provides improved organization of these Teachings by consolidating extracted versions of the forty-five (45) volumes of books found in The Pāli Canon.

What has been done as part of the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1), is put Right Speech all in one place taking into consideration all The Teachings from The Buddha to make it easy for a Practitioner to understand this important Teaching and others.

Now in (Volumes 2-13), a Practitioner is pulling back the covers, or layers, to see the source and details of these Teachings filling in any areas of your life practice that needs further development.

Speech is one of the most used and influential means of interacting with others. There is significant potential to produce wholesome or unwholesome results based on our diligent application of Right Speech. Practicing these wholesome Teachings of The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech will ensure there are wholesome outcomes.

Gotama Buddha further clarifies his purpose of practicing these wholesome Teachings at the end of this chapter as “The Tathāgata has compassion for all beings.”

Compassion is concern for the misfortune of others. So, through diligent learning, reflection, and practice of these Teachings you are improving the condition of your own life practice, and thus the mind, but also improving the world through reducing and eliminating any harm you are currently causing in the world through purifying your intentions, speech, actions, and livelihood. An Enlightened being would have loving-kindness and compassion for “all beings” among many other wholesome qualities of mind ensuring they are not causing any harm in the world through their interactions in the world.

Through eliminating any harm we cause in the world, over time, no harm will come to us. This is based in The Natural Law of Kamma - cause and effect, action and result, essentially the results of your decisions.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares further details on Right Speech. A Practitioner should first train the mind through The Eight Fold Path to practice The Teachings in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) related to Right Speech. As a Practitioner advances in their life practice and is looking to refine their speech even further, this Teaching can guide you in deepening your practice.

But, the Practitioner should ensure they are consistently practicing The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech to ensure that is a foundation before moving into understanding and practicing the Teaching shared here by Gotama Buddha.

As part of The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech, we already understand that it is wise to not speak untruths, incorrect, or unbeneficial words at any time. This would only cause harm, thus, harm will come to us and we would be wise to not speak those words.

This Teaching adds to the practice of Right Speech that a Practitioner would be wise to know when it is the proper time to speak words which are unwelcome and disagreeable as well as words that are welcome and agreeable.

If speech is untrue, incorrect, or unbeneficial, then it would be wise to not use this speech.

But, with speech being true, correct, and beneficial, then, we need to determine if it is “unwelcome and disagreeable” or “welcome and agreeable”.

If the words are true, correct, and beneficial while being unwelcome and disagreeable, we need to know the proper “time to use such speech” so that it can be better received.

If the words are true, correct, and beneficial while being welcome and agreeable, we also need to know the proper “time to use such speech”.

Much of the training regarding speech comes through trial and error. As a Practitioner gets to know each individual and how they respond to various speech, they will better know what is unwelcome and disagreeable or welcome and agreeable. This is oftentimes discovered on a case-by-case basis as each person is different.

As you have conversations and communication with various people in your life and observe the results of your speech, you can then determine what is leading to wholesome results and what is leading to unwholesome results. This way, you can refine your speech to develop more and more skillfulness in regards to practicing Right Speech so that your communication is never harmful and only has wholesome outcomes.

You will be able to observe the improvements as you train more deeply because eventually you will get to the point where each individual conversation you have will result in wholesome outcomes. You will find that you are never shaken up or uncalm during conversations as the mind becomes more and more confident conducting conversations using Right Speech.

As you notice that countless conversations you have are leading to wholesome outcomes, then you know that your practice of Right Speech is becoming more developed. Then, if there is an occasional situation where someone becomes hostile or irate in a conversation with you, looking at the situation objectively through the wisdom of these Teachings, you can discover if it was due to your practice or if it was due to the other person’s lack of wisdom, moral conduct, or mental discipline.

Even when you are deeply practicing Right Speech when the mind is Enlightened, there will be occasional situations where a person may become angered, frustrated, irritated, annoyed, or otherwise discontent in a conversation with you. But, by that time, you will have trained the mind so well and be able to see so clearly that you will have confidence

that their discontent mind and wrong speech was not a result of anything that you have done or not done. Instead, it is the lack of their own wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline that caused their “wrong speech”.

You will need to have a well developed and consistent practice of Right Speech to attain Enlightenment and be able to view your conversations objectively to determine where you can improve your practice of Right Speech. You no longer need to obsess over whether you are speaking in a wholesome way but instead, learn, reflect, and practice what The Buddha shares as his Teachings are based on The Natural Law of Kamma and as long as you develop your life practice to practice these Teachings, you will be gradually improving to ensure you are always practicing Right Speech.

Through constant refinement of your practice of Right Speech using the guidance from Gotama Buddha, you can realize increased amounts of successful conversations and interactions where relationships will be easy and smooth. No longer will you find relationships difficult and a struggle because you will be deeply practicing these Teachings.

With that said, there will still be occasional situations where the other person is not deeply practicing these Teachings and their untrained mind will result in “wrong speech”. If your mind is Enlightened, even someone else’s “wrong speech” will not result in your using “wrong speech” but instead, you will be able to maintain your contentedness and joy while continuing to practice to potentially bring the conversation towards a successful conclusion.

You will need to train to the point where there is never a time that another person’s choice to use “wrong speech” influences you to use “wrong speech”. Instead, a wise Practitioner will choose not to use wrong speech even when interacting with others who are choosing to use wrong speech.

No matter how deeply you are practicing these Teachings, there is no such thing as permanently being able to have 100% of everyone you interact with to never speak impolite, unkind, unfriendly, or disrespectful. They are an individual who is making their own decisions and you are unable to control how others choose to speak to you. There are going to be situations where people are impolite, unkind, unfriendly, or disrespectful due to their own lack of wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline. But, even though you cannot control others, you can train to control your own mind and speech.

You can train the mind to the point where you do not react to others who are using “wrong speech” with a lack of wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline, but rather, you can respond politely, kindly, friendly, and respectfully no matter what is or is not happening around you. This is how an Enlightened mind will function but will require deep training and practice that will result in gradual progress.

You will see the truth for yourself that you are improving your practice with Right Speech as conversations and relationships become more easy and smooth. While there will be challenges, the Enlightened mind will always be able to find a solution to the situation.

There are millions of “right” answers to any given challenging situation. And, there are “wrong” answers to a given challenging situation. The “right” answer is to always use Right Speech. The “wrong” answer would be to use “wrong speech” that is impolite,

unkind, unfriendly, and disrespectful speaking at the improper time, untrue, harsh, unbeneficial, with a mind of hatred, and being blameful.

Instead, actively deepen your practice through training of the mind using the entire Eight Fold Path refining your speech each and every conversation always looking to improve. Through slowing down the mind using meditation as taught in “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) in Chapter 11, a Practitioner can then reside with a mind in the present moment making wise decisions to practice Right Speech realizing the results of ease and smoothness in all relationships. Why did The Buddha actively work to train his mind so deeply to ensure he was not causing harm to others? “Because The Tathāgata has compassion for all beings”.

Through your practicing compassion for all beings, you can then decide to train your mind deeply so that you are not causing harm through your speech and, thus, no harm will come to you.

Compassion (Pāli: karuṇā) is concern for the misfortunes of others.

While others may choose to speak with you using “wrong speech”, there is no need to be judgmental or irritated at their lack of wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline. Instead, observe how you too, at one time, use to speak this way but have chosen to improve your life practice through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings.

Every unwholesome aspect of someone else’s practice that you observe, you too have done those same things in this life or some prior life. Judging others will only harm your own mind and how could you judge others when you too did those same things?

So instead, have concern for their misfortunate. Be pleased that you have discovered these Teachings and have the ability to improve your life practice and the outcomes that produces.

While a person whose mind is lacking wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline has not come into contact with these Teachings and has not had the good fortune to train in these Teachings, you have had the good fortunate and are training in these Teachings.

So be an example, a role model, one who people understand is actively working to deepen your practice out of compassion for all living beings.

There is no benefit to speaking unwisely but there are many benefits to training the mind to use Right Speech at all times. You will find that you will be more successful in all your personal and professional relationships through developing your ability to communicate using Right Speech that is not harmful to anyone. People will feel more comfortable to associate with you and be involved in the various personal and professional activities that you choose to participate in. Develop your ability to have Right Speech using wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline and people will be more interested to listen to you because they find benefit in doing so. You can be more helpful to those close to you and more influential in your community.

But, choose to learn, reflect, and practice Right Speech because it is the “right” thing to do, not because you “want” something from others.

Unsolicited Guidance vs. Sharing Teachings When There is a Request for Guidance

The Path That Leads to Enlightenment requires learning, reflecting (i.e. independently verifying), and practice of The Teachings of The Buddha with guidance from a Teacher to train the mind to eliminate the defilements, or taints, (i.e. The Ten Fetters - the pollution of the unEnlightened mind).

The Enlightened mind is a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy - permanently. The mind will no longer experience discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc.

The Enlightened mind is unshakable.

To accomplish this goal, a Practitioner will need guidance as only a true Buddha would be able to attain Enlightenment without the guidance of a Teacher, and the last Buddha currently known to the world lived over 2,500 years ago. A Practitioner will be unable to ask questions to a book, video, podcast, etc. and will need to develop their intellectual understanding and practical experience to attain Enlightenment. This is accomplished by applying The Teachings of The Buddha in daily life while seeking guidance, ideally, through a well developed relationship with a Teacher.

The Path That Leads to Enlightenment does not involve forcing unsolicited guidance, advice, or Teachings onto others because a person feels they “know more than another” and they feel the urge to ensure another Practitioner understands The Teachings of The Buddha, or any other aspect of life, in the same way as you.

At the very core of Buddhist Teachings that lead to Enlightenment is the understanding that craving/desire/attachment (i.e. mental longing with a strong eagerness) leads to discontent feelings of sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc.

It is only through training the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment (i.e. mental longing with a strong eagerness) that the mind will experience Enlightenment where the mind will reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

If a Practitioner has “longing with a strong eagerness” to share Teachings with others, this will lead to discontentedness for the Practitioner and the mind will remain unEnlightened. Additionally, sharing unsolicited guidance comes from one’s own ego, the arrogance, pride, and boastfulness of the mind’s pollution described by The Buddha as “conceit”, which is one of The Ten Fetters.

If a Practitioner is not seeking guidance through asking a question and a person shares unsolicited guidance as Teachings, this is to do so with craving/desire/attachment and the ego, this will create conditions that lead to discontentedness of one or both persons.

It is suggested that Practitioners choose to learn and practice Teachings with a dedicated Teacher whom they actively seek guidance from, ideally through a well developed relationship with a Teacher.

Nowadays, many people use online groups as a way of discussing The Teachings of The Buddha. If you have been online at all, you have seen, in some cases, the overwhelming inflammatory and harmful speech that these discussion forums will often descend into over simple disagreements.

The unEnlightened mind is most often uncomfortable with those who are disagreeable, craving and desiring for “all people” to agree with them, and when that is not experienced, anger, hatred, and ill will arises in the mind typically followed by hostile, bitter, and harsh speech (i.e. unskillful moral conduct) where the mind then has aversion.

This leads to all sorts of challenges including, people being blocked or banned from groups, inhibiting a Practitioner from further investigation and exploration of The Teachings of The Buddha to improve the condition of their mind.

The very Teachings they are seeking to share teaches harmlessness, to include harmless speech but yet, some find it challenging to have conversations conducive to open sharing where disagreement does not result in hostility.

Hostile, aggressive, bitterness, impolite, unkind, unfriendly, and disrespectful speech is a sure indication that there is not yet a well developed practice of The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment, and that person is not yet Enlightened. It could be suggested that these types of comments be ignored then deleted, because if one is not practicing The Teachings of The Buddha, how could what they are sharing as Teachings be helpful to anyone?

When one unEnlightened mind speaks with hostility it is often hurtful to another unEnlightened mind due to their own cravings/desires/attachment and, therefore, fighting ensues and conversations descend into bickering that is a clear indication that all parties involved could truly benefit from more intellectual learning and practical understanding of The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment with guidance from a Teacher.

Those who argue the most are in the need of more intellectual and practical understanding of The Teachings. But, they will only get that help when the ego is lowered and they choose to seek guidance with a Teacher.

The ego of the unEnlightened mind resorts to sharing unsolicited guidance thinking, “I know better than you”.

This is all hindering an individual from experiencing Enlightenment. As long as there is craving/desire/attachment and ego in the mind, among other unwholesome qualities, the mind will not experience Enlightenment.

Arguing will not allow you to experience Enlightenment as the constant hostility will only inhibit your growth and progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Sharing unsolicited guidance will not allow you to experience Enlightenment because, the ego still exists in the mind.

Sharing unsolicited guidance with others will not lead to your Enlightenment as in doing so, there is still craving/desire/attachment and conceit (i.e. ego) in the mind. An Enlightened being does not have craving/desire/attachment nor conceit. The ego of an

Enlightened being has been completely dissolved so that there is no longer any arrogance, pride, measuring and comparing of others to put yourself above or below others.

The Buddhist tradition of sharing Teachings that leads to awakening to Enlightenment “do not” involve unsolicited sharing of Teachings that one Practitioner feels would be helpful to another Practitioner. A Practitioner needs to choose for themselves to ask questions and seek guidance instead of, Teachings being forced onto others. This will only turn people away from The Teachings of The Buddha when people are pushing Teachings onto others.

The Buddhist tradition of sharing Teachings that lead to Enlightenment “do not” involve fighting over who is “right” and who is “wrong”. So when you receive unsolicited guidance, it is suggested that you ignore it and/or delete it. This will help the individual who is sharing unsolicited guidance understand, they are unwise for sharing unsolicited guidance and people are not interested in unsolicited guidance, thus, you do not respond.

The Buddhist tradition of sharing Teachings that lead to Enlightenment “do not” involve attempting to “save others” from themselves but instead, The Path to Enlightenment involves Practitioners choosing to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment through asking questions and seeking guidance through their own free will to an individual they have confidence in and trust.

Unsolicited guidance is not part of The Path to Enlightenment.

There is nothing anyone can do to force another person to attain Enlightenment.

There is no way to “save” anyone.

And if you have not yet attain Enlightenment, you do not yet know the truth to be able to share Teachings with anyone at all.

The sooner a Practitioner understands this and directs their time, effort, and energy towards their own growth and progress on The Path to Enlightenment, the better off for everyone involved.

The Path to Enlightenment is to realize, among other things, that it is through your own wise decisions that lead to wholesome results and outcomes (i.e. wholesome Kamma).

It is through each person’s individual choices to learn, reflect (i.e. independently verify), and practice The Teachings of The Buddha that, they themselves, will navigate The Path to Enlightenment with guidance from a dedicated, supportive, encouraging, and motivating Teacher who patiently shares without any expectation of anything in return.

You can’t force someone to learn. You can’t force someone to reflect. You can’t force someone to meditate. You can’t force someone to practice The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment.

So why would you try?

Could a person whom has never driven a car teach another person how to drive a car?

No, of course not.

A Practitioner would need to attain Enlightenment before they would be capable of guiding others to attain Enlightenment.

And to attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need to eliminate all craving/desire/attachment (mental longing with a strong eagerness) including the craving/desire/attachment to Teaching those who have not asked for your guidance.

Providing unsolicited guidance is an advertisement that you have not yet attained Enlightenment as there is still craving/desire/attachment to teach others when no one has asked you a question. And, there is still conceit (i.e. ego) in the mind where it arrogantly attempts to push Teachings onto others with the assumption that, you know more than others, as no one has sought your guidance.

It is best to focus on your own Enlightenment and in doing so, you will then be best prepared to share the wisdom of how you attained Enlightenment when someone asks you a question.

An Enlightened being only needs to walk with “wisdom and a smile”.

An Enlightened being does not have the uncontrollable urge to force others to understand The Teachings of The Buddha that lead to Enlightenment in the same way as they do.

An Enlightened being's mind is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. The mind is unshakable.

An Enlightened being knows the truth, with deep wisdom, and has no interest or urge to force others to do anything at all, but may instead, decide to make themselves available to those who choose to seek guidance and understanding so that they can experience the same life affirming improvements to the mind and one's life that are realized on The Path to Enlightenment by attaining Enlightenment.

The next time you feel the urge to give unsolicited guidance, recognize that as your craving/desire/attachment and conceit (i.e. ego), which will need to be eliminated from the mind for you to attain Enlightenment.

Otherwise, the unEnlightened mind will continue to experience discontent feelings, never experiencing peacefulness, calmness, serenity, or contentedness with joy that is permanent in the Enlightened mental state.

Gotama Buddha never attempted to force anyone to learn and practice his Teachings, so why should you?

You will know someone is soliciting guidance because they will ask you a question. But, if they did not ask you a question and you give someone guidance, that is unsolicited guidance, coming from the mind's craving/desire/attachment and ego. You will not attain Enlightenment, nor will anyone else, through unsolicited guidance.

Can you resist the urge to give someone unsolicited guidance through restraining the mind? If so, you are that much closer to Enlightenment.

Actively Listening and Being Supportive of New Thoughts and Ideas

Whether you are talking with your family, friends, or colleagues, etc. it is always wise to be open to other people's ideas.

It is only one's own ego, which is based in craving/desire, that would shut down others thoughts and ideas. Instead, it is wise to be open and inviting for people to share their thoughts and ideas with you but, you will not be able to get to that, if you shut them down, telling people how something will not work.

When presented with a new idea, the unEnlightened mind will typically look at all the reasons why this thing will not work, rather than, look at how to overcome the potential obstacles to implement something new, that is better. Remember, the unEnlightened mind craves permanence, and is typically highly complacent. It is not truly interested in doing the work to consider something new and different, due to its craving for permanence.

Also, keep in mind, that one of the things that The Teachings of The Buddha help you accomplish, is navigating a world of unEnlightened beings.

So, when someone comes to you with new thoughts and ideas, be it family, friends, or colleagues, they are typically going to have craving/desire with excitement. When their mind is not getting their craving/desire fulfilled, it will experience painful feelings, attribute those painful feelings to you, and then either push you away with aversion, become bitter/harsh/hostile with you, or put their expectations on you. This is going to promote disharmony in relationships.

Instead, what you can do, rather than shutting down the new thoughts and ideas based on the obstacles you see, you can ask questions, show interest to understand a person's idea, and if they need your involvement to implement the idea, let them know you would like to think over what they have shared as you can see they have some interesting thoughts and ideas that may be helpful.

If you see certain obstacles with the idea, as part of your questions, ask them questions of how they see to overcome those obstacles, in more of a consulting and teamwork type of conversation, rather than as an adversary. Brainstorm the obstacles, in a positive way, to solicit thoughts and ideas of how to overcome the obstacles, rather than, attempt to shut down the idea due to the obstacles you see.

In this way, you stay open to what others have to say, show them that you are listening, and that you do not think "you know it all". Asking questions to understand, goes a long way to show them that you are working to understand them and considering what they are thinking. Because, someone sharing new thoughts and ideas with you, is trying to help you. But, if you shut that down, you do not get that help. Also, a person usually does not fully articulate their new idea clearly and followup questions are needed to fully understand it. And, you typically will not see all the same angles and benefits that they are seeing, when they first present the new idea to you. Therefore, by asking questions, you can flush all that out.

When people are first communicating their ideas, you may not be understanding it fully so you would like to provide the individual an opportunity to fully explain it, and for you to ask questions to fully understand it. It would be wise to even repeat back to the person what you think their idea is, to ensure you understand it, before giving it further thought.

This will help them to understand you are taking the time to consider their idea, by first understanding it. Then, even if you ultimately consider to not go forward with their idea and get involved with it, they at least know you fully understood it and gave it proper consideration. And, you might be able to offer that person support without getting involved with the effort yourself, which can also be wise in some situations.

Because, truth be told, every single new thought or idea has obstacles. There are barriers to every “new” thing coming into existence. And if all you do is verbalize all those obstacles, it appears to that person, who is eager to share with you, that you are not giving their new thought or idea the time of day, and you will appear to be a very close minded person.

This will produce disharmony in your relationships and you will see that you are not going to be very successful as a wise leader because, you are not giving the team an avenue to share their new thoughts and ideas.

A leader needs to be open to all ideas, listening and understanding what people are looking to contribute.

And while some ideas are not something that one would choose to go forward with, team members will respect and appreciate that at least their leader listened and considered their ideas. They will continue to respect that leader. But, for someone who regularly shuts them down, they will ultimately turn away from that leader because they are not open to their thoughts and ideas, and when you come to them with something you would like them to implement, they will tend to not give it any consideration. It is your Kamma (the results of your decisions) that people will do the same thing to you, that you do to them. So, guiding and leading a team becomes more and more challenging.

In the past, there are countless times when, ideas people brought to me where unwise and I ultimately decided not to go forward with them. But, through listening and asking questions, they felt I heard and understood, and took the time to consider their ideas, thus, a harmonious relationship was maintained. But, it was that 99th idea that I listened to, despite all the other unwise ideas that would not work, that I was able to get that golden nugget that changed everything in a significant way. I regularly implemented this approach when I was a businessperson, and employees, customers, business partners all regularly contributed to the growth of my business. I would not have experienced that same growth without being a good listener to others new thoughts and ideas, and showed them that I truly considered what they had to share, and was appreciative of them sharing.

Being open to listen and understand others ideas, without just verbalizing all the obstacles you see, is the way to be a successful and harmonious leader who values teamwork and team problem solving.

Enlightened beings will be able to listen and understand others ideas, not assuming they “know it all”. They will be interested and intrigued to know what others think and how they are considering to do something new. People will feel listened to and that an Enlightened being considers their ideas, even if they do not go forward with them. And, an Enlightened being can be supportive in someone else progressing towards their ideas, even if they are not involved themselves.

So, whether you are interested in being a leader or a valuable member of a team, listening to new thoughts and ideas from others is highly important and wise, it will promote continuous improvement in your life and harmony in your relationships.

Chapter 18

The Tathāgata Taught Very Few Compared to Numerous Things He Had Known

On one occasion The Perfectly Enlightened One was residing at Kosambī in a simsapā grove. Then The Perfectly Enlightened One took up a few simsapā leaves in his hand and addressed the Monks thus:

What do you think, Monks, which is more numerous: these few simsapā leaves that I have taken up in my hand or those in the simsapā grove overhead?

‘Venerable Sir, the simsapā leaves that The Perfectly Enlightened One has taken up in his hand are few, but those in the simsapā grove overhead are numerous.’

So too, Monks, the things I have directly known but have not taught you are numerous, while the things I have taught you are few.

And why, Monks, have I not taught those many things?

Because they are unbeneficial, irrelevant to the fundamentals of the holy life, and do not lead to fading away of strong feelings, to freedom from strong feelings, to elimination, to peace, to direct knowledge (experience), to Enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

Therefore I have not taught them.

And what, Monks, have I taught?

I have taught: ‘This is discontentedness’; I have taught: ‘This is the cause of discontentedness’; I have taught: ‘This is the elimination of discontentedness’; I have taught: ‘This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.’

And why, Monks, have I taught this?

Because this is beneficial, relevant to the fundamentals of the holy life, and leads to fading away of strong feelings, to freedom from strong feelings, to elimination, to peace, to direct knowledge (experience), to Enlightenment, to Nibbāna. Therefore I have taught this.

(Reference: SN 56.31)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how enormous the wisdom was that he acquired through his independent journey to Enlightenment based on a simile related to all the “leaves” of the trees in the forest, while that which he taught was represented by only the few leaves gathered in his hand.

Though the wisdom he acquired was deep and profound encompassing The Natural Laws of Existence and wisdom beyond what others would be able to comprehend, he focused his efforts over the course of his 45-year Teaching career on sharing only those Teachings that lead to Enlightenment even though he understood wisdom well beyond that which he actually shared.

The Teachings a Practitioner needs to learn, reflect, and practice to experience Enlightenment are enormous enough that will challenge a Practitioner to understand and practice on a daily basis. Had Gotama Buddha shared all his wisdom and wisdom not associated with the awakening of the mind to Enlightenment, it would have only detracted from his objective of guiding countless beings to Enlightenment during his lifetime and after his death.

Through a Practitioner learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings he did share, the mind will gradually awaken to Enlightenment and then be able to see more and more of the leaves in all of the forest.

He then once again returns to emphasizing the importance and fundamental role of The Four Noble Truths ensuring his Students are always reminded how significant it is to learn, reflect, and practice The Four Noble Truths as that Teaching is the beginning of what leads to the complete elimination of all discontentedness.

Chapter 19

Simile of A Man Were Wounded by An Arrow Thickly Smeared with Poison

Suppose, Mālunkya-putta, a man were wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and his friends and companions, his kinsmen and relatives, brought a surgeon to treat him. The man would say: ‘I will not let the surgeon pull out this arrow until I know whether the man who wounded me was a noble or a Brāhmin or a merchant or a worker.’ And he would say: ‘I will not let the surgeon pull out this arrow until I know the name and clan of the man who wounded me;...until I know whether the man who wounded me was tall or short or of middle height;...until I know whether the man who wounded me was dark or brown or golden-skinned;...until I know whether the bowstring that wounded me was fibre or reed or sinew or hemp or bark;...until I know whether the shaft that wounded me was wild or cultivated;...until I know with what kind of feathers the shaft that wounded me was fitted — whether those of a vulture or a heron or a hawk or a peacock or a stork;...until I know with what kind of sinew the shaft that wounded me was bound — whether that of an ox or a buffalo or a deer or a monkey;...until I know what kind of arrowhead it was that wounded me — whether spiked or razor-tipped or curved or barbed or calf-toothed or lancet-shaped.’

All this would still not be known to that man and meanwhile he would die. So too, Mālunkya-putta, if anyone should say thus: ‘I will not lead the holy life under the [Enlightened] One until the [Enlightened] One declares to me: ‘The world is eternal’ and ‘the world is not eternal’; ‘the world is finite’; and ‘the world is infinite’; ‘the soul is the same as the body’ and ‘the soul is one thing and the body another’; and ‘after death a Tathāgata exists’ and ‘after death a Tathāgata does not exist’ and ‘after death a Tathāgata both exists and does not exist’ and ‘after death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist,’ that would still remain undeclared by The Tathāgata and meanwhile that person would die.

Therefore, Mālunkya-putta, remember what I have left undeclared as undeclared, and remember what I have declared as declared.

And what have I left undeclared? ‘The world is eternal’ and ‘the world is not eternal’; ‘the world is finite’; and ‘the world is infinite’; ‘the soul is the same as the body’ and ‘the soul is one thing and the body another’; and ‘after death a Tathāgata exists’ and ‘after death a Tathāgata does not exist’ and ‘after death a Tathāgata both exists and does not exist’ and ‘after death a Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist,’ — I have left undeclared.

And what have I declared? ‘This is discontentedness’, ‘This is the cause of discontentedness’, ‘This is the elimination of discontentedness’, ‘This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness’ — I have declared.

Why have I declared that? Because it is beneficial, it belongs to the fundamentals of the holy life, it leads to liberation, to freedom from strong feelings, to elimination, to peace, to direct knowledge (experience), to Enlightenment, to Nibbāna. That is why I have declared it.

(Reference: MN 63)

The Three Poisons of the mind are craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality). These are the high-level descriptions of the pollution of the mind or defilements that keep the mind trapped in the unEnlightened state. These are also referred to as The Three Unwholesome Roots or The Three Fires. You may even see them represented as greed, hatred, and delusion or desire, ill will, and confusion.

The unEnlightened mind is experiencing these Three Poisons and if one does not eliminate these poisons from the mind, a being will remain unEnlightened experiencing discontentedness and the being will be reborn into a lower realm of existence.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares this simile using the “poisonous arrow” to represent “The Three Poisons” that we are all affected by “craving (greed/desire), anger (hatred/ill will), and ignorance (delusion/confusion)”. The Teachings of Gotama Buddha are represented by the surgeon. His Teachings are the medicine to remove “The Three Poisons”. But, if we expect to know all the answers that lead to the removal of “The Three Poisons” prior to practicing these Teachings, which would remove these poisons, then surely we will die before the poisons are removed.

There is no way for you to know all the answers prior to learning and practicing these Teachings as you need to create a “life practice” to clearly see many of the answers. Each day you build more and more wisdom in your life practice to gradually attain Enlightenment. If you expect to know all the answers prior to practicing these Teachings, surely you will die before the poisons are removed and, thus, have continued discontentedness and be reborn to once again experience life in a new realm - most likely not the human realm.

Gotama Buddha left certain questions undeclared because they do not lead to liberation of the mind. But The Teachings he did declare do lead to complete liberation of the mind, namely starting with “The Four Noble Truths” as mentioned in this simile.

A Practitioner should not expect to have all the answers prior to deciding to learn, reflect and practice these Teachings as it would be impossible to discover “all the answers” prior to deciding to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings. During the course of establishing your life practice, there will be many questions that arise and require answers for you to progress on The Path to Enlightenment. Guidance from a Teacher is required for you to attain Enlightenment as only a true Buddha would be able to attain Enlightenment through their own independent pursuit to Enlightenment. Likewise, many of the answers to the

questions you do not even realize you have at this moment will be discovered by you through practice of The Teachings. If you did not practice The Teachings until you had all the answers to your questions, you would never actually practice The Teachings, thus, you would not discover the answers.

Direct knowledge is acquired wisdom through experience. Wisdom is acquired through experience or practice of The Teachings. The mind is liberated to Enlightenment through wisdom.

Without practicing The Teachings, one would never acquire wisdom and, thus, would never liberate the mind. Intellectual learning, merely reciting texts, or conducting scholarly/historic research will not lead to wisdom developed through practice of The Teachings. Therefore, while intellectual learning is required to be able to practice The Teachings, with only intellectual learning, merely reciting texts, or conducting scholarly/historic research one would not improve the condition of the mind to attain Enlightenment. It is when a Practitioner is guided to practice The Teachings through independent verification of The Teachings that the mind will acquire wisdom and be liberated from discontent feelings.

Chapter 20

Instruction Usually Presented to His Disciples

‘How does Master Gotama guide his disciples? And how is Master Gotama's instruction usually presented to his disciples?’

This is how I guide my disciples, Aggivessana, and this is how my instruction is usually presented to my disciples:

Monks, material form is impermanent, feeling is impermanent, perception is impermanent, volitional formations (choices/decisions) are impermanent, consciousness is impermanent.

Monks, material form is not self, feeling is not self, perception is not self, volitional formations (choices/decisions) are not self, consciousness is not self. All formations are impermanent; all things are not self.

That is the way I guide my disciples, and that is how my instruction is usually presented to my disciples.

(Reference: MN 35)

In The Four Noble Truths, Gotama Buddha lays the foundation for The Five Aggregates. In countless other Teachings, he references The Five Aggregates as it relates to (1) impermanence, (2) discontentedness, and (3) non-self along with sharing other Teachings related to The Five Aggregates. These three comprise what we refer to as The Three Universal Truths.

The Five Aggregates are form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions) and consciousness (the mind). Clinging to The Five Aggregates is what is referred to as “a being” in Gotama Buddha’s Teachings.

It is the physical form of the physical body, the feelings in the mind, the perceptions in the mind, the volitional formations or choices/decisions, and the consciousness (the mind) that are being held on to that a being experiences discontentedness and repeated existences in The Cycle of Rebirth.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how The Five Aggregates of form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions) and consciousness (the mind) are impermanent - meaning temporary. And, he explains that The Five Aggregates are “not self” - referencing The Universal Truth of Non-self as described in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

As the mind experiences discontentedness (pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant) the mind is “holding on to” The Five Aggregates. The mind can train to understand that all these Five Aggregates are impermanent (temporary) and not the self (non-self), then the mind clinging to them craving permanence can be eliminated to experience contentedness as the mind has nothing to hold on to so tightly causing itself discontentedness.

With this Teaching and all of Gotama Buddha’s Teachings, you should not believe what The Buddha is sharing but instead, learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to independently discover the truth through verification of The Teachings in your own practice.

You might choose to reflect in this way:

- 1.) Is the physical form of the body permanent or impermanent?
- 2.) Is the physical form of the body a permanent self?
- 3.) Are the feelings permanent or impermanent?
- 4.) Are the feelings a permanent self?
- 5.) Are the perceptions permanent or impermanent?
- 6.) Are the perceptions a permanent self?
- 7.) Are the volitional formations (choices/decisions) permanent or impermanent?
- 8.) Are the volitional formations (choices/decisions) a permanent self?
- 9.) Is the consciousness (the mind) permanent or impermanent?
- 10.) Is the consciousness (the mind) a permanent self?

In reflection on these questions, you should come to the conclusion that none of The Five Aggregates are permanent, they are all impermanent. This life and this existence are impermanent. And, therefore, none of The Five Aggregates is “the permanent self”. The permanent self does not exist.

So, if the mind deeply understands and can see this true reality clearly, it can then be trained to “let go” practicing non-craving, non-desire, non-attachment to The Five Aggregates and, thus, eliminating this entire mass of discontentedness and the suffering it causes.

It is only a matter of learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings with guidance from a Teacher to train the mind closely that “holding on to” any of these things or anything else is only going to cause discontent feelings in the mind. So, let go....

Why Did The Buddha Shave His Head?

During the lifetime of Siddhartha Gotama, who eventually became known as Gotama Buddha, it was common practice for members of the royal family to grow their hair very long. This helped people to understand who is and is not a member of the royal family.

During his lifetime, there were no photographs or other technology to widely share images of who is and is not a member of the royal family. So the only way that people knew who was royalty, was through their long, well cared for hair.

It is only royalty that would have the time and ability to take care of their hair. Cleaning, combing, brushing, and otherwise caring for long hair required time, effort, energy, and resources that a common person would not have.

A commoner would be hard at work in the fields as a laborer or perhaps having some other job that took significant amounts of time and effort, making it impossible to care for long flowing hair.

Siddhartha Gotama grew his hair for 29 years as the Prince destined to become the King.

Upon leaving the royal palace on a journey towards Enlightenment, he cut off his hair as a way of “letting go” of the past, ensuring that his decision to pursue Enlightenment was confirmed, as no one would ever believe that he was royalty ever again. Without the long flowing hair that took 29 years to develop, the people in the Kingdom would never accept that he was a member of the royal family and certainly not a King.

So this tradition was part of what he decided to do in his journey to Enlightenment.

As such, it also helps one to understand and develop “The Universal Truth of Non-self” in the mind.

The Universal Truth of Non-self helps a Practitioner to understand that “you” are not the physical body (i.e. the self image) and “you” are not the mind (i.e. self identity).

The Universal Truth of Non-self helps a Practitioner see true reality that there is no permanent never changing self, it does not exist. This physical body (i.e. self image) and mind (i.e. self identity) is not “you”. These things are constantly changing and as long as the mind holds on to them, it will continue to experience discontentedness never being peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy by experiencing Enlightenment. This is described as part of the fetter/taint/pollution of mind in The Ten Fetters as “personal existence view”.

So today, someone might choose to cut their hair as a way to help them develop the mind towards the realization of The Universal Truth of Non-self and elimination of the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as “personal existence view”.

While Siddhartha Gotama cut his hair as a way to “not look back” and make a lasting decision to no longer be a member of the royal family, it also contributed to helping him realize non-self, eliminating the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described in The Ten Fetters as “personal existence view” bringing the mind closer to Enlightenment.

It can also be a reminder of The Universal Truth of Impermanence, that this hair is constantly changing, and it is not permanent. Every 2-4 weeks, one will need to get a haircut to keep it short as a continuous reminder of The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

Soaking into the mind both, The Universal Truth of Impermanence and The Universal Truth of Non-self helps to train the mind closer to Enlightenment and actually experience Enlightenment, along with many other Teachings that are needed to progress to Enlightenment.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 11-20)

<https://youtu.be/FdRURBrCqms>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 202 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 11-20)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--202---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Walking-The-Path-with-The-Buddha---Volume-2---Chapter-11-20-e16la9p/a-a6egvvs>

Chapter 21

Seeing Non-Self With Correct Wisdom

Monks, form is impermanent.... Feeling is impermanent.... Perception is impermanent.... Volitional formations (choices/decisions) are impermanent.... Consciousness is impermanent.

What is impermanent is discontentedness. What is discontentedness is non-self. What is non-self should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.

When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, one holds no more views concerning the past.

When one holds no more views concerning the past, one holds no more views concerning the future.

When one holds no more views concerning the future, one has no more stubborn craving.

When one has no more stubborn craving, the mind becomes free from strong feelings towards form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness, and is liberated from the taints by non-clinging.

By being liberated, the mind is steady;
by being steady, the mind is content;
by being content, one is not agitated;
Being unagitated, one personally attains Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

One understands: Destroyed is birth,
the holy life has been lived,
what had to be done has been done,
there is no more for this state of existence.

(Reference: SN 22.46)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings on The Universal Truth of Impermanence and The Universal Truth of Non-self.

The Buddha explains that The Five Aggregates of form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness (the mind) are impermanent. Like with all Teachings, this is not a Teaching that you should believe but instead, observe the truth for yourself through investigating it and examining it in the world.

He then explains, “What is impermanent is discontentedness. What is discontentedness is non-self”. If the mind holds onto impermanent conditions, it will experience discontentedness. And, when the mind experiences discontentedness, that is not the self, that is not you, that is not who you are.

If you understand The Universal Truth of Impermanence and The Universal Truth of Non-self then you will come to the conclusion that “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self”. None of The Five Aggregates or any other object is “you” or belongs to “you”.

The Buddha then mentions how the mind should be trained to not hold on to the past nor the future eliminating any sort of craving/desire/attachment for the past and the future. The mind needs to be trained to be in the present moment. “When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, one holds no more views concerning the past. When one holds no more views concerning the past, one holds no more views concerning the future. When one holds no more views concerning the future, one has no more stubborn craving”.

When the mind eliminates craving/desire/attachment, it “becomes free from strong feelings towards form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, and is liberated from the taints by non-clinging”. As the mind is trained to “let go” of The Five Aggregates, it can be trained to eliminate The Ten Fetters or “the taints”.

When the mind has eliminated The Ten Fetters then it is “liberated, the mind is steady”, “the mind is content”, “not agitated”, and “one personally attains Nibbāna (Enlightenment)”.

Having attained Enlightenment, a Practitioner understands “destroyed is birth”, “the holy life has been lived”, “what had to be done has been done”, “there is no more for this state of existence” and there will no longer be any more rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

With an Enlightened mind experiencing such peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy, a Practitioner knows and can observe this for themselves. They will know that this path has led exactly where Gotama Buddha said it would, to complete liberation and freedom from discontentedness. You will also know that there is no more rebirth to be experienced because the mind has attained Enlightenment.

As has been shared in the other Teachings within this book series, a Practitioner should never convince themselves that the mind is Enlightened as that can be dangerous to the mind. But instead, with humbleness a Practitioner will know the mind is liberated when it has not experienced any discontentedness for a few years.

As the discontentedness in the mind gradually decreases, life only gets better and better as the brilliance and brightness of the Enlightened mind shines through.

Chapter 22

One Who is Engaged is Unliberated One Who is Disengaged is Liberated

Monks, one who is engaged is unliberated, one who is disengaged is liberated. Consciousness, Monks, while standing, might stand engaged with form; based upon form, established upon form, with a sprinkling of excitement, it might come to growth, increase, and expansion.

Or consciousness, while standing, might stand engaged with feeling; based upon feeling, established upon feeling, with a sprinkling of excitement, it might come to growth, increase, and expansion.

Or consciousness, while standing, might stand engaged with perception; based upon perception, established upon perception, with a sprinkling of excitement, it might come to growth, increase, and expansion.

Or consciousness, while standing, might stand engaged with volitional formations (choices/decisions); based upon volitional formations, established upon volitional formations, with a sprinkling of excitement, it might come to growth, increase, and expansion.

Monks, though someone might say: ‘Separated from form, separated from feeling, separated from perception, separated from volitional formations, I will make known the coming and going of consciousness, its passing away and rebirth, its growth, increase, and expansion — is impossible.’

Monks, if a Monk has abandoned desire for the form aggregate, with the abandoning of craving the basis is cut off: there is no support for the establishing of consciousness. If he has abandoned desire for the feeling aggregate, for the perception aggregate, for the volitional formations (choices/decisions) aggregate, for the consciousness aggregate, with the abandoning of craving the basis is cut off, there is no support for the establishing of consciousness.

When that consciousness is unestablished, not coming to growth, non-generative, the mind is liberated.

By being liberated, the mind is steady;
by being steady, the mind is content;
by being content, one is not agitated;
Being unagitated, one personally attains Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

One understands: Destroyed is birth,
the holy life has been lived,
what had to be done has been done,
there is no more for this state of existence.

(Reference: SN 22.53)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how one who is engaged is unliberated and one who is unengaged is liberated.

To be liberated is to have attained Enlightenment. The mind is liberated, or experiencing freedom, from strong feelings. The mind is liberated, or experiencing freedom, from discontentedness.

Here, The Buddha interchanges the word craving/desire/attachment with “engaged”. So, when he shares that “one who is engaged is unliberated, one who is disengaged is liberated” another way to say this is “one who has craving/desire/attachment is unliberated; one who has eliminated craving/desire/attachment is liberated”.

Where you see the word engaged, substitute the word craving/desire/attachment.

Where you see the word disengaged, substitute the word non-craving, non-desire, or non-attachment.

The Buddha then goes further to mention that a being who is “engaged” with The Five Aggregates of form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness will have “a sprinkling of excitement” or pleasant feelings.

Pleasant feelings are part of a discontent mind.

So, if one has craving/desire/attachment to The Five Aggregates, they will experience pleasant feelings and thus, will also experience painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. The mind is unliberated or unEnlightened.

If the mind is craving/desiring/attached to form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), or consciousness, the mind is unliberated and will continue to experience discontentedness along with rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

The Buddha then shares “Monks, though someone might say: ‘Separated from form, separated from feeling, separated from perception, separated from volitional formations, I will make known the coming and going of consciousness, its passing away and rebirth, its growth, increase, and expansion — is impossible”. It is not just merely separating the mind from a certain object that it will experience liberation. Thus, The Buddha explains

that separation from form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations, and consciousness will not lead to liberation as this “is impossible”.

Instead, he shares that abandoning desire (i.e. craving) for form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness is what leads to liberation of the mind.

Craving/Desire/Attachment/Wants/Expectations/Grasping/Holding/Clinging: a mental longing for something with a strong eagerness. The mind pulling in a direction for objects of its affection.

A craving/desire/attachment is not the object itself but instead, the mental longing, yearning, and pulling in the direction of the object. A Practitioner needs to eliminate the mental longing, not the object itself necessarily.

Separating the mind from the actual object of its affection can be helpful in eliminating cravings/desires/attachments but through the separation of the being from the object does not necessarily eliminate the craving/desire/attachment.

It is only when the mind is trained to “cut off” craving/desire/attachment that the mind is liberated from that craving/desire/attachment no longer experiencing discontentedness related to that specific craving/desire/attachment.

Once all craving/desire/attachment is eliminated from the mind, it will be liberated. In other words, once the mind is disengaged it is then liberated.

Once craving/desire/attachment has been eliminated, or cut off, there is no more basis or support for renewed consciousness. The mind is liberated from discontentedness in this life and is liberated from The Cycle of Rebirth. The “consciousness is unestablished, not coming to growth, non-generative, the mind is liberated”.

When the mind has eliminated craving then it is “liberated, the mind is steady”, “the mind is content”, “not agitated”, and “one personally attains Nibbāna (Enlightenment)”.

Having attained Enlightenment, a Practitioner understands “destroyed is birth”, “the holy life has been lived”, “what had to be done has been done”, “there is no more for this state of existence” and there will no longer be any more rebirth in The Cycle of Rebirth.

With an Enlightened mind experiencing such peace, calmness, serenity, and contentedness with joy, a Practitioner knows and can observe this for themselves. They will know that this path has led exactly where Gotama Buddha said it would, to complete liberation and freedom from discontentedness. You will also know that there is no more rebirth to be experienced because the mind has attained Enlightenment.

As has been shared in the other Teachings within this book series, a Practitioner should never convince themselves that the mind is Enlightened as that can be dangerous to the mind. But instead, with humbleness a Practitioner will know the mind is liberated when it has not experienced any discontentedness for a few years.

As the discontentedness in the mind gradually decreases, life only gets better and better as the brilliance and brightness of the Enlightened mind shines through.

Chapter 23

Right and Wrong Refuge

They go to many a refuge, to mountains and forests, to parks and tree shrines: people threatened with danger.

That's not the secure refuge,
Not the supreme refuge,
That's not the refuge, having gone to which,
You gain release from all discontentedness and stress.

But when, having gone to The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community for refuge, you see with right wisdom The Four Noble Truths — stress, the cause of stress, the transcending of stress, and The Noble Eight Fold Path, the way to the stilling of stress:

That's the secure refuge, that,
The supreme refuge,
That is the refuge, having gone to which,
You gain release from all discontentedness and stress.

(Reference: DHP 188-192)

Refuge: Shelter or protection from danger or distress. A place that provides shelter or protection. Something to which one can receive help in difficulty.

Buddha: A being who has attained Enlightenment on their own without the assistance of Teachers to independently discover Teachings that leads to their own Enlightenment, with the ability to share their independently discovered Teachings that leads others to Enlightenment. The last Buddha currently known to the world existed 2,500 years ago, who I refer to as Master Teacher Gotama Buddha or Gotama Buddha. (You will see other ways people refer to him.)

Teachings: The Teachings of Gotama Buddha based on The Natural Laws of Existence that lead to awakening of the mind, to Enlightenment.

Community: The entire community of Practitioners to include Ordained Practitioners and anyone who has attained one (1) of The Four Stages of Enlightenment, this includes Household Practitioners. These are the Teachers who can guide others to attain Enlightenment through The Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that when the mind experiences fear from danger people retreat “to mountains and forests, to parks and tree shrines”. However, the real danger that beings are experiencing is that of discontentedness and The Cycle of Rebirth caused by their own lack of wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline.

The mountains, forests, parks, nor tree shrines will protect the mind from discontentedness and The Cycle of Rebirth. But instead, it is a Practitioner who seeks protection with confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community. As a being who seeks refuge or protection through having confidence in The Buddha, access to his Teachings, and being a member of The Community, then, one can learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to liberate the mind from the true danger - discontentedness and The Cycle of Rebirth.

It is important to understand that Gotama Buddha never used guilt, shame, or fear to motivate or encourage people to learn his Teachings. Instead, his Teachings are to guide beings to the elimination of such discontent feelings as guilt, shame, and fear. Gotama Buddha’s Teachings are to eliminate these discontent feelings and others, so he would not see the use of guilt, shame, and fear as beneficial to eliminate guilt, shame, and fear.

So, Gotama Buddha is using the term “danger” because it is a feeling that the unEnlightened mind is familiar with and can relate to. He is redirecting one’s mind to understand the true dangers in the world which may not be easily observed through less illuminating language.

He then goes on to explain that this protection of the mind, this refuge, starts with The Four Noble Truths leading to The Eight Fold Path. It is these two Teachings that are the most fundamental and core Teachings that comprise what is needed for a Practitioner to deeply understand and practice to train the mind towards the attainment of Enlightenment.

It is through experiencing Enlightenment that one “transcends stress”, “stills stress”, The Four Noble Truths and The Eight Fold Path are the “supreme refuge” (protection) which will gain “release from all discontentedness and stress” it is not the mountains, forests, parks and tree shrines as through seeking protection there, the mind is still fearful.

It is only through the elimination of fear that one experiences a true refuge or true protection, not hiding from that which the mind fears. Avoiding and hiding from that which the mind fears only allows the mind to hold on to the fear continuing to experience the same fear over and over through countless cycles.

But, through training the mind to release the fear by the elimination of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) the mind will then reside in the secure and permanent refuge or protection of The Buddha, The Teachings, and The Community.

Chapter 24

A Monk Who Is Concentrated Understands Things as They Really Are

Monks, develop concentration. A Monk who is concentrated understands things as they really are. And what does he understand as it really is? He understands as it really is: ‘This is discontentedness.’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the cause of discontentedness.’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the elimination of discontentedness.’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.’

Monks, develop concentration. A Monk who is concentrated understands things as they really are. Therefore, Monks, an effort should be made to understand: ‘This is discontentedness.’ An effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the cause of discontentedness.’ An effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the elimination of discontentedness.’ An effort should be made to understand: ‘This is the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness.’

(Reference: SN 56.1)

Concentration, focus, memorization, and clarity of mind are indications of a well functioning and optimized mind. The learning, reflection, and practice of these Teachings will guide a Practitioner to experiencing these benefits through the attainment of Enlightenment. The mind will gradually awaken to these benefits and many others as one cultivates this path to Enlightenment.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares with his Students to cultivate “concentration”. As a well concentrated mind can more readily see things clearly not reacting to life situations and circumstances but instead responding with generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom (The Three Wholesome Roots).

The Four Noble Truths is the beginning of this path and a Teaching that you will see Gotama Buddha continually reference.

He repeatedly advises and guides his Students to learn, reflect, and practice The Four Noble Truths applying “an effort” to be made to understand and practice this important Teaching. As one who understands and practices this Teaching will make a breakthrough on The Path to Enlightenment.

Chapter 25

Gradual Progress in These Teachings and Discipline

It is possible, Brāhmin, to describe gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress in these Teachings and Discipline.

Just as, Brāhmin, when a clever horse-trainer obtains a fine thoroughbred colt, he first makes him get used to wearing the bit, and afterwards trains him further, so when The Tathāgata obtains a person to be tamed he first guides him thus:

Come, Monk, be virtuous (practice moral conduct), restrained with the restraint of the guidelines of these Teachings, be perfect in conduct and determination, and seeing misery in the slightest fault, train by undertaking the training precepts.

When, Brāhmin, the Monk is virtuous (practicing moral conduct) and seeing misery in the slightest fault, trains by undertaking the training precepts, then The Tathāgata guides him further:

Come. Monk, guard the doors of your sense bases. On seeing a form with the eye not grasping at its signs and features. Since, if you were to leave the eye unguarded, evil unwholesome states of craving and displeasure might invade you, practice the way of its restraint, guard the eye sense base, undertake the restraint of the eye sense base.

(On hearing a sound with the ear...On smelling an odor with the nose...On tasting a flavor with the tongue...On touching a physical object with the body...On recognizing a mental object with the mind, are explained in the same repetitive formulas.)

When, Brāhmin, the Monk guards the doors of his sense bases, then The Tathāgata guides him further:

Come, Monk, be moderate in eating. Reflecting wisely, you should take food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending discomfort, and for assisting the holy life, considering: Thus I shall terminate old feelings without entertaining new feelings and I shall be healthy and blameless and shall live in comfort.

When, Brāhmin, the Monk is moderate in eating, then the Tathāgata guides him further:

Come, Monk, be devoted to wakefulness. During the day, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the first watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the middle watch of the night, you should lie down on the right side in the lion's pose with one foot overlapping the other, mindful and fully aware, after noting in your mind the time for rising. After rising, in the third watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states.

When, Brāhmin, the Monk is devoted to wakefulness, then The Tathāgata guides him further:

Come, Monk, be possessed of mindfulness and full awareness. Act in full awareness when going forward and returning; act in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; act in full awareness when flexing and extending your limbs; act in full awareness when wearing your robes and carrying your outer robe and bowl; act in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; act in full awareness when defecating and urinating; act in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silent.

When, Brāhmin, the Monk possesses mindfulness and full awareness, then The Tathāgata guides him further:

Come, Monk, make use of a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.

He makes use of a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw. On returning from his almsround (gathering food), after his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness before him.

Abandoning sensual desires for the world, he resides with a mind free from sensual desires; he purifies his mind from sensual desires.

Abandoning ill will and hatred, he resides with mind free from ill will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies his mind from ill will and hatred.

Abandoning complacency, he resides free from complacency, deeply understand of the light, mindful and fully aware: he purifies his mind from complacency.

Abandoning restlessness and worry, he resides unagitated with a mind inwardly peaceful; he purifies his mind from restlessness and worry.

Abandoning doubt, he resides having gone beyond doubt, unconfused about wholesome states with confidence; he purifies his mind from doubt.

Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite distant from sense-desires, distant from unwholesome mental states, enters and resides in the first Jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, based in seclusion, filled with excitement and joy. And with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters and resides in the second Jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, based in concentration, filled with excitement and joy. And with the fading away of excitement, remaining imperturbable (unable to be upset or excited; calm; serene), mindful and clearly aware, he experiences in himself the joy of which the Noble Ones say:

‘Peaceful is he who resides with equanimity and mindfulness’, he enters the third Jhāna. And, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the fading away of former gladness and sadness, he enters and resides in the fourth Jhāna, which is beyond pleasure and pain, and purified by equanimity and mindfulness.

This is my instruction, Brāhmin, to those Monks who are in the higher training, whose minds have not yet attained the goal, who reside aspiring to the supreme security from bondage (Enlightenment).

But these things conduce both to a peaceful residing here and now and to mindfulness and full awareness for those Monks who are Arahants with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached the true goal, destroyed the fetters of existence, and are completely liberated through final knowledge (wisdom).

(Reference: MN 107)

The attainment of Enlightenment is experienced through “gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress”. It is the gradual acquiring of wisdom that leads to Enlightenment.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares his approach to the “gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress” of training a Student comparing it to that of a “horse trainer”. The training of horses is something that the average person would have understood during Gotama Buddha’s lifetime so he related the training of the mind to attain Enlightenment to that of the gradual training of a horse.

Today, we might use the analogy of training a dog. Many people have dogs as pets and understand that to train a dog to be well behaved, that happens through “gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress” yet the unEnlightened mind oftentimes “wants” Enlightenment “right now”.

Due to craving/desire/attachment where the mind is longing or yearning for something with a strong eagerness as being the core and central problem to resolve in the unEnlightened mind, when the mind is on The Path to Enlightenment, the longing and yearning for something does not just stop or halt in its tracks. The mind will oftentimes have longing and yearning for Enlightenment itself which needs to be eliminated to attain Enlightenment. The mind needs to pursue Enlightenment as a goal, interest, or objective rather than with longing or yearning.

The mind needs “gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress” to be developed to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings much like one would employ for training a household pet like a dog.

The gradual training that Gotama Buddha describes here is to:

1.) “Be virtuous (practice moral conduct), restrained with the restraint of the guidelines of these Teachings, be perfect in conduct and determination, and seeing misery in the slightest fault, train by undertaking the training precepts”.

This relates to practice of the moral conduct shared in The Eight Fold Path as Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood and The Five Precepts as “the training precepts” and for Ordained Practitioners, there would be many more than just five (5) precepts.

2.) “Guard the doors of your sense bases. On seeing a form with the eye not grasping at its signs and features. Since, if you were to leave the eye unguarded, evil unwholesome states of craving and displeasure might invade you, practice the way of its restraint, guard the eye sense base, undertake the restraint of the eye sense base”.

This relates to “protecting the doorways to discontentedness” as it is the senses of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind (The Six Sense Bases) that are the entry ways or doorways to allow discontentedness to “invade” the mind. If the mind has craving/desire/attachment through The Six Sense Bases, (i.e. sensual desire) there will be discontentedness of mind.

3.) “Be moderate in eating. Reflecting wisely, you should take food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending discomfort, and for assisting the holy life, considering: Thus, I shall terminate old feelings without entertaining new feelings and I shall be healthy and blameless and shall live in comfort”.

This relates to training his Students to not over eat causing the physical body to work hard through digestion, which would not be “the middle way”, nor for the pleasure of food. Food should not be seen as being digested for pleasing the tongue and thus, the mind, but “for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending discomfort”. Food is only to sustain the health of the body and, thus, the mind. Be sure to make wise choices about the quality of food that you choose to ingest as this will directly result in the health of the body. Through maintaining the health of the body for a longer period of time, this reduces the burden placed on the mind and elongates the amount of time one would have in the human realm to cultivate the mind on The Path to Enlightenment.

Here he also encourages his Students to be healthy and without blame through having a healthy body, the mind can then reside in “comfort”.

4.) “Be devoted to wakefulness. During the day, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the first watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states. In the middle watch of the night, you should lie down on the right side in the lion's pose with one foot overlapping the other, mindful and fully aware, after noting in your mind the time for rising. After rising, in the third watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, purify your mind of obstructive states”.

This training of “wakefulness” relates to the mind being “calm and relaxed” while also being “alert and attentive” being devoted to awakening the mind to Enlightenment. Through purification of the mind in learning, reflecting, and practicing The Eight Fold Path one will eliminate “obstructive states”.

While The Buddha is describing his sleeping position in the “lion’s pose”, one does not need to sleep in that pose to attain Enlightenment. This practice is not about training the physical body to permanently assume a specific position during sleep but instead, learning, reflecting, and practicing Teachings to train the mind to acquire wisdom.

5.) “Be possessed of mindfulness and full awareness. Act in full awareness when going forward and returning; act in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; act in full awareness when flexing and extending your limbs; act in full awareness when wearing your robes and carrying your outer robe and bowl; act in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; act in full awareness when defecating and urinating; act in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silent”.

This Teaching from Gotama Buddha encourages “mindfulness” or “awareness of mind” as he views this quality of mind as always useful and beneficial on The Path to Enlightenment.

In order to purify the mind of unwholesome states and cultivate the mind with wholesome states, one would need to have awareness of mind or Right Mindfulness - practicing this during all wakeful moments during our day. Developing mindfulness in Breathing

Mindfulness Meditation is an ongoing daily practice and ensuring the mind is focused on only one singular task at a time will further cultivate Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration resulting in “singleness of mind”.

The Buddha is encouraging one that when they are eating, they are eating. When they are drinking, they are drinking. When they are defecating, they are defecating. When they are urinating, they are urinating. How did Gotama Buddha know 2,500 years ago that people would be sitting on the toilet using electronic devices? Are you one of those people?

The mind can only do one thing at a time. The mind tricks itself into thinking that it is doing more than one thing at a time but, in fact, what it is really doing is rapidly cycling from one thing to the next to the next. Allowing the mind to rapidly cycle in this way creates muddle mindedness, lack of focus and concentration, therefore, it is more likely that one will make unwholesome decisions leading to unwholesome results.

A dedicated and diligent Student would work to apply effort to only focus on one task at a time ensuring complete mindfulness (awareness of mind) and concentration (singleness of mind) in our daily tasks. This takes the training of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation and moves it into daily life through application of the training in a real world setting. This allows a Practitioner to benefit from having cultivated Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration through applying the results of a well cultivated and optimized mind in daily life through our daily tasks making wholesome decisions each moment leading to wholesome outcomes or results.

6.) “Make use of a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw”.

Here, Gotama Buddha is advising his Students to find “a secluded resting place” to meditate. As a roaming Ascetic, Monks would not have a designated home but instead, need to find a suitable place for meditating.

Gotama Buddha shares his approach to the ideal place for meditation and you might decide to try this, from time to time, in your own practice. Meditate in “a secluded resting place” as described here in this Teaching.

7.) “After his meal he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness before him”.

Gotama Buddha is guiding Students to meditate with folded legs, erecting the upper body, and to setup mindfulness in front of them. This is to bring awareness to the mind prior to meditation. Rather than just plopping down the physical body to meditate, one should sit down with intention and awareness of mind to establish a proper meditation position and then initiate meditation.

A Practitioner is not required to meditate with crossed legs but if choosing to sit on the floor, that is how you would choose to sit.

Detailed explanation on developing a meditation practice is available in Chapter 11 of this same book series found in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

8.) Gotama Buddha is providing Teachings that he guides his Students in the elimination of The Five Hindrances. The Five Hindrances are sensual desire, ill will, complacency, restlessness and worry, and doubt. These are not only described in The Five Hindrances but also in The Ten Fetters as part of the pollution that is hindering the mind from experiencing Enlightenment. You will find Gotama Buddha's Teachings have overlapping guidance depending on which aspect of The Path to Enlightenment he chose to focus on.

In this way, he layered his Teachings one-by-one with connections between The Teachings. This layering effect allows the mind to digest The Teachings gradually in various levels of depth associated with each individual topic of discussion being shared.

One would need to eradicate The Five Hindrances to experience Enlightenment.

Instruction on how to accomplish this goal is provided in videos and classes shared by the author of this book. You can contact the author of this book for detailed instruction and guidance on all aspects of The Path to Enlightenment including the elimination of The Five Hindrances.

You can access an online class where The Five Hindrances were taught using this link.

(Group Learning Program) - The Five Hindrances to Enlightenment & The Seven Factors of Enlightenment -

<https://youtu.be/mY8xw5wPRiQ>

(Podcast)

Ep. 290 - (Group Learning Program) - The Five Hindrances to Enlightenment & The Seven Factors of Enlightenment

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--290---Group-Learning-Program---The-Five-Hindrances-to-Enlightenment--The-Seven-Factors-of-Enlightenment-e1gduid>

The Five Hindrances are Eliminated with The Seven Factors of Enlightenment

Monks, these five hindrances are makers of blindness, causing lack of vision, causing lack of knowledge, detrimental to wisdom, leading to discontentedness, leading away from Enlightenment.

What five?

The hindrance of sensual desire is a maker of blindness ...

The hindrance of ill will ...

The hindrance of complacency ...

The hindrance of restlessness and worry ...

The hindrance of doubt is a maker of blindness ... leading away from Enlightenment.

These five hindrances are makers of blindness, causing lack of vision, causing lack of knowledge, detrimental to wisdom, leading to discontentedness, leading away from Enlightenment.

These Seven Factors of Enlightenment, Monks, are makers of vision, makers of knowledge, promoting the growth of wisdom, free from discontentedness, leading towards Enlightenment.

What seven?

The Enlightenment factor of mindfulness is a maker of vision ...

The Enlightenment factor of investigation is a maker of vision ...

The Enlightenment factor of energy is a maker of vision ...

The Enlightenment factor of joy is a maker of vision ...

The Enlightenment factor of tranquility is a maker of vision ...

The Enlightenment factor of concentration is a maker of vision ...

The Enlightenment factor of equanimity is a maker of vision ... leading towards Enlightenment.

These Seven Factors of Enlightenment are makers of vision, makers of knowledge, promoting the growth of wisdom, free from discontentedness, leading towards Enlightenment.

(Reference: SN 46.40)

9.) Gotama Buddha then goes into sharing Teachings on experiencing The Four Jhāna's as the guidance and instruction provided would lead to the attainment of the Jhānas.

The Jhānas are preliminary phases the mind will experience as it moves from the unEnlightened mind off The Path to Enlightenment to an unEnlightened mind learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment - namely The Eight Fold Path.

The Jhānas are not permanent and one can regress from the Jhānas if they do not continue through to the first Stage of Enlightenment. Once one attains the first Stage of Enlightenment, the mind will not regress. The mind experiences these attainments of the Jhānas, and the associated benefits, as the mind progresses through these preliminary indications that one's practice of The Eight Fold Path is well developed.

The difference between the unEnlightened mind off The Path to Enlightenment to the unEnlightened mind experiencing the Jhānas is like, night and day. Oftentimes Practitioners who experience the Jhānas think they have actually attained Enlightenment due to the difference observed to the condition of the mind. But, one who is experiencing the Jhānas will still be experiencing discontentedness as they have not yet eliminated The Ten Fetters. There is much bliss and joy associated with experiencing the Jhānas and the mind's ego, which is still present, might attempt to convince it that it is further along on The Path to Enlightenment than it really is.

A wise Practitioner would not be affected by the attainment of the Jhānas but instead, remain focused and diligent on the true goal, complete liberation of the mind - Enlightenment. To accomplish that goal, one will need to start directing their attention to the elimination of The Ten Fetters. With this indication that the practice of The Eight Fold Path is well developed through the attainment of the Jhānas, it is now time to start focusing on the attainment of the first Stage of Enlightenment through the elimination and eradication of the first three (3) fetters.

10.) Gotama Buddha wraps up this Teaching with explaining what his "gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress" leads to which is "these things conduce both to a peaceful residing here and now and to mindfulness and full awareness for those Monks who are Arahants with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached the true goal, destroyed the fetters of existence, and are completely liberated through final knowledge (wisdom)".

This is the description of a mind that has reached Enlightenment as described by The Buddha in this specific Teaching and the results therein.

Chapter 26

Simile of A Young Infant

Suppose a young infant boy, unwise, lying on his back, were to put a stick or pebble in his mouth because of his nurse's lack of attention. His nurse would quickly attend to him and try to take it out. If she could not quickly take it out, she would brace the boy's head with her left hand and, hooking a finger of her right hand, she would take it out even if she had to draw blood.

For what reason?

There would be some distress for the boy - this I don't deny - but the nurse has to do so for his good and welfare, out of compassion for him. However, when the boy has grown up and has enough sense, the nurse would be unconcerned about him, thinking: The boy can now look after himself. He won't be careless.

So too, so long as a Monk is still not accomplished in confidence in cultivating wholesome qualities, in a sense of moral wrongdoing in cultivating wholesome qualities, in moral concern in cultivating wholesome qualities, in energy in cultivating wholesome qualities, and in wisdom in cultivating wholesome qualities, I must still look after him.

But when that Monk is accomplished in confidence in cultivating wholesome qualities, in a sense of moral wrongdoing in cultivating wholesome qualities, in moral concern in cultivating wholesome qualities, in energy in cultivating wholesome qualities, and in wisdom in cultivating wholesome qualities, then I am unconcerned about him, thinking:

The Monk can now look after himself. He won't be careless.

(Reference: AN 5.7)

A dedicated Teacher will apply much time, effort, energy, and resources into supporting their Students on The Path to Enlightenment. It is not easy to share The Teachings of this path with Students. But, with dedication and diligence, a wise Teacher who is Enlightened can guide countless people to the attainment of Enlightenment.

Choosing a Teacher to guide you on this path, could almost be described like choosing your own parent. To progress through any particular Teacher's Teachings, one would need to develop a long term relationship based in politeness, kindness, friendliness, respectfulness and trust between both the Teacher and the Student.

The Teacher and the Student will need to apply much dedication and diligence to sharing/ learning The Teachings for the Student to be successful in their pursuit to Enlightenment. It is the responsibility of the Student to seek guidance, not for the Teacher to ensure the Student is seeking guidance and learning these Teachings. This is an independent practice in which the Student needs to apply enthusiasm and motivation towards developing their life practice by choosing to seek guidance with a Teacher. Only a true Buddha would be able to attain Enlightenment on their own without the guidance of a Teacher. Therefore, you are not a Buddha and will need to develop a long term relationship with a Teacher based on non-attachment. This choice alone can be helpful in reducing and eliminating the ego as to seek guidance with a Teacher one needs to admit to themselves that they "do not know it all" which will help to eliminate arrogance or conceit.

A Teacher may choose to look after and care for their Students in much the same way a parent might care for a child. A Student may choose to look to their Teacher in much the same way as a child might appreciate a parent. No matter how either party chooses to develop their relationship, it is highly important that a Teacher never become attached to their Students and for Students to never become attached to their Teacher. If either of these happen, whoever has attachment has not liberated the mind and will not liberate the mind until the craving/desire/attachment is eliminated. The individuals with attachment will experience discontentedness associated with the relationship.

It is said that one of Gotama Buddha's closest Students, Ānanda, did not attain Enlightenment until after Gotama Buddha's death. He was with Gotama Buddha, "The Buddha", learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings with the originator, discoverer and declarer of The Path to Enlightenment during his entire forty-five (45) years of teaching, yet he did not attain Enlightenment until his Teacher's death. I suspect this was due to Ānanda's attachment to Gotama Buddha.

Depending how close of a relationship one has established, oftentimes it is not until a person dies in our life that the mind is finally able to "let go" unless one is determined and diligent in their efforts to identify and eliminate attachments.

If you attach to your Teacher, you will not be able to attain Enlightenment and at some point the mind will become discontent associated with your relationship. You need to learn and practice non-attachment in all relationships, especially your relationship with your Teacher. And, Teachers need to practice non-attachment with their Students.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a simile comparing the care of an infant to the care and attention that he gives to his own Students.

Initially as a baby is first born, caregivers may watch over the child very closely ensuring that the young child does not harm itself causing death because the infant lacks wisdom. But, then as the child ages and its wisdom increases, the caregivers will be more willing to allow the child to depart from constant care and venture out into the world to explore thinking "The boy can now look after himself".

A Teacher who shares these Teachings, in this case The Buddha, might choose to initially watch over their Students taking great care to ensure they are guided and supported with dedicated attention. But then, as they grow in the development of these Teachings a wise Teacher would understand that it is important to step back from a Student providing them the ability to exercise wise decision making based in the wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline of these Teachings thinking "The [Student] can now look after himself".

This will help the mind of the Student ensuring there is not attachment wanting constant interaction and attention from the Teacher.

Gotama Buddha's Students basically lived side-by-side with him in a Community of Ordained Practitioners. This close proximity in living can, oftentimes, lead to the mind developing attachment. But, even with this close proximity in living arrangements you can see that The Buddha remained unconcerned about his Students knowing that it is important for them to stand up on their own two feet to establish a well developed practice of these Teachings making wise choices in their life. While he did look after his Students more closely as they initially stepped forward to learn, later, upon the Student being more developed in The Teachings, he wisely chose to step back being unconcerned having confidence that the Student could "look after himself".

Detailed explanation of moral wrongdoing and moral concern is available in this same book series found in Chapter 25 of the book "Generosity" (Volume 13).

Chapter 27

Killing in The Perfectly Enlightened One's Teachings

Kesi, you are well known to be a horse trainer. Just how do you guide a horse to be tamed?

'Venerable Sir, I guide one kind of horse gently, another kind sternly, and still another kind both gently and sternly.'

But, Kesi, if a horse to be tamed by you won't submit to guidance by any of these methods, how do you deal with him?

'Venerable Sir, if a horse to be tamed by me won't submit to guidance by any of these methods, then I kill him. For what reason? So that there will be no disgrace to my Teaching organization. But, Venerable Sir, The Perfectly Enlightened One is the unsurpassed trainer of persons to be tamed. Just how does The Perfectly Enlightened One guide a person to be tamed?'

I guide one kind of person gently, another kind sternly, and still another kind both gently and sternly.

(1) This, Kesi, is the gentle method: Such is bodily wholesome conduct, such the result of bodily wholesome conduct; such is verbal wholesome conduct, such the result of verbal wholesome conduct; such is mental wholesome conduct, such the result of mental wholesome conduct; such are the heavenly beings, such are human beings.

(2) This is the stern method: Such is bodily misconduct, such the result of bodily misconduct; such is verbal misconduct, such the result of verbal misconduct; such is mental misconduct, such the result of mental misconduct; such is hell, such the animal realm, such the realm of afflicted spirits.

(3) This is the gentle and stern method: Such is bodily wholesome conduct, such the result of bodily wholesome conduct; such is bodily misconduct, such the result of bodily misconduct. Such is verbal wholesome conduct, such the result of verbal wholesome conduct; such is verbal misconduct, such the result of verbal misconduct. Such is mental wholesome conduct, such the result of mental wholesome conduct: Such is mental misconduct, such the result of mental misconduct.

Such are the heavenly beings, such are human beings: such is hell, such the animal realm, such the realm of afflicted spirits.

‘But, Venerable Sir, if a person to be tamed by you won't submit to guidance by any of these methods, how does The Perfectly Enlightened One deal with him?’

If a person to be tamed by me won't submit to guidance by any of these methods, then I kill him.

‘But, Venerable Sir, it isn't allowable for The Perfectly Enlightened One to destroy life. Yet he says, Then I kill him,’

It is true, Kesi, that it isn't allowable for The Tathāgata to destroy life. However, when a person to be tamed won't submit to guidance by the gentle method, the stern method, or the method that is both gentle and stern, then The Tathāgata thinks he should not be spoken to and instructed, and his wise fellow Monks, too, think he should not be spoken to and instructed.

For this, Kesi, is ‘killing’ in the Noble One's Teachings: The Tathāgata thinks one should not be spoken to and instructed, and one's wise fellow Monks, too, think one should not be spoken to and instructed.

(Reference: AN 4.11)

Here again, The Buddha is sharing Teachings connected with that of training a horse. He is relating the training provided by a horse trainer to tame a horse to that of the training he provides to tame the human mind.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that if a Student is not attentive to his guidance he has four methods of instruction.

1.) “The Gentle Method” which is to talk with Students softly to help them see areas of improvement.

2.) “The Stern Method” which is to talk with Students firmly to help them see areas of improvement.

3.) “The Gentle and Stern Method” which is to talk with Students both softly and firmly, depending on the situation and lesson to be learned, to help them see areas of improvement.

The method used would be based on what the Student responds to. If a Student responded to “the gentle method”, that is all that was needed. But some Students might only respond to “the stern method” with more firm talk. Remember, Gotama Buddha’s Students basically lived with him and he served as a parent. So, speaking firmly to a Student of his might produce the results needed for the Student to move the mind towards improved conduct. But, in using “the stern method”, that would not involve harsh speech as The Buddha and any Enlightened being would be practicing The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech and choose not to speak harshly. It is possible to speak sternly or firmly without speaking harshly based on word choice, tone, and tempo a wise Teacher might choose to employ.

The Buddha chose to employ a fourth aspect of sharing these Teachings that if a Student did not respond to his Teachings, he “killed” them. Killing in his view was not to take their life through destroying the physical body but instead, choosing to no longer share The Teachings with a Student is considered “killing” in these Teachings.

It is these Teachings that breathe healthy life into the mind. Without this breath of healthy life being breathed into the mind, it is similar to “killing” a person.

I am sure Gotama Buddha did not take the decision to stop sharing The Teachings with a Student lightly. But, at the end of the day, a Perfectly Enlightened One is interested in helping Practitioners progress on The Path to Enlightenment. If a Student is taking time, effort, energy, and resources from a Teacher to have the Teacher share The Teachings yet does not apply the lessons shared to improve their life practice, this could be considered disrespectful to the Teacher and other Students.

The way to respect a Teacher is through dedicated learning and application of The Teachings into one’s life practice. Remember, the Teacher is not getting a salary, benefits nor are they placing any direct requirements or expectations onto the Students as part of sharing The Teachings. But it would be wise for a Teacher to recognize their time in this existence is limited as well as their effort, energy, and resources are also limited. If a Teacher invests heavily into a Student who chooses not to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings, this would be unwise for the Teacher to continue sharing The Teachings with the disrespectful Student - as the Teacher will have many Students to help.

So, while the decision to kill a Student should not be taken lightly, there may come a time in your teaching career where the wisest and most helpful thing for a complacent Student is to realize they are being disrespectful to not diligently apply The Teachings, they are wasting time, and The Teacher is choosing to move away from them due to their decision to not learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings. This would be the Student's Kamma - the results of their decisions. This could be exactly what that Student needs to ignite motivation and enthusiasm to more diligently learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings.

Anyone choosing to share these Teachings into the world may find this Teaching helpful but also parents, employers, community leaders and others may find applying these methods could be beneficial to produce results within your relationships. Just be sure that if you choose to speak "sternly or firmly" you are not speaking "harshly" and you may need to seek guidance from a wise Teacher to understand the difference and where is "the middle way" associated with this Teaching. Because if you spoke harshly, that would not produce wholesome results as it would be counterproductive based on The Natural Laws of Existence shared in The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech.

I have found that in 99.9% of all relationships, I am able to use "the gentle method" of sharing these Teachings and Students will respond to this more readily. However, in relationships such as with my son, wife, and a very limited number of employees from the past, choosing to speak "sternly and firmly" was exactly what they needed to learn a lesson and get to the next step in their development. I ensured that if I employed "the stern method" there was a well established relationship that ensured the individual already understands I have deep loving-kindness, compassion, and respect for them as an individual. I would also attempt to always employ "the gentle method" first and in more than one instance. But ultimately if a firmer approach is what is needed, this can be employed in a skillful way that results in the improvement of the situation and circumstances leading to wholesome outcomes.

I do not suggest a Practitioner or Teacher employ "the stern method" until they have a well established practice of The Five Factors of Well Spoken Speech and a well established relationship with the individual that you feel a firm approach could be beneficial. I suggest you attempt "the gentle method" in 99.9% of all situations and if there is no improved response you could consider killing the Student - no longer sharing these Teachings.

And, if you do decide to use "the stern method" after much consideration, that you do so without craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality). As if you use a firm approach while your own mind is angered, then this is not the proper time for you to speak and it will most likely have unwholesome results. One should not employ "the stern method" based on anger or an interest to punish an individual, but instead, based on compassionate interest in helping an individual improve their conduct and results.

Chapter 28

The Tathāgata Is The One Who Shows the Way

The Brāhmin Ganaka Moggallāna asked The Perfectly Enlightened One: 'When Master Gotama's disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, do they all attain Nibbāna (Enlightenment), the ultimate goal, or do some not attain it?'

When, Brāhmin, they are thus advised and instructed by me, some of my disciples attain Nibbāna (Enlightenment), the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it.

'Master Gotama, since Nibbāna (Enlightenment) exists and the path leading to Nibbāna exists and Master Gotama is present as the guide, what is the cause and reason why, when Master Gotama's disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, some of them attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it?'

As to that, Brāhmin, I will ask you a question in return. Answer it as you choose. What do you think, Brāhmin? Are you familiar with the road leading to Rājagaha?

'Yes. Master Gotama, I am familiar with the road leading to Rājagaha.'

What do you think, Brāhmin? Suppose a man came who wanted to go to Rājagaha, and he approached you and said: 'Venerable Sir, I want to go to Rājagaha. Show me the road to Rājagaha.'

Then you told him: Now, good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Follow it for a while and you will see a certain village, go a little further and you will see a certain town, go a little further and you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, groves, meadows, and ponds. Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would take a wrong road and would go to the west.

Then a second man came who wanted to go to Rājagaha, and he approached you and said: 'Venerable Sir, I want to go to Rājagaha.' Then you told him: Now, good man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Follow it for a while and you will see a certain village, go a little further and you will see a certain town, go a little further and you will see Rājagaha with its lovely parks, groves, meadows, and ponds. Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would arrive safely in Rājagaha.

Now, Brāhmin, since Rājagaha exists and the path leading to Rājagaha exists and you are present as the guide, what is the cause and reason why, when those men have been thus advised and instructed by you, one man takes a wrong road and goes to the west, and one arrives safely in Rājagaha?

‘What can I do about that, Master Gotama? I am one who shows the way.’

So too, Brāhmin, Nibbāna (Enlightenment) exists and the path leading to Nibbāna exists and I am present as the guide. Yet when my disciples have been thus advised and instructed by me, some of them attain Nibbāna, the ultimate goal, and some do not attain it.

What can I do about that, Brāhmin?

The Tathāgata is one who shows the way.

(Reference: MN 107)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he helps a Brāhmin understand why not all of his Students attain Enlightenment. As it might be thought that everyone who learned, reflected, and practiced The Teachings directly with a Perfectly Enlightened One would attain Enlightenment. But this is not true and would be permanence while we know that would not exist based on The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

Notice how The Buddha skillfully asks the Brāhmin questions to guide the Brāhmin to his own answer. Rather than just giving someone an answer to a question they have asked, oftentimes it is better to ask well thought out and well placed questions to guide a person to answering their own question. This way, it is like the individual is teaching themselves.

An individual will be more likely to listen to their own logic and understanding to teach themselves rather than accepting the logic and understanding of another person. If the individual already has the wisdom to answer the question, they do not need to believe what you are sharing but instead, they can see “true reality” through well thought out and well placed questions guiding an individual to a helpful answer through interactive discussion.

You might choose to use this approach with friends, children, co-workers, employers, or anyone whom you need to guide to understanding your logic in solving a certain challenge.

This Teaching also helps us to understand how the success of one’s own attainment of Enlightenment is not necessarily based purely on the guidance of the Teacher but, in fact, developing one’s life practice is an independent pursuit. While a Practitioner will need guidance from a Teacher, each individual Practitioner would need to understand what they are looking to develop in their practice and seek the appropriate guidance.

Then, once guidance is provided, a Student would need to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings diligently seeking any follow up guidance to ensure understanding.

Since not all Students of even a Perfectly Enlightened Buddha would attain Enlightenment, then we know one of the primary determining factors of whether one does or does not attain Enlightenment is based on the Students' own determination and diligence to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings as an independent practice while seeking guidance.

A Teacher can only show the way to Enlightenment. A Teacher cannot give a Student Enlightenment nor hold their hand on the journey to Enlightenment. Instead, a Student will need to apply their own patience and endurance to "never give up" continuing to walk the path with The Buddha. And, if a Student feels lost, they should let the Teacher know they feel lost so they can continue their journey.

A Teacher should be holding the light to illuminate The Path to Enlightenment assisting the Student out of the darkness to be able to more clearly see the path. But the Student will need to develop their own light so that they can more readily walk the path through improved decision making.

This Teaching can also be beneficial for parents, employers, community leaders or anyone who is guiding individuals in life. This Teaching can help you understand that your goal is not to make decisions for your children, employees, friends, family members, life partners, etc. but instead, to provide guidance that will help them in making wise decisions.

As parents, employers, or the other roles we fulfill in life, we cannot control what others do. We cannot give people a list of decisions for exactly what they should or should not do in every situation because every situation is different based on unique circumstances. But we can share wisdom that when understood by our children, employees, or others that they can then apply that wisdom for improved decision making.

So, your goal is not to control people in your life but instead, to provide them guidance that when understood they can, with their own free will, make wise wholesome decisions that lead to wholesome outcomes. You are not going to permanently be with your children, employees, or others in your life. But the wisdom you share to help guide a person's decision making can reside in the mind and be the guiding light that helps them navigate a challenging world leading to a better way of life.

Chapter 29

The Simile of The Great Log

Do you see, Monks, that great log being carried along by the current of the river Ganges?

‘Yes, Venerable Sir.’

If, Monks, that log does not veer towards the near shore, does not veer towards the far shore, does not sink in mid-stream, does not get cast up on high ground, does not get caught by human beings, does not get caught by non-human beings, does not get caught in a whirlpool, and does not become inwardly rotten, it will slant, slope, and incline towards the ocean.

For what reason?

Because the current of the river Ganges slants, slopes, and inclines towards the ocean.

So too, Monks, if you do not veer towards the near shore, do not veer towards the far shore, do not sink in mid-stream, do not get cast up on high ground, do not get caught by human beings, do not get caught by non-human beings, do not get caught in a whirlpool and do not become inwardly rotten, you will slant, slope, and incline towards Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

For what reason?

Because Right View slants, slopes, and inclines towards Nibbāna (Enlightenment).

When this was said, a certain Monk asked The Perfectly Enlightened One: ‘What, Venerable Sir, is the near shore? What is the far shore? What is sinking in mid-stream? What is getting cast up on high ground? What is getting caught by human beings, what is getting caught by non-human beings, what is getting caught in a whirlpool? What is inward rottenness?’

‘The near shore’, Monk: this is a designation for the six internal sense bases. ‘The far shore’: this is a designation for the six external sense bases. ‘Sinking in mid-stream’: this is a designation for excitement and desire. ‘Getting cast up on high ground’: this is a designation for the conceit ‘I am’.

And what, Monk, is getting caught by human beings?

Here, someone lives in association with Household Practitioners; he rejoices with them and sorrows with them, he is happy when they are happy and sad when they are sad, and he involves himself in their affairs and duties. This is called getting caught by human beings.

And what, Monk, is getting caught by non-human beings?

Here, someone lives the holy life with the desire [to be reborn] into a certain order of heavenly beings, thinking: By this virtue or vow or austerity or holy life I will become a heavenly being or one among the heavenly beings. This is called getting caught by non-human beings.

‘Getting caught in a whirlpool’: this, Monk, is a designation for the five cords of sensual pleasure.

And what, Monk, is inward rottenness?

Here someone is immoral, one of unwholesome character, of impure and suspect behavior, secretive in his acts, no Ascetic though claiming to be one, not a celibate though claiming to be one, inwardly rotten, corrupt, wicked. This is called inward rottenness.

(Reference: SN 35.241)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings on various aspects of life that can hinder someone from the attainment of Enlightenment using the “Simile of The Great Log”.

The Buddha uses “the stream” to describe The Path to Enlightenment. “The stream” leads to “the ocean” (i.e. to Enlightenment). This is why the first Stage of Enlightenment is referred to as a “Stream-Enterer”. One who has put together The Teachings into a life practice so well that at the first Stage of Enlightenment (i.e. Stream-Enterer), one has entered the stream and there is no going backwards. At the first Stage of Enlightenment, the mind will not regress and the being will attain Enlightenment at some point in the next seven (7) lives - at a maximum.

The log represents the individual and Gotama Buddha is explaining the various aspects of life that can get one caught up and inhibit the log from making it to the ocean. These are Teachings describing the things for you to “look out” for so that you do not get inhibited from making it to Enlightenment.

If one avoids getting “caught up” with these, the mind will slant, slope, and incline towards Enlightenment because “Right View” will slant, slope, and incline towards Enlightenment. Right View is to learn, reflect, and practice The Four Noble Truths.

1.) Near shore: this is a designation for the six internal sense bases related to the fetter/taint of “sensual desire”. This is how the mind has craving/desire/attachment through The Six Sense Bases of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

2.) Far shore: this is a designation for the six external sense bases related to the fetter/taint of “sensual desire”. This is how the mind has craving/desire/attachment through The Six Sense Bases for the objects of its affection as forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects.

The six internal sense bases are experiencing the six external sense bases.

It is only when one guards the doorways to The Six Sense Bases, or the six doorways to discontentedness, that one is able to eliminate craving/desire/attachment through the six internal sense bases for the six external sense bases eliminating the fetter/taint of “sensual desire” that the mind can progress towards Enlightenment.

The mind needs to establish a well refined practice of The Eight Fold Path as a starting point for eventually getting to the point where it can eliminate the fetters/taints/pollution of the mind. One would not be able to just immediately eliminate the fetters but instead, would need to first lay the foundation of their life practice with a well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path to prepare the mind to be willing and able to eliminate The Ten Fetters.

3.) Sink in mid-stream: this is a designation for one who allows excitement and desire to persist. To attain Enlightenment the mind needs to eliminate pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant.

If the Practitioner allows the mind to experience pleasant feelings, then they are inviting into the mind painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. The mind needs to eliminate happiness, excitement, and elation based on impermanent conditions gaining inner tranquility of mind - peacefulness, calmness, serenity, and contentedness with joy that is permanent because it is not based on impermanent conditions.

Through “cutting off or letting go” of happiness, excitement, and elation, the mind can then eliminate craving/desire/attachment. Sinking mid-stream is to allow the happiness, excitement, elation (pleasant feelings) to persist, thus, craving/desire/attachment is not eliminated. Craving/desire/attachment is the cause of the discontent mind. If the mind has craving/desire/attachment it will experience discontentedness, thus, will not experience Enlightenment.

4.) Cast up on high ground: this is a designation for the conceit ‘I am’. A person that is “cast up on high ground” is one who allows arrogance, pride, judging, measuring or comparing as superior or inferior to others (i.e. the ego) to persist.

If the mind has the fetter/taint/pollution of “conceit” it is “cast up on high ground”, therefore, the mind will not experience Enlightenment. A Practitioner needs to eliminate the ego comprised of the fetters/taints of “Personal Existence View” and “Conceit”.

5.) Gets caught by human beings: is someone who lives in association with Household Practitioners; he rejoices with them and sorrows with them, he is happy when they are happy and sad when they are sad, and he involves himself in their affairs and duties.

Remember that Ordained Practitioners are going to live separate from Household Practitioners as a way of creating conditions that are more conducive to Enlightenment but do not guarantee Enlightenment. So, an Ordained Practitioner, in this Teaching, is being advised not to “get caught by human beings”.

For Household Practitioners, you can apply this Teaching to your life in that as your friends, family, and other associates are experiencing the ebbs and flows in the daily struggles of life, that you should ensure the mind does not get “caught up” by their challenges of life.

It is typically viewed as empathy if one sorrows with their associates as they are struggling in life. It is typically viewed as friendly if one rejoices and becomes elated when others around them become elated. Here, The Buddha is sharing that this would get the mind “caught by human beings” if the mind lacked the wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline to not allow this to happen.

It is possible to be understanding and helpful in our personal and professional relationships with others without feeling their same sorrow or elation when those close to us experience daily struggles. You can actually be even more helpful in your relationship if when those around you are sorrowful or elated to remain calm and provide guidance, when asked, of how to improve their situation and move the mind out of discontentedness and towards peacefulness.

If you allow the mind to feel the same sorrow and elation of others and view this as part of your relationship with them, then the mind will “get caught by human beings” because you are allowing your attachment to human beings to cause discontentedness in the mind. Through the elimination of your attachments to human beings through practicing “True Love”, as described in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1), a Practitioner can remain unaffected by the daily struggles of others while with loving-kindness and compassion potentially help others as they seek your assistance.

6.) Get caught by non-human beings: is someone living the holy life with the desire [to be reborn] into a certain order of heavenly beings, thinking: By this virtue or vow or austerity or holy life, I will become a heavenly being or one among the heavenly beings.

There are some who aspire to be reborn in the heavenly realm. This is not the goal of these Teachings and would not produce an Enlightened mind.

If the mind has craving/desire/attachment to exist in heaven as a heavenly being, then the mind is still holding on and has not yet fully extinguished 100% of all craving/desire/attachment and, thus, will experience discontentedness because it is not yet Enlightened.

One will need to extinguish any desire to be reborn in the heavenly realm to experience complete liberation of the mind.

7.) Get caught in a whirlpool: is a designation for the five cords of sensual pleasure.

The Five Cords of Sensual Pleasure is the craving/desire/attachment the mind has for the sensual pleasures associated with wanting agreeable and pleasant forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and physical objects through five of the sense bases to produce pleasant feelings.

Where the six internal and external sense bases are the actual sense bases, The Five Cords of Sensual Pleasure are how the mind has longing and strong eagerness (craving/desire/attachment) for the objects of its affection through five of The Six Sense Bases and becomes practically obsessed with acquiring the objects of its affection as “sensual pleasures”.

“The cord” is the actual craving/desire/attachment for the sensual pleasure.

The Five Cords of Sensual Pleasure

Monks, there are these five cords of sensual pleasure.

What are the five?

Forms recognizable by the eye that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and temptation of craving.

Sounds recognizable by the ear that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and temptation of craving.

Odors recognizable by the nose that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and temptation of craving.

Flavors recognizable by the tongue that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and temptation of craving.

Physical Objects that are wished for, desired, agreeable and likeable, connected with sensual desire, and temptation of craving.

These are the five cords of sensual pleasure.

Detailed explanation of The Six Sense Bases and Sensual Pleasures is available in this same book series found in the book “The Six Sense Bases” (Volume 9).

8.) Inwardly rotten: someone is immoral, one of unwholesome character, of impure and suspect behavior, secretive in his acts, no Ascetic though claiming to be one, not a celibate though claiming to be one, inwardly rotten, corrupt, wicked.

While Gotama Buddha is describing characteristics associated with the Ascetic life, one can apply this Teaching to all lifestyles whether an Ordained or a Household Practitioners.

If one is immoral, unwholesome, impure, secretive, rotten, corrupt, and wicked then this will inhibit one from experiencing Enlightenment. The Path to Enlightenment is about eliminating unwholesome qualities of mind and cultivating wholesome qualities of mind.

Through making wholesome decisions, one will experience only wholesome results due to The Natural Law of Kamma. It is The Teachings of The Buddha that will help you understand what is unwholesome and what is wholesome. Through learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings, the mind is gradually trained to acquire wisdom and gradually practices wholesome moral conduct through a mind that has been trained to have mental discipline.

Chapter 30

The Simile of The Tortoise

Monks, in the past a tortoise was searching for food along the bank of a river one evening. On that same evening a jackal was also searching for food along the bank of that same river. When the tortoise saw the jackal in the distance searching for food, it drew its limbs and neck inside its shell and passed the time keeping still and silent.

The jackal had also seen the tortoise in the distance searching for food, so he approached and waited close by, thinking: When this tortoise extends one or another of its limbs or its neck, I will grab it right on the spot, pull it out, and eat it. But because the tortoise did not extend any of its limbs or its neck, the jackal, failing to gain access to it, lost interest in it and departed.

So too, Monks, Māra the Evil One is constantly and continually waiting close by you, thinking, ‘Perhaps I will gain access to him through the eye or through the ear or through the nose or through the tongue or through the body or through the mind.’ Therefore, Monks, reside guarding the doors of The Six Sense Bases. Having seen a form with the eye...Having heard a sound with the ear...Having smelt an odor with the nose...Having tasted a flavor with the tongue...Having touched a physical object with the body... Having recognized a mental object with the mind, do not grasp its signs and features. Since, if you leave the eye sense base unguarded, the ear sense base unguarded, the nose sense base unguarded, the tongue sense base unguarded, the body sense base unguarded, the mind sense base unguarded, evil unwholesome states of craving and displeasure might invade you, practice the way of its restraint, guard the eye sense base, the ear sense base, the nose sense base, the tongue sense base, the body sense base, the mind sense base, undertake the restraint of the eye sense base, the ear sense base, the nose sense base, the tongue sense base, the body sense base, and the mind sense base.

When, Monks, you reside guarding the doors of The Six Sense Bases, Māra the Evil One, failing to gain access to you, will lose interest in you and depart, just as the jackal departed from the tortoise.

Drawing in the mind’s thoughts
As a tortoise draws its limbs into its shell,
Independent, not harassing others, fully extinguished.
A Monk would not blame anyone.

(Reference: SN 35.240)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares Teachings to help Practitioners understand that developing a “guard” over The Six Sense Bases is crucial for the development of the mind on The Path to Enlightenment.

A Practitioner needs to deeply understand the problem of the unEnlightened mind which is its mental longing and strong eagerness (craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations/grasping/holding), craving for sensual pleasures through The Six Sense Bases. Due to the craving/desire/attachment for agreeable and pleasant sensual pleasures, the mind causes itself to be discontent.

It is through training the mind to eliminate the defilement, or unwholesome root, of craving/desire/attachment that one will be able to eliminate discontentedness and, thus, liberate the mind.

So, when one observes the arising of craving/desire/attachment through The Six Sense Bases or a form, sound, odor, flavor, physical object, or mental object has come in contact with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind that arises any sort of discontent feelings either pleasant, painful, or neither painful-nor-pleasant - cut it off and let it go.

Through constant dedication and effort to eliminate the arising pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant, eventually these feelings will not ever arise in the mind.

But this comes with determination and diligence to guard the six doorways to discontentedness ensuring that one can readily cut off and let go of the cravings/desires/attachments that cause the mind to be discontent.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 21-30)

<https://youtu.be/ubyl4f5BSU>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 205 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 21-30)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--205---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Walking-The-Path-with-The-Buddha---Volume-2---Chapter-21--30-e16urg4/a-a6fui9p>

Chapter 31

A Strong Post or Pillar Is A Designation for Mindfulness

And how, Monks, is there restraint?

Here, having seen a form with the eye, having heard a sound with the ear, having smelt an odor with the nose, having tasted a flavor with the tongue, having touched a physical object with the body, having recognized a mental object with the mind, a Monk is not intent upon a pleasing form and not repelled by a displeasing form. He resides having set up mindfulness of the body, with a measureless mind, and he understands as it really is that liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, wherein those evil unwholesome states are eliminated without remainder. It is in such a way that there is restraint.

Suppose, Monks, a man would catch six animals - with different domains and different feeding grounds - and tie them by a strong rope. He would catch a snake, a crocodile, a bird, a dog, a jackal, and monkey, and tie each by a strong rope. Having done so, he would bind them to a strong post or pillar. Then those six animals with different domains and different feeding grounds would each pull in the direction of its own feeding ground and domain. The snake would pull one way, thinking, 'Let me enter an anthill.' The crocodile would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me enter the water.' The bird would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me fly up into the sky.' The dog would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me enter a village.' The jackal would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me enter a charnel ground.' The monkey would pull another way, thinking, 'Let me enter a forest.'

Now when these six animals become worn out and fatigued, they would stand close to that post or pillar, they would sit down there, they would lie down there.

So too, Monks, when a Monk has developed and cultivated mindfulness directed to the body, the eye does not pull in the direction of agreeable forms nor are disagreeable forms repulsive; the ear does not pull in the direction of agreeable sounds nor are disagreeable sounds repulsive; the nose does not pull in the direction of agreeable odors nor are disagreeable odors repulsive; the tongue does not pull in the direction of agreeable flavors nor are disagreeable flavors repulsive; the body does not pull in the direction of agreeable physical objects nor are disagreeable physical objects repulsive;

the mind does not pull in the direction of agreeable mental objects nor are disagreeable mental objects repulsive.

It is in such a way that there is restraint.

A strong post or pillar: this, Monks, is a designation for mindfulness directed to the body. Therefore, Monks, you should train yourselves thus: We will develop and cultivate mindfulness directed to the body, make it our vehicle, make it our basis, stabilize it, exercise ourselves in it, and fully perfect it.

Thus should you train yourselves.

(Reference: SN 35.247)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how Breathing Mindfulness Meditation (i.e. “cultivate mindfulness directed to the body”) is used as a strong “post or pillar” to restrain The Six Sense Bases of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

He uses the six animals pulling in different directions to represent the six internal sense bases of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind pulling towards the six external sense bases of forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects. If the mind is unrestrained allowing the mind to pull towards the objects of its affection, the mind will continue to experience discontentedness.

Through training the mind to be restrained by focusing on the arising bodily sensations as the “post or pillar” then as discontentedness arises, the Practitioner can observe those bodily sensations and cut off and let go of the discontentedness, thus, working to eliminate the cravings/desires/attachments that caused the discontentedness. By no longer allowing the mind to pull towards the objects of its affection, it is restrained and the mind will eliminate discontentedness.

A Practitioner who trains the mind in Breathing Mindfulness Meditation will be able to train the mind to cut off thoughts and let them go gaining more and more mental discipline of the mind being aware of the bodily sensations that precede the arising of discontentedness. In this way, one gains the ability to cut off and let go of cravings/desires/attachments of the mind that are pulling towards forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects to eliminate discontentedness.

It is the mind’s mental longing with a strong eagerness towards the six external sense bases through the six internal sense bases that is the cause of the discontent mind. The mind craves pleasant feelings and when it gets the object of its affection, it experiences happiness, excitement, and elation but the mind is discontent. If the mind does not acquire the objects of its affection, it experiences sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, etc. - painful feelings. Or, the mind might experience feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant such as boredom, loneliness, melancholy, shyness, displeased, uncomfortable, unsatisfied. All of these feelings and others are indications of a discontent mind.

It is only when one deeply learns, reflects, and practices these Teachings while training the mind using techniques such as Breathing Mindfulness Meditation that the mind will be liberated through wisdom from the discontent feelings experienced in the unEnlightened mind. Then in the moment as the mind experiences the arising of bodily sensations indicating arising discontentedness, cut that off and let it go.

As the mind is being trained in meditation to cut off thoughts and let them go, the mind develops the ability to become deeply aware of unwholesome thoughts, feelings, ideas, perceptions, etc., arising and to then cut them off or let them go. This trains the mind over repeated meditation training sessions to “let go”. Every time the mind wants to pull in any direction towards the past, the future, thoughts, feelings, ideas, perceptions, etc., a Practitioner should not judge the thoughts, label them, or even attempt to figure out where they are coming from. You can just cut them off and let them go bringing the mind back to the breath. The breath is the present moment and is the strong “post or pillar”.

This training will develop into the mind having deep awareness (Right Mindfulness) and the ability to cut off and let go of thoughts, feelings, ideas, perceptions, etc. (Right Effort)

Then, with this consistent and ongoing training during daily meditation sessions of 2-3 times per day for 30-minutes or more per session, in daily life as unwholesome thoughts, feelings, ideas, perceptions, etc., arise or the mind goes to the past or future, cut it off and let it go.

Over time, this trains the mind to be well disciplined with Breathing Mindfulness Meditation being the strong “post or pillar”. Just as Gotama Buddha shares that “when these six animals become worn out and fatigued, they would stand close to that post or pillar, they would sit down there, they would lie down there” the mind will eventually get tired of pulling in the direction of the six external sense bases through the six internal sense bases and it will just “sit down there” and “lie down there” being perfectly tuned to “the middle way”.

The mind can then apply this in daily life, that as the mind is pulling in the direction of the objects of its affection due to craving/desire/attachment, the Practitioner can cut that off and let it go. This trains the mind to reside in the middle no longer pulling towards the objects of its affection due to craving/desire/attachment. Craving/desire/attachment can be gradually eliminated from the mind, thus, all discontentedness of mind is gradually eliminated. The mind becomes Enlightened because the unwholesome root of craving/desire/attachment has been extinguished from the mind and no longer causes arising discontentedness.

The mind will be more and more trained to perform optimally with deep concentration (Right Concentration) as the fetters/taints/pollution of the mind are no longer causing muddle mindedness. The mind will become more and more clear as it fully realizes the benefits and results of consistent and ongoing training on The Path to Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation is available in this same book series found in Chapter 11 of the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 32

Dwelling in Breathing Mindfulness Meditation

Monks, that Monk gains at will, without trouble or difficulty, that concentration through the development and cultivation of which no shaking or trembling occurs in the body, and no shaking or trembling occurs in the mind. And what concentration is it through the development and cultivation of which no shaking or trembling occurs in the body, and no shaking or trembling occurs in the mind?

It is, Monks, when concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) has been developed and cultivated that no shaking or trembling occurs in the body, and no shaking or trembling occurs in the mind. And how, Monks, is concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) developed and cultivated so that no shaking or trembling occurs in the body, and no shaking or trembling occurs in the mind?

Here, Monks, a Monk, having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty hut, sits down.

Having folded his legs crosswise, straightened his body and set up mindfulness in front of him, just mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.

Breathing in long, he knows: I breathe in long; or breathing out long, he knows: I breathe out long.

Breathing in short, he knows: I breathe in short; or breathing out short, he knows: I breathe out short.

He trains thus: Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Calming the bodily sensations, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Calming the bodily sensations, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Experiencing joy, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Experiencing joy, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Experiencing peacefulness, I will breathe in: he trains thus: Experiencing peacefulness. I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Experiencing the mental activity, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Experiencing the mental activity, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Calming the mental activity, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Calming the mental activity, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Experiencing the mind, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Experiencing the mind, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Gladdening the mind, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Gladdening the mind, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Concentrating the mind, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Concentrating the mind, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Liberating the mind, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Liberating the mind, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Reflecting on impermanence, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Reflecting on impermanence, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Reflecting on fading away, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Reflecting on fading away, I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Reflecting on elimination, I will breathe in; he trains thus: Reflecting on elimination I will breathe out.

He trains thus: Reflecting on letting go. I will breathe in; he trains thus: Reflecting on letting go, I will breathe out.

It is, Monks, when concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) has been developed and cultivated in this way that no shaking or trembling occurs in the body, and no shaking or trembling occurs in the mind.

I too, Monks, before my Enlightenment, while I was still unawakened but intent on awakening, not yet fully Enlightened, generally dwelt in this dwelling. While I generally dwelt in this dwelling, neither my body nor my eyes became fatigued and my mind, by not clinging, was liberated from the taints.

Therefore, Monks, if a Monk aspires: May neither my body nor my eyes become fatigued and may my mind, by not clinging, be liberated from the taints, this same concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) should be closely attended to.

(Reference: SN 54.8)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how important Breathing Mindfulness Meditation was to his own journey to the Enlightened mind and encourages his Students to use this meditation to train the mind to experience liberation.

Through development of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation and other training, the mind is liberated to Enlightenment. An Enlightened mind will experience deep “concentration” and will not experience any “shaking or trembling”. But, as long as the mind is unEnlightened it will experience discontent feelings which is the “shaking and trembling” of the mind. This is described in The Ten Fetters as “restlessness”. A Practitioner will need to eliminate the fetter of “restlessness” to attain Enlightenment.

Restlessness (Confused, distracted, worried, anxious, restless state of mind the opposite of “singleness of mind”).

The Buddha then goes into explaining instructions and guidance for Breathing Mindfulness Meditation which is explained in detail in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) and in the book “Breathing Mindfulness Meditation” (Volume 7) in this same book series.

The Buddha describes Breathing Mindfulness Meditation as a “dwelling”. As one experiences the Jhānas and more deeply moves into the Stages of Enlightenment, the mind becomes so stable and steady that one might have the thought that they can “dwell” or “reside” there permanently with a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy because the mind is at ease, tranquil, and unbothered by anything at all.

The goal is to then bring this same tranquility of mind into one’s daily life where the mind can reside or “dwell” in this peaceful dwelling at all times - permanently.

A mind that resides permanently peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy experiencing complete liberation or Enlightenment, then “neither my body nor my eyes became fatigued and my mind, by not clinging, was liberated from the taints”. The body nor the mind will ever become fatigued. An Enlightened being will experience sleepiness and need sleep but they will not experience fatigue.

If you have ever had a long day and felt that the feet were carrying around a ton of bricks or that there were a ton of bricks on the shoulders, this is because the mind is carrying the burden of craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality). This is very tiresome for the mind and, thus, the body experiences a great amount of fatigue in the unEnlightened state.

But, as the mind becomes more and more Enlightened laying down the burden of carrying around the fetters/taints/pollution of the mind, it is liberated from craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) and never again experiences fatigue. This is just one of many benefits associated with training the mind to attain Enlightenment and The Buddha is making that clear in this Teaching.

He shares, “if a Monk aspires: May neither my body nor my eyes become fatigued and may my mind, by not clinging, be liberated from the taints, this same concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) should be closely attended to”.

A Practitioner will need to develop a well established practice of Breathing Mindfulness Meditation to train the mind and liberate it from all unwholesome mental qualities that are keeping it trapped in the unEnlightened state. You can seek guidance from the author of this book to assist you in developing your life practice.

Chapter 33

Breathing Mindfulness Meditation The Tathāgata's Dwelling

Monks, if wanderers of other communities ask you: In what dwelling, friends, did The Perfectly Enlightened One generally dwell during the rains retreat? - being asked thus, you should answer those wanderers thus: During the rains residence, friends, The Perfectly Enlightened One generally resided in the concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation).

Here, Monks, mindful I breathe in, mindful I breathe out.

When breathing in long I know: I breathe in long;
when breathing out long I know: I breathe out long.

When breathing in short I know: I breathe in short;
when breathing out short I know: I breathe out short.

I know: Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe in;
I know: Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe out.

I know: Calming the bodily sensations, I will breathe in;
I know: Calming the bodily sensations, I will breathe out.

I know: Experiencing joy, I will breathe in;
I know: Experiencing joy, I will breathe out.

I know: Experiencing peacefulness, I will breathe in;
I know: Experiencing peacefulness, I will breathe out.

I know: Experiencing the mental activity. I will breathe in;
I know: Experiencing the mental activity I will breathe out.

I know: Calming the mental activity, I will breathe in;
I know: Calming the mental activity, I will breathe out.

I know: Experiencing the mind, I will breathe in;
I know: Experiencing the mind, I will breathe out.

I know: Gladdening the mind, I will breathe in;
I know: Gladdening the mind, I will breathe out.

I know: Concentrating the mind, I will breathe in;
I know: Concentrating the mind, I will breathe out.

I know: Liberating the mind, I will breathe in;
I know: Liberating the mind, I will breathe out.

I know: Reflecting on impermanence, I will breathe in;
I know: Reflecting on impermanence, I will breathe out.

I know: Reflecting on fading away, I will breathe in;
I know: Reflecting on fading away, I will breathe out.

I know: Reflecting on elimination, I will breathe in;
I know: Reflecting on elimination, I will breathe out.

I know: Reflecting on letting go, I will breathe in;
I know: Reflecting on letting go, I will breathe out.

If anyone, Monks, speaking rightly could say of anything: It is a noble dwelling, an excellent dwelling, The Tathāgata's dwelling, it is of concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) that one could rightly say this.

Monks, those Monks who are trainees, who have not attained their mind's ideal, who dwell aspiring for the unsurpassed security from bondage (Enlightenment): for them concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation), when developed and cultivated, leads to the destruction of the taints. Those Monks who are Arahants, whose taints are destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached their own goal, completely destroyed the fetters of existence, those completely liberated through final knowledge (wisdom): for them concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation), when developed and cultivated, leads to a peaceful dwelling in this very life and to mindfulness and clear comprehension.

If anyone, Monks, speaking rightly could say of anything: It is a noble dwelling, an excellent dwelling, The Tathāgata's dwelling, is of concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) that one could rightly say this.

(Reference: SN 54.11)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how important Breathing Mindfulness Meditation is to training the mind to attain Enlightenment.

Here, he discusses that during the “rains retreat” he will be residing in Breathing Mindfulness Meditation. Each year during the three (3) month rainy season (July to October), Ordained Practitioners were taught to reside at their primary Temple. This was taught as a way to ensure that the roaming and wandering Ordained Practitioners did not do harm to the farmers’ fields. With significant rain fall, roaming and wandering Ordained Practitioners would be stepping on the softened earth potentially harming the land of the farmers. The Path to Enlightenment is focused on not causing harm to others as if you cause harm to others, harm will be returned to you.

So, The Buddha advised the Ordained Practitioners to reside at the Temple and do not venture off other than in short distances to collect food each day. This would ensure the Ordained Practitioners were not causing harm to the farmers’ land and their ability to cultivate crops. If the Ordained Practitioners harmed the land, and thus the crops, this harm could result in the farmers being angered and/or a shortage of food for their family and surrounding villagers.

The practice of residing at one’s primary Temple during the rains retreat is still in place today. Ordained Practitioners will reside in their Temple for deep learning, reflection, and practice to develop their understanding of The Path to Enlightenment through The Buddha’s Teachings. While Ordained Practitioners will often travel throughout the other times of year to interact with other Ordained Practitioners and seek guidance in The Teachings, during this three (3) month period each year (July to October), Ordained Practitioners will typically study closely with the Master Teacher at their primary Temple.

The Buddha then goes into explaining instructions and guidance for Breathing Mindfulness Meditation which is explained in detail in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) and in the book “Breathing Mindfulness Meditation” (Volume 7) in this same book series.

Gotama Buddha then goes on praising Breathing Mindfulness Meditation in the following: “If anyone, Monks, speaking rightly could say of anything: It is a noble dwelling, an excellent dwelling, The Tathāgata's dwelling, it is of concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) that one could rightly say this”.

The Buddha encourages anyone new to the path, “trainees”, who have not attained Enlightenment to train in Breathing Mindfulness Meditation as this will lead to Enlightenment in the following: “those Monks who are trainees, who have not attained their mind's ideal, who dwell aspiring for the unsurpassed security from bondage (Enlightenment): for them concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation), when developed and cultivated, leads to the destruction of the taints”.

He also explains that all those who are Enlightened practice Breathing Mindfulness Meditation in the following: “Those Monks who are Arahants, whose taints are destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached their own goal, completely destroyed the fetters of existence, those completely liberated through final knowledge (wisdom): for them concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation), when developed and cultivated, leads to a peaceful dwelling in this very life and to mindfulness and clear comprehension”.

Then lastly, once again praising Breathing Mindfulness Meditation similarly as the prior paragraph: “If anyone, Monks, speaking rightly could say of anything: It is a noble dwelling, an excellent dwelling, The Tathāgata's dwelling, is of concentration by Mindfulness of Breathing (Breathing Mindfulness Meditation) that one could rightly say this.”

Chapter 34

One Who Develops Mindfulness of Death Diligently for The Destruction of the Taints

Monks, mindfulness of death, when developed and cultivated, is of great fruit and benefit, culminating in the deathless (Enlightenment), having the deathless as its conclusion. But do you, Monks, develop mindfulness of death?

When this was said, one Monk said to The Perfectly Enlightened One: 'Venerable Sir, I develop mindfulness of death.'

Monks, the Monk who develops mindfulness of death thus: 'May I live just a night and a day so that I may attend to The Perfectly Enlightened One's Teaching. I could then accomplish much!'; ... 'May I live just a day so that I may attend to The Perfectly Enlightened One's Teaching. I could then accomplish much!'; ... 'May I live just half a day so that I may attend to The Perfectly Enlightened One's Teaching. I could then accomplish much!'; ... 'May I live just the length of time it takes to eat a single almsfood meal so that I may attend to The Perfectly Enlightened One's Teaching. I could then accomplish much!'; ... 'May I live just the length of time it takes to eat half an almsfood meal so that I may attend to The Perfectly Enlightened One's Teaching. I could then accomplish much!'; ... 'May I live just the length of time it takes to chew and swallow four or five mouthfuls of food so that I may attend to The Perfectly Enlightened One's Teaching. I could then accomplish much!': these are called Monks who dwell carelessly. They develop mindfulness of death sluggishly for the destruction of the taints.

But the Monk who develops mindfulness of death thus: 'May I live just the length of time it takes to chew and swallow a single mouthful of food so that I may attend to The Perfectly Enlightened One's Teaching. I could then accomplish much!'; ... 'May I live just the length of time it takes to breathe out after breathing in, or to breathe in after breathing out, so that I may attend to The Perfectly Enlightened One's Teaching. I could then accomplish much!': these are called Monks who reside determined. They develop mindfulness of death diligently for the destruction of the taints.

Therefore, Monks, you should train yourselves thus: We will reside determined. We will develop mindfulness of death diligently for the destruction of the taints. Thus should you train yourselves.

(Reference: AN 8.73)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that it is important to cultivate “mindfulness of death” or “awareness of death” as this is of “great fruit and benefit”.

In order to attain Enlightenment, a Practitioner would need to eliminate all fears including the fear of death. If the mind has fear, this is discontentedness being caused by craving/desire/attachment. An Enlightened mind would not experience discontentedness as all discontent feelings have been eradicated from the mind. An Enlightened being will not fear death. If there is craving/desire/attachment to this material world, the physical body, the people in this world, etc. the mind will experience fear of death.

A mind that fears death will not experience a permanent peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy because it is still “holding on” and, thus, fear is produced in the mind.

The Buddha then describes two different perspectives of Students. Those students who develop mindfulness of death “sluggishly” and those who develop mindfulness of death “diligently”.

Using an elongated timeframe, he describes Students focusing on his Teachings sluggishly and with complacency developing the mind towards the elimination of fear of death. Using a shortened timeframe, he describes Students focusing on his Teachings diligently and with energy developing the mind towards the elimination of fear of death.

Here, Gotama Buddha is encouraging Students to eliminate the fear of death and to do so with motivation, determination, diligence, and without delay. One of The Five Hindrances to Enlightenment is complacency and this will need to be eliminated from the mind to attain Enlightenment.

A sluggish approach to learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings would not produce the results of an Enlightened mind. But also, approaching and pursuing The Path to Enlightenment with craving/desire/attachment expecting or wanting immediate results would cause the mind to be discontent.

So, the solution is to train the mind towards Enlightenment by practicing “the middle way” where there is no sluggish complacency and no longing with a strong eagerness but instead motivation, determination, diligence, and enthusiasm with Enlightenment as a goal, interest, or objective. Progressing in this way will produce results.

Chapter 35

Direct Knowledge for A Sick One

Monks, if five things do not slip away from a weak and sick Monk, it can be predicted of him: In no long time, with the destruction of the taints, he will realize for himself with direct knowledge (experience), in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, he will reside in it.

What five?

Here, a Monk resides reflecting on the unattractiveness of the body, perceiving the dissatisfaction of food, perceiving non-excitement in the entire world, reflecting on impermanence in all conditioned objects; and he has the perception of death well established internally.

If these five things do not slip away from a weak and sick Monk, it can be predicted of him: In no long time, with the destruction of the taints, he will realize for himself with direct knowledge (experience), in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, he will reside in it.

(Reference: AN 5.121)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares here are “five things” that need to be retained in the mind and if they “do not slip away” when “weak and sick” that one will experience for themselves the Enlightened mind.

1.) Unattractiveness of the body: The fetter/taint/pollution in the mind of “sensual desire” is one of the most challenging aspects of the mind to eliminate on The Path to Enlightenment. One of the strongest cravings/desires/attachments the mind has related to sensual desire is the craving for sexual contact. In order to attain the third or fourth Stage of Enlightenment, a Practitioner would need to eliminate the fetter/taint of sensual desire which includes the elimination of sexual contact. When or if a Practitioner decides to do this is their personal choice.

A Practitioner progressing on this path might decide to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings progressing to the first or second Stage of Enlightenment where discontentedness is significantly reduced and one’s mind and life is quite peaceful while still retaining sexual contact. In the first and second Stages of Enlightenment a Practitioner would not yet have eliminated the fetter/taint of sensual desire and could choose to approach this at a later time.

Once a Practitioner has decided to eliminate sensual desire, thus sexual contact, a technique used to train the mind to accomplish this goal is to develop “unattractiveness of the body”.

The reason human beings have craving for sexual contact is instinctive but also driven by the mind’s ignorance/delusion/unknowing of true reality as it relates to many topics including being able to see the body as it truly is. The unEnlightened mind does not see the human body as it truly is. We see the beautified hair, clothing, jewelry, skin, makeup, etc. and are driven to chase pleasant feelings associated with the sense base of the body - the mind is triggered to chase after bodily contact for sexual intercourse.

Through training the mind to see true reality, thus, the “unattractiveness of the human body” this would involve observing the body as it truly is without the beautified hair, clothing, jewelry, skin, makeup, etc. The techniques employed to develop this are found in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) and you can seek guidance with a Teacher to help you establish this in the mind when ready.

Sensual desire (The desire for pleasures from The Six Sense Bases: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind.)

2.) Dissatisfaction of food: With the fetter/taint/pollution in the mind of “sensual desire” being one of the most challenging aspects of the mind to eliminate on The Path to Enlightenment as described related to sexual contact, another strong sensual desire in the mind is the craving/desire/attachment to food.

While the mind needs food to sustain one’s life, oftentimes the unEnlightened mind develops mental longing and strong eagerness for specific types of food that if they are not acquired, the mind is discontent.

A Practitioner will need to train the mind to eliminate any mental longing with a strong eagerness towards specific foods and train the mind that food is purely to sustain the health of the physical body. There is no other purpose for food.

This does not mean that one cannot enjoy a good tasting meal, but if the mind finds happiness, excitement, elation (pleasant feelings) based on this impermanent condition, then when that impermanent condition does not exist, the mind will experience discontentedness of painful feelings like sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, anxiety, stress, etc.

To eradicate the discontentedness associated with craving/desire/attachment to specific foods, one will need to understand and train the mind to observe contentedness no matter what food is available to eat. Ordained Practitioners collect food from Household Practitioners on alms rounds where they can only eat what food is given. They do not have any choice in the foods they ingest at a given meal. But Household Practitioners choose their own food so you will need to employ your own discipline to eliminate any cravings/desires/attachments to specific foods.

One way a person might choose to do this is through having someone else choose their food for them for an extended period of time, 6-12 months, giving a person full range to select foods that are healthy yet not influenced by your personal choices. During this time, observe the mind and whether it is pulling towards any specific foods and if it becomes discontent when specific foods are not available. If you observe this, then you know there is craving/desire/attachment to specific foods and one should train the mind to distance itself from those foods for a period of time training it to ingest food for the sole purpose of maintaining the health of the physical body until the mind has fully eliminated the craving/desire/attachment for specific foods.

You can seek guidance from your Teacher on other options and ideas for eliminating cravings/desires/attachments to food to then eliminate the fetter/taint of sensual desire.

Additionally, the mind can understand “dissatisfaction of food” as understanding that as it relates to a discontent mind, food is not the solution. Oftentimes when the mind is unwell experiencing pleasant feelings, painful feelings, or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant, a human being will eat food in an attempt to cure the unwelcomed feelings. The mind needs to understand that emotional eating is not the solution to solving the discontentedness that exists in the mind cultivating “dissatisfaction of food” or in other words “understanding that food is not the solution” to the discontentedness experienced in the unEnlightened mind.

3.) Non-excitement in the entire world: There are many enticing and alluring pleasures in the world that the mind may have come accustomed to finding happiness, excitement, and elation in while unaware it was causing its own discontentedness off The Path to Enlightenment. Once a Practitioner understands the cause of the discontent mind is craving/desire/attachment, they will need to “let go” of the entire world to attain Enlightenment choosing to not seek or chase excitement in the world developing “non-excitement in the entire world”.

This does not mean that one needs to eliminate relationships, occupations, possessions, etc. It just means the mind needs to eliminate the “mental longing with a strong eagerness” that exists in the mind towards relationships, occupations, possessions, etc. learning how to practice non-craving, non-desire, and non-attachment. In this way, the mind can be trained to experience unconditioned joy. Unconditioned joy is not associated with impermanent objects, so the Practitioner is not attaining it by craving/desire/attachment and, therefore, unconditioned joy is permanent.

Practicing non-attachment does not mean one needs to eliminate relationships, occupations, or possessions necessarily. Non-attachment means that one needs to “let go” of the longing with strong eagerness in the mind that it is chasing after the objects of its affection. One can still enjoy relationships, occupations, and possessions while on The Path to Enlightenment and once Enlightened. But if the mind is chasing after sensual desires through craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations etc. then it will cause itself to experience discontentedness.

The unEnlightened mind will oftentimes remedy boredom or loneliness with chasing after pleasant feelings. It also tends to chase pleasant feelings anytime it experiences painful feelings. Existing in the world and enjoying life activities is not the problem. The problem is the mind chases after the objects of its affection, obsessing over what it wants, and if it does not acquire the objects of its affection will then experience painful feelings or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant. The mind does not realize that permanent peacefulness and joy cannot be found in chasing after impermanent objects. This is the unEnlightened mind’s ignorance/delusion/unknowing of true reality keeping it trapped in the unEnlightened state.

The unEnlightened mind will oftentimes attempt to control people and situations in the world thinking that is going to remedy the discontent mind, but it never does. Instead, the true problem lies in the defilement of craving/desire/attachment where the mind is longing for excitement and pleasures in the world.

Training the mind to be peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy permanently is to train the mind to be “satisfied with what is”. The mind cannot permanently experience heightened excited experiences and if the mind longs for excited feelings in the world, then at some point it is going to crash into sadness, anger, or worse.

Training the mind to “let go” of pursuing excitement in the world which would condition the mind to only experience happiness, excitement, and elation based on some impermanent condition, means that as excitement arises, a wise Practitioner will cut it off and let it go so that the mind can be inwardly peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy no longer basing its internal feelings on impermanent conditions. This will develop “non-excitement in the entire world”.

Additionally, some Practitioners will oftentimes be holding on to the world so tightly that their craving/desire/attachment to the world itself causes discontentedness. The mind can worry about all the problems in the world seeing so much harm being caused by human beings. If the mind has craving/desire/attachment for things to happen a certain way in the world and those things are not happening the way the mind “wants”, then it will cause itself to be discontent.

Instead, the mind can have loving-kindness and compassion for “all beings” in the world not wanting, expecting, or desiring for things to be a certain way, but coming to realize that each individual is making their own decisions and it is impossible for you to control those decisions. All you can do is train the mind to be unaffected by others’ intentions, speech, actions, and livelihoods. Have compassion that others are lacking the wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to experience the results of an Enlightened mind that is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently.

A worried mind sees the problems and is discontent.

A concerned mind sees the solutions to the problems and is content.

The solution to the world's problems is for everyone to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings. But when or if an individual chooses to do that is their own choice. If a Practitioner craves/desires/attaches/wants/expects this to happen when they want it and how they want it, it will never happen in that way and, thus, the mind is attached to a certain outcome and will cause itself to be discontent. The mind is not liberated experiencing freedom. Instead, it is burdened by the craving that is causing the painful feelings from seeing all the harm in the world wanting things to be different but lacking the ability to truly implement any change for everyone in the world. All you can do is focus on your own learning, reflecting, and practice of these Teachings allowing each individual to make their own decisions and experience the results therein. That is their Kamma - the results of their decisions.

As long as the mind is attached to what the world is or is not doing, the mind is not liberated experiencing freedom. Instead, it is trapped in this Cycle of Rebirth continuously experiencing untold amount of discontentedness because things are not occurring in the way the mind "wants". Let go....the world will be fine. Seek your own liberation of mind by practicing "non-excitement in the entire world" training the mind to "let go" of the world.

Cultivate and practice loving-kindness and compassion for "all beings" in the entire world.

Loving-kindness: is active goodwill towards all beings without judgment. A genuine interest in seeing all beings be well.

Compassion: is concern for the misfortunes of others.

4.) Impermanence in all conditioned objects: Understanding The Universal Truth of Impermanence in all conditioned objects is a fundamental and core Teaching required to get started on The Path to Enlightenment and to make any sort of progress in the direction of Enlightenment.

This Teaching can be found in the chapter "The Four Noble Truths: Establishing Right View" (Chapter 4) in the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) of this same book series. Please see the content for learning, reflecting, and practicing this Teaching in that book.

5.) Perception of death: Please see the book "Walking The Path with The Buddha" (Volume 2 - Chapter 34) to understand the development of the perception of death.

If these five aspects of the mind are retained, along with a well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path through seeking guidance with a Teacher, a Practitioner can be predicted to attain Enlightenment in this life. Through cultivation of the entire Path to Enlightenment, a mind can be trained to experience liberation.

Chapter 36

There Is No You There

Then, Bahiya,...

When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the recognized in reference to the recognized, then, Bahiya, there is no you in connection with that.

When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor there nor between-the-two.

This, just this, is the end of stress.

(Reference: UD 1.10)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he points to The Universal Truth of Non-self.

The Universal Truth of Non-self is required to be learned, reflected upon, and practiced to eliminate the fetter/taint of “Personal Existence View”. This is a Teaching that I suggest a Practitioner gain some basic familiarity with then sets aside while they focus on establishing a well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path.

Then, as the mind enters the Jhānas, a Practitioner could more deeply learn, reflect, and practice The Teaching of “The Universal Truth of Non-self” to eliminate the fetter/taint of “Personal Existence View” to move the mind into the first Stage of Enlightenment and beyond. A Practitioner would be unable to eliminate the fetter/taint of “Personal Existence View” early in practice as the mind is not yet prepared to release this fetter/taint. It is only once a Practitioner deeply prepares the mind through a well developed practice of The Eight Fold Path will it be ready and able to release the “Personal Existence View” through understanding and practicing The Universal Truth of Non-self.

Through the elimination of “Personal Existence View” by realizing “non-self” the mind will be able to “end stress” and all other discontent feelings as all of The Ten Fetters are eliminated.

Detailed explanation of The Universal Truth of Non-self is available in Chapter 4 and 16 of this same book series found in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1).

Chapter 37

With The Elimination of Excitement Comes The Complete Destruction of Discontentedness

Punna, there are forms recognizable by the eye that are desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, tempting. If a Monk does not seek excitement in them, does not welcome them, and does not remain holding to them, excitement is eliminated in him. With the elimination of excitement, Punna, there is the elimination of discontentedness, I say.

There are, Punna, sounds recognizable by the ear..., odors recognizable by the nose..., flavors recognizable by the tongue..., physical objects recognizable by the body..., mental objects recognizable by the mind that are desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, tempting. If a Monk does not seek excitement in them, does not welcome them, and does not remain holding to them, excitement is eliminated in him.

With the elimination of excitement, Punna, there is the elimination of discontentedness, I say.

(Reference: SN 35.88)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares a similar Teaching as the prior Chapter adding a bit more information.

The mind will experience desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, and tempting forms that the mind sees through the eyes. If a Practitioner does not long or yearn for excitement in these agreeable forms, welcome them, or remain holding on to them, then the mind can eliminate its craving/desire/attachment to impermanent conditions that are creating the impermanent pleasant feelings causing the mind to be dissatisfied (i.e. discontent). Because the pleasant feelings are based on impermanent conditions and are not permanent, the mind eventually becomes discontent or dissatisfied with the constant struggle attempting to hold on to the pleasant feelings permanently. While the mind experiences temporary pleasantness, it will eventually swing to painful feelings or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant due to the mind basing its inner feelings on impermanent conditions.

Through the elimination of craving/desire/attachment for desirable and agreeable forms, sounds, odors, flavors, physical objects, and mental objects through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, a Practitioner will gradually eliminate all discontentedness.

The unEnlightened mind will continue to long with a strong eagerness for pleasant feelings through The Six Sense Bases and as long as the mind is seeking, welcoming, and holding on to the cravings/desires for these pleasant feelings chasing after the objects of its affection, the mind will continue to experience discontentedness including painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant.

The mind needs to be trained to be “satisfied with what is” rather than continuously chase after the objects of its affection to experience pleasant feelings. Allowing the mind to continue to chase after pleasant feelings is to invite painful feelings and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant into the mind.

Because the conditions that create pleasant feelings are impermanent, eventually the mind will be unable to acquire those conditions to create the pleasant feelings, thus, painful feelings or feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant will be experienced.

Detailed explanation of The Six Sense Bases is available in this same book series found in the book “The Six Sense Bases” (Volume 9).

Chapter 38

Liberation of The Destruction of Craving

On seeing a form with the eye, he does not crave after it if it is pleasing; he is not averse to it if it is unpleasing. He resides with mindfulness of the body established, with an immeasurable mind, and he understands as it actually is the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome states are eliminated without remainder.

Having thus abandoned favoring and opposing, whatever feeling he feels, whether pleasant or painful or neither painful-nor-pleasant, he does not seek excitement in that feeling, welcome it, or remain holding to it. As he does not do so, excitement in feelings is eliminated in him.

With the elimination of his excitement comes elimination of clinging; with the elimination of clinging, elimination of existence; with the elimination of existence, elimination of birth; with the elimination of birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, pain, grief, displeasure and despair is eliminated. Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

On hearing a sound with the ear... On smelling an odor with the nose... On tasting a flavor with the tongue... On touching a physical object with the body... On recognizing a mental object with the mind, he does not crave after it if it is pleasing; he does not become averse to it if it is unpleasing. With the elimination of his excitement comes elimination of clinging; with the elimination of clinging, elimination of existence; with the elimination of existence, elimination of birth; with the elimination of birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair is eliminated. Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness.

Monks, remember this [discourse] of mine briefly as liberation of the destruction of craving.

(Reference: MN 38)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares “liberation of the destruction of craving”.

Craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations/grasping/holding/clinging are words that we use which relate to the mind’s mental longing with a strong eagerness - the cause of discontentedness.

A primary goal of this Path to Enlightenment is to eliminate mental longing with a strong eagerness (craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations/grasping/holding/clinging) from the mind in order to eliminate discontent feelings allowing the mind to reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy permanently - the Enlightened mind.

As long as the mind still has mental longing with a strong eagerness, it will experience pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and feelings that are neither painful-nor-pleasant - discontentedness.

Craving through The Six Sense Bases, the mind is discontent but if the mind “does not crave after it if it is pleasing” seeking pleasant feelings and is not “averse to it if it is unpleasing” the mind can work towards liberation through eliminating, extinguishing, eradicating, and the complete destruction of craving.

In The Buddha’s Teachings on Dependent Origination, The Buddha explains how a being comes into existence and birth experiencing “this whole mass of discontentedness”. Dependent Origination is shared in detail in Chapter 14 of the book “The First Stage of Enlightenment (Stream-Enterer)” (Volume 5) where you can learn this important Teaching.

Here in this Teaching, Gotama Buddha is pointing to a portion of his Teachings on Dependent Origination explaining that when one eliminates feelings that craving does not come to be....then, “with the elimination of his excitement comes elimination of clinging; with the elimination of clinging, elimination of existence; with the elimination of existence, elimination of birth; with the elimination of birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, pain, grief, displeasure and despair is eliminated. Such is the elimination of this whole mass of discontentedness”.

This is a portion of his Teachings on Dependent Origination explaining the unraveling or destruction of birth, aging-and-death, through the elimination of craving which ultimately eliminates discontentedness where the mind is liberated, has attained Enlightenment, and there is no longer any rebirth.

There were four (4) observations that Gotama Buddha saw that led him to be motivated towards understanding the solutions to sickness, aging, and death. He also observed a roaming Ascetic where he ultimately decided to leave the royal palace and embark on a journey to understand the problems faced by human beings.

He discovered the truth through his independent journey to Enlightenment and shared these Teachings through dedicating the last 45 years of his life to guiding beings who chose to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to attain the results of a liberated mind.

The Buddha solved the problem of the discontent mind figuring out exactly why the mind is discontent and the solutions to remedy the discontent mind. In solving the discontent mind, the solution that he also came to understand is sickness, aging, and death is caused by birth. If we are not born, we will not experience sickness, aging, and death. He

observed The Cycle of Rebirth and how beings are trapped in a cycle of continuous wandering hindered by ignorance (unknowing of true reality).

It is only when we understand what we do not understand through acquiring wisdom in these Teachings that the mind can come to deeply understand the problems of the human mind through The Natural Laws of Existence, then skillfully implement the solutions as a prescription to the discontent mind. In applying The Teachings through dedicated training, the mind is liberated through the destruction of craving to eliminate discontentedness in the mind and at the same time, having eliminated craving the fuel that leads to rebirth, a being is no longer reborn into a new existence, thus, eliminating birth into a new existence.

A Practitioner who has attained Enlightenment has solved the discontent mind but has also solved the more significant problem that each being is facing in that one will no longer need to roam and wander through the five (5) realms of existence continuing to experience discontentedness and the misery therein.

Instead, the mind can experience complete peacefulness through the elimination of craving that leads to the elimination of discontentedness. An Enlightened being will no longer experience sickness, aging, and death also referred to as “The Deathless”. All “sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair is eliminated” and one can enjoy the remaining time of their last existence without any discontentedness and understand there will be no more rebirth to experience discontentedness ever again.

To accomplish this goal, one needs to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to acquire wisdom. The mind is liberated through wisdom.

Chapter 39

The Carrier of The Burden

Monks, I will teach you the burden, the carrier of the burden, the taking up of the burden. Listen to that

And what, Monks, is the burden?

It should be said: The Five Aggregates subject to clinging.

What five?

The form aggregate subject to clinging,
The feeling aggregate subject to clinging,
The perception aggregate subject to clinging,
The volitional formations (choices/decisions) aggregate subject to clinging,
The consciousness aggregate subject to clinging.

This is called the burden.

And what, Monks, is the carrier of the burden?

It should be said: the person, this Venerable One of such a name and clan.

This is called the carrier of the burden.

And what, Monks, is the taking up of the burden?

It is this craving that leads to renewed existence, accompanied by excitement and desire, seeking excitement here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination.

This is called the taking up of the burden.

(Reference: SN 22.22)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares The Five Aggregates of form, feeling, perception, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and consciousness (the mind). When a human being comes into existence, it is the coming together of The Five Aggregates (i.e. elements or collections) that identifies a human being as a human being.

There is physical “form”, “feelings”, “perceptions”, “volitional formations”, and “consciousness” (the mind) that makes a human being a human being - there is a physical body and a mind. It is a burden to carry The Five Aggregates in existence as a human being and it is “craving that leads to renewed existence”.

Not only does craving cause discontentedness, but it is also the cause of rebirth. Through training the mind to eliminate craving/desire/attachment then the mind will eliminate discontentedness and with the elimination of craving there is no more rebirth.

Craving is the fuel that causes a new existence, but it is ignorance (unknowing of true reality) that keeps the mind trapped in The Cycle of Rebirth and wisdom that transforms the mind to eliminate ignorance. Learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings one independently verifies the truth in The Teachings to acquire wisdom.

The being has “laid down the burden” of carrying The Five Aggregates through wisdom by deeply understanding the problem, the cause of the problem, the solution to the problem, and the path leading to the complete solution of the problem as described in The Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths along with all the other Teachings of The Buddha develop into a mind with deep wisdom eradicating ignorance (unknowing of true reality) for a Practitioner to entirely understand the problems and the solutions to those problems on The Path to Enlightenment described as The Natural Laws of Existence.

Chapter 40

Elimination of Craving is Called The Laying Down of The Burden

And what, Monks, is the laying down of the burden?

It is the remainderless fading away and elimination of that same craving, the giving up and letting go of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.

This is called the laying down of the burden.

This is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said. Having said this, The Fortunate One, The Teacher, further said this:

The Five Aggregates are truly burdens,
The burden-carrier is the person.
Taking up the burden is discontentedness in the world,
Laying the burden down is joyful.

Having laid the heavy burden down
Without taking up another burden,
Having taken out craving from its root,
One is free from hunger, fully extinguished.

(Reference: SN 22.22)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that through eliminating craving one is “laying down the burden”.

The mind is heavily burdened carrying around craving/desire/attachment/wants/expectations, etc. as the mind constantly pursues the objects of its affections. Through the elimination of craving (mental longing with a strong eagerness) the mind can be at peace, once and for all, as it is no longer making decisions through its own selfish desires.

While craving is described by The Buddha as “the burden”, it is truly a burden to carry around craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) where a being then comes into existence accumulating “The Five Aggregates” to become “a being”.

“The Five Aggregates are truly burdens” to carry around. With the physical body and a mind, a being needs to constantly be burdened by feeding, watering, clothing, sheltering, and acquiring medical care for the physical body. A being will need to maintain the physical body through bathing, haircuts, cutting nails, and a whole range of other maintenance activities which can be exhausting for one to come into existence and then maintain throughout life.

Through The Path to Enlightenment, one can “lay down the heavy burden” of carrying around The Five Aggregates, realizing peace of mind, and then no longer experiencing another existence through The Cycle of Rebirth where all the challenges of life start all over again.

If one believes they only have one life, when faced with the burden of life then one might sometimes consider suicide as an option to end the displeasure of existence in life. However, when one comes to understand The Cycle of Rebirth that all beings are continuously reborn until the mind is fully developed, you come to understand that suicide is not the solution, but instead makes the problem worse. One would only be committing themselves to countless more lives and rounds of roaming and wandering, struggling to find a way out of The Cycle of Rebirth. If one is interested in ending the challenges of life, then the solution is found through cultivation of the mind, training it to eliminate The Ten Fetters, so that one no longer needs to experience existence.

There is going to continue to be renewed existence until one learns, reflects, and practices The Teachings to eliminate craving, anger, and ignorance (unknowing of true reality) acquiring wisdom. Essentially, continued existence in The Cycle of Rebirth is continuous opportunities to learn what one did not learn in prior existences through cultivation of the mind.

It is not until one eliminates all unwholesome qualities and cultivates the wholesome qualities that, through wisdom, the entire cycle is eliminated and the burden of existence can finally be “laid down”.

“One is free from the hunger” and thirst of constant craving and pursuing selfish desires - all has been “fully extinguished”. “Laying the burden down is joyful” as a being will no longer experience any discontent feelings, truly enjoying the remaining time of their last existence with a mind that is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 31-40)

<https://youtu.be/xZ3YndzehP4>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 208 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 31-40)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--208---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Walking-The-Path-with-The-Buddha---Volume-2---Chapter-31-40-e17199h/a-a6fugob>

Chapter 41

Not Understanding and Not Penetrating The Four Noble Truths

Monks, it is because of not understanding and not penetrating The Four Noble Truths that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of The Cycle of Rebirth.

What four?

It is, Monks, because of not understanding and not penetrating the noble truth of discontentedness that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of The Cycle of Rebirth.

It is because of not understanding and not penetrating the noble truth of the cause of discontentedness that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of The Cycle of Rebirth.

It is because of not understanding and not penetrating the noble truth of the elimination of discontentedness that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of The Cycle of Rebirth.

It is because of not understanding and not penetrating the noble truth of the way leading to the elimination of discontentedness that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of The Cycle of Rebirth.

(Reference: SN 56.21)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the importance of learning, reflecting, and practicing The Four Noble Truths as due to the lack of wisdom of this Teaching, a being will continue to “roam and wander through this long course of The Cycle of Rebirth”.

It is not just that one needs the intellectual learning of The Four Noble Truths but reflection to understand the truths then moving The Teachings into practice fully establishing “Right View”. It is only when one practices The Teachings that the condition of the mind is improved.

While some may value memorization and recitation of scriptures or text, a Practitioner would need to not only learn intellectually, but also ensure the mind is deeply practicing The Teachings through a well developed life practice while seeking guidance from a Teacher. One will need to “penetrate” The Four Noble Truths.

Today, we do not need to memorize or recite texts as that content is captured in a way to reference it at any time. A Practitioner needs to “understand and penetrate” the meaning of The Teachings so that they can practice The Teachings to improve the condition of the mind.

As one learns, reflects, and practices The Teachings, the condition of one’s mind and life gradually improve. There is nothing in these Teachings that one should believe.

In order to progress on The Path to Enlightenment, a Practitioner will need a Teacher to receive guidance. One would not be able to only read a book and attain the results of an Enlightened mind.

Nothing in Gotama Buddha's Teachings is based on belief. All his Teachings can be learned and practiced to independently observe the truth as the mind "gradually" acquires wisdom through independent verification of his Teachings through practice of his Teachings.

This new found wisdom "gradually" improves the way the mind functions in the world through eliminating discontentedness of mind. The mind can completely eliminate all discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc. on The Path to Enlightenment.

Through learning and practicing Gotama Buddha's Teachings with guidance, the mind becomes Enlightened in that you can observe the improvement in the condition of the mind as you eliminate all discontent feelings where the mind can reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. You are not believing The Teachings wishing for a positive outcome at some point in the future or after death. Instead, you are observing the improvements to the condition of the mind right now - in the present moment.

Only a Buddha would be able to attain Enlightenment on their own without Teachers. These are some of the criteria that make a Buddha a Buddha, is that they discover The Teachings on their own attaining Enlightenment without help from a Teacher, shares their independently discovered Teachings to guide countless others to Enlightenment during the remaining time of their life, and they leave their Teachings in a condition that they guide countless others to Enlightenment after their death.

The last Buddha currently known to the world existed over 2,500 years ago.

That means you and everyone else will need Teachers on this Path to Enlightenment.

Chapter 42

The Mind Has Attained The End of Craving

Through the round of many births I roamed
without reward,
without rest,
seeking the house-builder.

Painful is birth
again & again.

House-builder, you're seen!
You will not build a house again.
All your rafters broken,
the ridge pole dismantled,
immersed in dismantling,
the mind has attained to the end of craving.

(Reference: DHP 153-154)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares just a little bit of his own experience in The Cycle of Rebirth prior to the attainment of Enlightenment.

He was reborn through constant rounds of rebirth.

As the mind awakens, one might come to observe their past lives. Not all Enlightened beings have this experience but for some Practitioners, it does occur.

At this point in time, you have memory and can recall events, situations, and relationships that have transpired within your current existence - your current life. However, you have had several lives prior to this life that you may not currently recall and cannot remember. Those prior existences may not be part of your current available memories.

As the mind wakes up, closer and closer to Enlightenment, the mind may have memories of previous lives. The process of Enlightenment will allow you to attain a higher and Higher Consciousness, which allows you to see more of your current life and past lives.

As you ascend to a higher place, you can see more of the bigger picture.

Just like if you were in a village or city, you can only see and experience what is in that village or city. But if you relocated to a higher location on a nearby mountain top, you would be able to see all the other villages from this higher vantage point and how all these villages interconnect from one to the other.

Attaining a Higher Consciousness will have the same effect as being on top of the mountain.

As you attain a Higher Consciousness, you will see more of your existing life and how to create a smooth and peaceful existence within this life. You may also observe previous births in the other realms, including previous births in the human realm.

To obtain rebirth in the human realm, you would have needed to generate significant amounts of wholesome, or good, Kamma in your previous births.

Seeing past lives, is not necessarily important because they are in the past and have no significance on your attaining Enlightenment in this life. Discovering past lives is interesting but will not help you to attain Enlightenment in this life. Only what you do in this life will contribute to Enlightenment in this life. Nothing from past lives and nothing in the past from this life matters - it's in the past and does not affect your ability to attain Enlightenment in this life.

Being born into the human realm means there have most likely already been countless previous births within all five (5) realms. A certain number of rebirths into the human realm occur from the heavenly realm. The vast majority of all rebirths occur out of the animal realm into the human realm.

If you are new to these Teachings, I suggest that you set aside The Teachings on The Cycle of Rebirth until you have a well established practice of The Three Universal Truths, The Four Noble Truths, The Eight Fold Path to include a well developed meditation practice, and The Five Precepts. These are the core and central Teachings that a Practitioner will need to learn, reflect on, and practice to start observing improvement to the condition of one's mind and life.

In regards to The Cycle of Rebirth, what happened in the past is in the past - we can't change that. What may or may not happen in the future, has not happened yet so there is no need to worry about the future. The challenges that you are experiencing in this present moment and this present life is a discontent mind. A Practitioner needs to deeply investigate the core Teachings implementing them into a well developed life practice to train the mind. It is through gradual training and gradual practice that there is gradual progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Understanding The Cycle of Rebirth early in practice can be a distraction that takes one away from truly discovering the life changing Teachings offered by The Buddha. I suggest, if new to these Teachings, that you focus on the book "Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment" (Volume 1) with the guidance of a Teacher.

It is through dedicated and determined diligence to developing and practicing these Teachings with guidance that one will come to experience the results.

In addition to acquiring a peaceful mind as the mind becomes more and more Enlightened, there will no longer be any rebirth. One will no longer "build a house again" as one will have laid down the burden and no longer accumulate The Five Aggregates.

The "house-builder, you're seen" as through wisdom it is that one understands The Cycle of Rebirth and how continuous rebirth occurs. Through attaining Enlightenment "you will not build a house again" as one has escaped The Cycle of Rebirth and there is no more existence as birth has been eliminated. There will be no more sickness, aging, death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair because it is all eliminated - once and for all.

Chapter 43

In This Fathom-Long Body

I say, friend, that by traveling one cannot know, see, or reach that end of the world where one is not born, does not grow old and die, does not pass away and get reborn. Yet I say that without having reached the end of the world, there is no making an end of discontentedness.

It is in this fathom-long body endowed with perception and mind that I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the elimination of the world, and the way leading to the elimination of the world.

(Reference: AN 4.45)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that he has “proclaimed” The Four Noble Truths. He is using the word “world” as a “retelling” of how he describes The Four Noble Truths.

It is The Four Noble Truths where one can make the breakthrough to establishing “Right View” and in doing so, one can make a complete end to discontentedness. In doing so, one would no longer be reborn. As more and more beings are born through The Cycle of Rebirth coming to understand and penetrate The Four Noble Truths, there will be fewer and fewer beings coming into existence. As all beings gradually attain Enlightenment ending The Cycle of Rebirth, there will eventually come “the elimination of the world” in terms of you no longer needing to experience “the world”.

A “fathom” is a unit of measurement considered to be approximately 1.8 meters or six (6) feet. He is only using this to reference himself and there is no meaning here in the use of that word that needs to be further understood.

Through traveling in The Cycle of Rebirth, “one cannot know, see, or reach that end of” discontentedness, thus, ending The Cycle of Rebirth or “ending the world”. Through ending The Cycle of Rebirth “one is not born, does not grow old and die, does not pass away and get reborn”.

“Without having reached the end of” The Cycle of Rebirth, “there is no making an end of discontentedness”. Here, The Buddha is sharing the interlinking between making an end to discontentedness through attaining Enlightenment is equivalent to making an end to The Cycle of Rebirth, thus, an end to existence in “the world”.

He is not sharing that the world will actually come to an end, as he left The Teaching on this as an “undeclared” Teaching.

Gotama Buddha did not teach about an afterlife or a soul. He left these “undeclared” in his Teachings. He did not teach whether we exist nor not exist once we attain Enlightenment and die. He shared that there is no more rebirth as “a being” in The Cycle of Rebirth which is different than no existence at all. If we do not attain Enlightenment during this life or at death, we will be reborn through The Cycle of Rebirth.

These are the undeclared Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

- the world is eternal
- the world is not eternal
- the world is finite
- the world is infinite
- the soul is the same as the body
- the soul is one thing and the body is another
- after death The Tathāgata exists
- after death The Tathāgata does not exist
- after death The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist
- after death The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist

Tathāgata is another term used to refer to Gotama Buddha.

Gotama Buddha is referring to himself who was an Arahant, therefore, you can also insert “Enlightened Being” for Tathāgata. This means, he left The Teachings “undeclared” of whether a human being who has attained Enlightenment as an Arahant “after death exists, does not exist, both exists and does not exist, neither exists nor does not exist”.

Just like all clinging and attachments, if we cling and crave the answer to these questions, it will cause the mind to be discontent. Knowing the answer to any of these questions will not lead to an individual’s own Enlightenment and therefore Gotama Buddha never taught or “declared” these Teachings. They are “undeclared”.

There were many Teachings Gotama Buddha did not share, as his main focus was to help people understand that they needed to work towards their own salvation through the process of attaining Enlightenment.

Gotama Buddha focused everyone’s attention, the mind, and their development on The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment - the cessation of discontentedness and the suffering it causes rather than ceremonies and worship. He taught people to practice The Teachings of being a good moral person that eliminates all unwholesome Kamma production, producing only wholesome Kamma.

Gotama Buddha’s Teachings are about non-attachment. He was not even interested in people attaching to him nor the existence of God, as Gotama Buddha knew Enlightenment is 100% determined by our own intentions, speech, and actions.

Rebirth, or The Cycle of Rebirth, is the process in which all beings who have not attained Enlightenment during this life or at death will be reborn into a new form or formless realm of existence, hell, afflicted spirits, animal, human, or heaven.

An “afterlife”, which Gotama Buddha left as an “undeclared” Teaching, is what happens when one has attained Enlightenment in this life or at death - what happens next? That is the afterlife.

You need to be comfortable with not knowing the answer, in other words, not being attached to what is or is not going to happen in an afterlife as being attached to needing to know this outcome could inhibit you from attaining Enlightenment and will cause rebirth. The goal is to extinguish all craving for a “Personal existence view”, “Desire for form”, and “Desire for the formless”. These are just three (3) aspects of The Ten Fetters required for Enlightenment as it relates to the discussion in this Chapter.

If you attain Enlightenment in this human existence, life will be so peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy that you will have no need to know what comes next in the afterlife, if anything at all. You will be experiencing complete and total peace of mind and will know that if there is something after death having attained Enlightenment, it must be good.

The goal is to attain Enlightenment in this very life so that you will not be reborn through The Cycle of Rebirth into another realm of existence. You can attain Enlightenment during your existing life to experience ever lasting peace or at death.

Chapter 44

The Perfectly Enlightened One's Complexion is No Longer Pure and Bright The Limbs Are All Flaccid and Wrinkled

(Then the Venerable Ānanda approached The Perfectly Enlightened One. Having approached and paid homage (respect), while massaging The Perfectly Enlightened One's limbs, he said to him:)

'It is wonderful, Venerable Sir! It is amazing, Venerable Sir! The Perfectly Enlightened One's complexion is no longer pure and bright, his limbs are all flaccid (soft and hanging loosely) and wrinkled, his body is stooped, and some alteration is seen in his sense bases—in the eye sense base, the ear sense base, the nose sense base, the tongue sense base, the body sense base.'

So it is, Ānanda! In youth one is subject to aging; In health one is subject to illness; while alive one is subject to death. The complexion is no longer pure and bright, the limbs are all flaccid and wrinkled, the body is stooped, and some alteration is seen in the sense bases — in the eye sense base, the ear sense base, the nose sense base, the tongue sense base, the body sense base.

This is what The Perfectly Enlightened One said. Having said this, The Fortunate One, The Teacher, further said this:

Fie on you, wretched aging,
Aging which makes beauty fade!
So much has the charming puppet,
Been crushed beneath advancing age.

One who might live a hundred years
Also has death as destination.
Death spares none along the way
But comes crushing everything.

(Reference: SN 48.41)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the dissatisfaction that one might express regarding the aging process. One who is unaware and unaccepting of impermanence might think negatively of the aging process rather than just see it for what it is - impermanence.

Oftentimes beings might attempt to “hold on” to youth and their youthful appearance. This can cause much discontentedness in one’s own mind through constant attempts at beautification of the body craving youthfulness.

There have been many people who have failed to resist the pressure and temptation of craving/desiring a youthful appearance to only meet with complicated surgeries and procedures that later result in devastation and despair.

It is only when the mind understands and accepts impermanence that one gains comfort in allowing the mind to be content with the aging of the physical body. While one needs to maintain the physical body’s health, maintaining a youthful appearance is subject to impermanence and a craving for youthfulness will only result in discontentedness of mind.

Sickness, aging, and death “spares none along the way”. It will come “crushing everything” and if the mind is unknowing of this reality, it will become discontent as the body ages and experiences decline.

Gotama Buddha is not discontent in his sharing of this Teaching but instead, reflecting and sharing words that one might understand to know that even him a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha is subject to sickness, aging, and death. As long as we are in the human condition, we will experience sickness, aging, and death.

Discontentedness is optional and we can choose to eliminate sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair. Through eliminating discontentedness to attain Enlightenment we also eliminate sickness, aging, and death.

Observe how in this Teaching from The Buddha that he describes the aging body and the “alteration is seen in the sense bases”. He describes the fading away of highly developed or a sharp use of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. Meaning these sense bases are in decline as he aged.

However, notice that he did not mention the decline of the mind. His mind was highly developed and sharp as having attained Enlightenment there is focus, concentration, deep memory, and clarity of thought. While an unEnlightened being ages, they will experience the same decline of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. They will also experience the decline of the mind.

But having attained Enlightenment, an Enlightened being does not experience the decline of the mind as the physical body ages. The body and the mind are two separate entities and the declining of one does not necessarily require the declining of another.

So, with the common knowledge of decline of the mind often associated with aging, you can understand the wisdom that this only applies to the unEnlightened mind. Through cultivation of the mind to Enlightenment as one's body ages, the mind remains highly developed and sharp with peacefulness, calmness, serenity, and contentedness with joy permanently. The focus, concentration, memory, and clarity of thought of the Enlightened mind does not decline with age. This is yet another reason and beneficial outcome of pursuing and attaining Enlightenment in this very life.

Chapter 45

The Tathāgata's Final Passing

Monks, for this reason those matters which I have discovered and proclaimed should be thoroughly learnt by you, practiced, developed and cultivated, so that this holy life may endure for a long time, that it may be for the benefit and peacefulness of the multitude (many people), out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and peacefulness of heavenly beings and humans.

And what are those matters...?

They are: The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the four Right Efforts, the four bases of mental power, the five spiritual faculties, the five mental powers, The Seven Factors of Enlightenment, The Noble Eight Fold Path.

And now, Monks, I declare to you - all conditioned things are of a nature to decay, strive on untiringly. The Tathāgata's final passing will not be long delayed. Three months from now The Tathāgata will take his Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment).

Ripe I am in years. My life-span's determined
Now I go from you, having made myself my refuge.

Monks, be untiring, mindful, disciplined,
Guarding your minds with well-collected thought.

He who, tirelessly, keeps to the guidance and Teachings,
Leaving birth behind, will put an end to sorrow and despair.

(Reference: DN 16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he prepares his Students for his own death. As a Fully Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, he was well aware of his pending death and knew when it would occur.

Three months prior to his death, in this Teaching he notifies his Students that “The Tathāgata’s final passing will not be long delayed. Three months from now The Tathāgata will take his Final Nibbāna (Final Enlightenment)”. Final Nibbāna or Final Enlightenment is when someone has attained Enlightenment during their life and then there is death of the physical body, the separation of the body and the mind, the breakup of the physical body and, thus, the mind is no longer attached to the physical body.

The Buddha encourages his Students to “strive on untiringly” being determined, dedicated, and diligent in their continuous pursuit to Enlightenment. Through “guarding your minds with well-collected thought” “he who, tirelessly, keeps to the guidance and Teachings” will “leave birth behind will put an end to sorrow and despair” no longer experiencing any discontentedness and eliminating The Cycle of Rebirth.

Old and “ripe I am in years. My life-span’s determined. Now I go from you, having made myself my refuge” The Buddha’s mind is fully protected and will no longer experience any more existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

He delivers what he feels to be the core Teachings that one needs to actively learn to ensure his Teachings continue long into the future “for the benefit and peacefulness of heavenly beings and humans”. The Teachings he declares as essential are “The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the four Right Efforts, the four bases of mental power, the five spiritual faculties, the five mental powers, The Seven Factors of Enlightenment, The Noble Eight Fold Path”.

All of these Teachings are deeply explained and shared in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) and through the remaining books in this book series. With guidance from a Teacher, you can learn and progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

The Teachings of “the four bases of mental power, the five spiritual faculties, and the five mental powers” are not shared in great detail within this book series as these are cultivated automatically as part of practice of the other Teachings. With The Buddha’s layering of Teachings and overlapping discourses that ensure one develops the mind on The Path to Enlightenment, there is nothing additional one needs to learn, reflect, and practice to develop these aspects of the mind.

Instead, focusing on the core and central Teachings of The Path to Enlightenment will ensure one is cultivating “the four bases of mental power, the five spiritual faculties, and the five mental powers”.

I suggest one focuses on The Three Universal Truths, The Four Noble Truths, The Eight Fold Path with a well developed meditation practice, and The Five Precepts with the additional Teachings interconnected to these as detailed in the book “Developing a Life Practice: The Path That Leads to Enlightenment” (Volume 1) and through the remaining books in this book series.

As a Prince named Siddhartha Gotama who eventually becomes Gotama Buddha upon his Enlightenment and lifetime of work, he left the royal riches of being the next in line for the throne as the King of his father's Kingdom. Though having wealth and every material possession he might desire available to him, none of that led to his peacefulness of mind and Enlightenment.

One might wonder why does a Buddha dedicate their life to sharing Teachings into the world if there is no inherent benefit to a Buddha himself as he has already attained Enlightenment? Why not just go back to life as a member of the royal family living a life of luxury?

Here in this Teaching, The Buddha briefly touches on his purpose for sharing The Teachings as he did for his entire life. A Buddha shares their Teachings into the world for only one reason. Not fame or fortune but instead "out of compassion for the world".

Compassion is concern for the misfortunes of others.

A Buddha has already made a complete end to their discontentedness and deeply understands exactly what it took to eliminate their own discontentedness through independent discovery of The Teachings. They have penetrating wisdom that is profound and beyond that of the average human being. They want nothing, desire nothing, and crave nothing. They "are freed from sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair" and have only one goal.

To help the world.

Seeing the sea of discontentedness among unEnlightened beings, a Buddha has the answers to solve the discontentedness of the entire world. But, he is only one man and it is his last life. A Buddha is determined, dedicated, and diligent in his efforts to share The Teachings into the world that will rid it of all discontentedness - all sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair can be entirely eliminated as each individual chooses to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings.

While the objective of a Buddha to share their Teachings into the world comes with extensive work and effort, they are tireless in their journey to help other beings while at the same time doing so without craving/desire/attachment (mental longing with a strong eagerness).

So, they work and apply effort to plant and grow trees so that the world will become a better place. But they will never, themselves, experience the enjoyment of the shade of those trees as their work cannot be accomplished in just one lifetime. It is the entire community of Practitioners that remain, to include all Enlightened beings, who continue to "strive on" sharing The Teachings of a Buddha into the world so that one day the entire world is cooled, calm, and peaceful.

Seeing the world's misfortunes, a Buddha humbly does their work "out of compassion for the world".

To learn and practice The Teachings of a Buddha is to take part in improving the condition of your own mind and in doing so, you are improving the world. It is through your own determination, dedication, and diligence to developing your own mind that you will significantly reduce and eliminate any harm you are causing in the world. This is the most compassionate thing you could ever do for others is to improve the condition of your own mind through developing your life practice to eliminate the unwholesome qualities and cultivate wholesome qualities.

In some respects, we are individually making efforts to improve our corner of the world and through each individual doing that, the world becomes a better place. But, one must focus on improving their own mind without craving to “fix the world”. Each individual needs to come to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings on their own. It is not possible to force someone to attain Enlightenment. Nothing in these Teachings will work through force.

So, if you have “compassion for the world” you are encouraged to learn, reflect, and practice these wholesome Teachings to improve the condition of your mind and your life.

In doing so, you can make a complete end to discontentedness and experience the ease and enjoyment of no longer experiencing any discontent feelings ever again while no longer experiencing existence through The Cycle of Rebirth.

Final Nibbāna

Final Nibbāna, or Final Enlightenment, is when someone attains Enlightenment and dies. This is referred to as Final Enlightenment.

During one’s life, the mind can be trained to attain Enlightenment. The mind will reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. The mind will no longer experience any mental pain associated with unwelcomed emotions, thoughts, ideas, or any sort of discontentedness of mind. All discontentedness such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc., will be completely eliminated from the mind.

However, a being is unable to completely transcend physical pain while in the human form. This is impossible. While the mind can be developed to not react with anger, sadness, hostility, aggression, or other discontent feelings upon experiencing physical pain, nonetheless, physical pain will still be experienced by the mind.

The mind can eliminate all cravings/desires/attachments while in the human form and during this life to experience Enlightenment. But while still alive, a being cannot eliminate the connection between the body and the mind. The mind is still connected to the physical body during life. Therefore, the mind will still experience physical pain but the mind will experience it differently in the Enlightened mental state versus in the unEnlightened mental state.

In the unEnlightened mental state, when the mind experiences physical pain, one can become angered, frustrated, irritated, annoyed, hostile, aggressive, resentful, fearful, and experience other discontent feelings. This is due to the mind craving permanent health, permanent comfort, and permanent pleasant feelings from the body. It is impossible for the body to experience permanent comfort due to The Universal Truth of Impermanence.

The pain associated with the physical body is an important aspect of the mind that needs to exist in order for a being to function in the world. If a being did not experience physical pain, they would be unable to remove the physical body from harm when too close to a heat source or if another problematic situation arose. The sensation of physical pain experienced by the mind helps a being understand, potential damage will occur or has occurred and therefore, seek a remedy to the physical pain. This is why we choose to step away from a heat source. The mind is alerted that the physical body is experiencing pain and the being takes action to resolve the situation. This is beneficial and needed during life.

In these situations, an unEnlightened mind will oftentimes experience discontentedness associated with the craving for permanent comfort of the physical body. When there is physical pain, the unEnlightened mind becomes discontent.

An Enlightened mind has been deeply trained to the point that it understands physical pain is impermanent, and that allowing the mind to become discontent due to physical pain, does not help to eliminate the physical pain.

Discontentedness at times of physical pain could actually make the situation worse.

For example, if one was bitten by a poisonous snake and became agitated, overactive, and uncalm, this would increase respirations of the lungs and heart functions creating conditions for the poison to more rapidly move through the body causing more significant injury and damage with an increased risk of potential death. Through training the mind to reside unagitated and calm, an individual can decrease the harm to the body and improve their ability to survive an injury such as a snake bite because the poison will not permeate in the body as rapidly when the mind is calm. Through the mind remaining calm during physical injuries, a being increases their ability to resolve the situation with a positive outcome.

When an Enlightened mind experiences physical pain, the mind can continue to reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy despite the physical injury, damage, or pain. This is an added benefit experienced by an Enlightened mind producing improved outcomes in situations where physical pain is experienced.

Nonetheless, there is still physical pain for an Enlightened being but it is just that the mind will not react to the pain and instead, respond to resolve the situation finding a solution. The physical pain associated with existence will continue for the remaining time of existence even for an Enlightened being. But, they will not experience mental anguish or any type of discontentedness associated with the physical pain. The Enlightened mind does not relate to the pain in the same way as the unEnlightened mind which will oftentimes become discontent due to physical pain.

It is not until the physical body dies, described by Gotama Buddha as “the breakup of the body”, that the body and mind completely separate. From that point, not only has one transcended discontentedness their entire life due to the attainment of Enlightenment, but the being will then experience the complete elimination of all pain including physical pain. This is referred to as Final Enlightenment or Final Nibbāna.

Enlightenment is experienced during life and the mind has transcended all emotional pain and suffering. But, the physical pain will remain, because it is needed to make wise decisions concerning the physical body during times of injury. The Enlightened mind will

have physical pain but will have acquired an improved way of responding to the physical pain rather than reacting to it so there is no mental pain.

Once a being has attained Enlightenment and dies, there is no longer any physical pain because the separation of the body and mind has occurred, therefore one has attained Final Enlightenment. All pain both mental and physical has been completely eliminated - permanently.

It is possible for an unEnlightened being to experience Enlightenment and Final Enlightenment at the time of death. The being would have experienced discontentedness their entire life but at the time of death, they would immediately experience Enlightenment and Final Enlightenment no longer experiencing rebirth through The Cycle of Rebirth.

What happens once one attains Enlightenment and dies experiencing Final Enlightenment is an undeclared Teaching of Gotama Buddha. He did not teach what is next other than an Enlightened being will not experience any further existence in The Cycle of Rebirth.

There are other Teachings from Gotama Buddha in this book series related to how to ensure The Teachings of a Buddha are sustained in the world. Chapters 33 and 34 in the book "Foundation in The Teachings" (Volume 3) provides these Teachings and an explanation of these Teachings.

What Happens at Death?

After we die does the body become soil to the earth or after death what remains? Isn't there spirit or energy which exist inside our body? Isn't there some sort of energy?

No, at the time of death the body and mind separate and then there is "break up of the body".

The body was described by Gotama Buddha through The Four Elements of Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water.

Essentially, the physical body is described and classified into these Four Elements.

Earth: The solids of the body. (hair, teeth, nails, bones, etc.)

Wind: The movement of bodily functions. (Circulation, movement of bile, etc.)

Fire: The temperature of the body.

Water: The liquids of the body. (urine, saliva, blood, pus, tears, etc.)

The physical body is nothing more than these four elements coming together with a mind or consciousness. The joining of the body and the mind creates a person.

Once the body and mind separate, the body will deteriorate remaining as these four elements but without a mind or consciousness.

What you are looking at when you see the body is a unique collection of these four elements that is always in a state of change and upon death, the body will continue that change and configuration but it will still be just these four elements.

The body will progressively deteriorate and depending whether there is burial or cremation, will determine how quickly the process of change occurs.

Through burial, the process is much slower. Cremation accelerates the process of change of these four elements.

What happens to the mind upon death?

If the mind is not yet Enlightened, (i.e. the mind has not yet attained Enlightenment), then there is rebirth into one of The Five Realms.

Heavenly Realm
Human Realm
Afflicted Spirits Realm
Animal Realm
Hell Realm

Heavenly, Afflicted Spirits, and Hell realms are formless realms. (i.e. there is no physical form).

Human and Animal realms are form realms, (i.e. there is physical form).

Rebirth is not instantaneous and upon rebirth there is a completely new existence with a new form or formless existence and a new consciousness, (i.e. a new mind).

The new mind will have residual memories of past lives and unextinguished craving/desire/attachment from past lives. The residual memories of past lives may potentially be recalled as the mind awakens towards Enlightenment more and more.

If someone attains Enlightenment what happens to the mind? Does it disappear?

If the mind has experienced Enlightenment during the human or heavenly existence or at death, (i.e. Enlightenment can be attained during an existence in the human or heavenly realm or at death in those realms but not in the lower realms), the body and mind separate and what happens next is an "undeclared" Teaching.

To attain Enlightenment, the mind needs to get to the point where there is no craving/desire/attachment (i.e. mental longing with a strong eagerness) to know what is next.

An Enlightened mind is experiencing so much peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy that is permanent, the mind is not going to care what is next.

An Enlightened mind has already extinguished all fears including the fear of death, therefore, the mind is so peaceful and does not fear death so what happens next, the Enlightened mind does not care.

Having attained Enlightenment, you will know that you are already experiencing complete and utter peacefulness so if there is something next after death for an Enlightened being, it is either as good as you are currently experiencing or better.

And, if there is nothing next, then, ok, you are "done".

Either way, the mind needs to "let go" of wanting to know what is next and just focus on learning and practicing The Teachings with guidance on The Path to Enlightenment to experience Enlightenment in this life now that you are human.

Is the mind or soul/spirit the same thing?

No they are not.

There is no Teaching from The Buddha that there is or is not a soul/spirit. This is not a Teaching he shared. He left The Teaching on a soul/spirit as "undeclared".

How Did The Buddha Die?

Author: Venerable Dr Mettanando Bhikkhu
Published: 15 May 2001 - Bangkok Post

(This article was partially edited by the author of this book series to improve the formatting and readability, however, the primary content of the article was not edited. Dr Mettanando Bhikkhu was a physician before becoming an Ordained Practitioner. He was based at Wat Ratchaorasaram Ratchaworawihan, Thailand at the time that this article was published.)

During Vesak Day, we are informed that it is also the day The Buddha attained Final Enlightenment. But not many know how The Buddha died. Ancient texts weave two stories about The Buddha's death. Was it planned and willed by The Buddha, or was it food poisoning, or something else altogether?

Here's an account [to help you better understand how The Buddha died].

The Mahaparinibbana Sutta, (Reference: DN 16) from the Long Discourse of The Pāli Canon, is without doubt the most reliable source for details on the death of Siddhattha Gotama (BCE 563-483), The Buddha. It is composed in a narrative style that allows readers to follow the story of the last days of The Buddha, beginning a few months before he died.

To understand what really happened to The Buddha is not a simple matter, though. The sutta, or discourse, paints two conflicting personalities of The Buddha, one overriding the other.

The first personality was that of a miracle worker who beamed himself and his entourage of Monks across the Ganges River (D II, 89), who had a divine vision of the settlement of gods on earth (D II, 87), who could live until the end of the world on condition that someone invite him to do so (D II, 103), who determined the time of his own death (D II, 105), and whose death was glorified by the shower of heavenly flowers and sandal powder and divine music (D II, 138).

The other personality was that of an aged being who was failing in health (D II, 120), who almost lost his life because of a severe pain during his last retreat at Vesali (D II, 100), and who was forced to come to terms with his unexpected illness and death after consuming a special cuisine offered by his generous host.

These two personalities take turns emerging in different parts of the narrative. Moreover, there also appear to be two explanations of The Buddha's cause of death: One is that the Buddha died because his attendant, Ānanda, failed to invite him to live on to the age of the world or even longer (D II, 117). The other is that he died by a sudden illness which began after he ate what is known as "Sukaramaddava" (D II, 127-157).

The former story was probably a legend, or the result of a political struggle within the Buddhist community during a stage of transition, whereas the latter sounds more realistic and accurate in describing a real life situation that happened in The Buddha's last days.

A number of studies have focused on the nature of the special cuisine that The Buddha ate during his last meal as being the agent of his death. However, there is also another approach based on the description of the symptoms and signs given in the sutta, which modern medical knowledge can shed light on.

In another mural painting at Wat Ratchasittharam, The Buddha is approaching death, but he still takes time to answer questions put forth by the Ascetic Subhadda, his last convert who, after being admitted to the Buddhist Order, became an Arahant (An Enlightened Being).

What We Know

In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, we are told that The Buddha became ill suddenly after he ate a special delicacy, Sukaramaddava, literally translated as "soft pork", which had been prepared by his generous host, Cunda Kammaraputta. The name of the cuisine has attracted the attention of many scholars, and it has been the focus of academic research on the nature of the meal or ingredients used in the cooking of this special dish.

The sutta itself provides details concerning the signs and symptoms of his illness in addition to some reliable information about his circumstances over the previous four months, and these details are also medically significant.

The sutta begins with King Ajatasattus' plot to conquer a rival state, Vajji. The Buddha had journeyed to Vajji to enter his last rainy-season retreat. It was during this retreat that he fell ill. The symptoms of the illness were sudden, severe pain.

However, the sutta provides no description of the location and character of his pain. It mentions his illness briefly, and says that the pain was intense, and almost killed him.

Subsequently, The Buddha was visited by Māra, the Evil One, who invited him to pass away. The Buddha did not accept the invitation right away. It was only after Ānanda, his attendant, failed to recognize his hint for an invitation to remain that he died. This piece of the message, though tied up with myth and supernaturalism, gives us some medically significant information. When the sutta was composed, its author was under the impression that The Buddha died, not because of the food he ate, but because he already

had an underlying illness that was serious and acute-and had the same symptoms of the disease that finally killed him.

The Timing

[The] Theravada Buddhist tradition has adhered to the assumption that the historical Buddha passed away during the night of the full moon in the lunar month of Vesak (which falls sometime in May to June). But the timing contradicts information given in the sutta, which states clearly that the Buddha died soon after the rainy-season retreat, most likely during the autumn or mid-winter, that is, November to January.

A description of the miracle of the unseasonal blooming of leaves and flowers on the sala trees, when The Buddha was laid down between them, indicates the time frame given in the sutta.

Autumn and winter, however, are seasons that are not favorable for the growth of mushrooms, which some scholars believe to be the source of the poison that The Buddha ate during his last meal.

Diagnosis

The sutta tells us that The Buddha felt ill immediately after eating the Sukaramaddava. Since we do not know anything about the nature of this food, it is difficult to name it as the direct cause of The Buddha's illness. But from the descriptions given, the onset of the illness was quick.

While eating, he felt there was something wrong with the food and he suggested his host have the food buried. Soon afterward, he suffered severe stomach pain and passed blood from his rectum.

We can reasonably assume that the illness started while he was having his meal, making him think there was something wrong with the unfamiliar delicacy. Out of his compassion for others, he had it buried.

Was food poisoning the cause of the illness? It seems unlikely. The symptoms described do not indicate food poisoning, which can be very acute, but would hardly cause diarrhea with blood. Usually, food poisoning caused by bacteria does not manifest itself immediately, but takes an incubation period of two to 12 hours to manifest itself, normally with acute diarrhea and vomiting, but not the passage of blood.

Another possibility is chemical poisoning, which also has an immediate effect, but it is unusual for chemical poisoning to cause severe intestinal bleeding. Food poisoning with immediate intestinal bleeding could only have been caused by corrosive chemicals such as strong acids, which can easily lead to immediate illness. But corrosive chemicals should have caused bleeding in the upper intestinal tract, leading to vomiting blood. None of these severe signs are mentioned in the text.

(NOTE from author of this book series: Chemicals were not yet invented during the lifetime of The Buddha.)

Peptic ulcer diseases can be excluded from the list of possible illnesses as well. In spite of the fact that their onset is immediate, they are seldom accompanied by bloody stool. A gastric ulcer with intestinal bleeding produces black stool when the ulcer penetrates a blood vessel. An ulcer higher up in the digestive tract would be more likely to manifest itself as bloody vomiting, not a passage of blood through the rectum.

Other evidence against this possibility is that a patient with a large gastric ulcer usually does not have an appetite. By accepting the invitation for lunch with the host, we can assume that The Buddha felt as healthy as any man in his early 80s would feel. Given his age we cannot rule out that The Buddha did not have a chronic disease, such as cancer or tuberculosis or a tropical infection such as dysentery or typhoid, which could have been quite common in The Buddha's time.

These diseases could produce bleeding of the lower intestine, depending on their location. They also agree with the history of his earlier illness during the retreat. But they can be ruled out, since they are usually accompanied by other symptoms, such as lethargy, loss of appetite, weight loss, growth or mass in the abdomen. None of these symptoms were mentioned in the sutta.

A large hemorrhoid can cause severe rectal bleeding, but it is unlikely that a hemorrhoid could cause severe abdominal pain unless it is strangulated. But then it would have greatly disturbed the walking of The Buddha to the house of his host, and rarely is hemorrhoid bleeding triggered by a meal.

Mesenteric Infarction

A disease that matches the described symptoms-accompanied by acute abdominal pain and the passage of blood, commonly found among elderly people, and triggered by a meal-is mesenteric infarction, caused by an obstruction of the blood vessels of the mesentery. It is lethal. Acute mesenteric ischemia (a reduction in the blood supply to the mesentery) is a grave condition with a high rate of mortality.

The mesentery is a part of the intestinal wall that binds the whole intestinal tract to the abdominal cavity. An infarction of the vessels of the mesentery normally causes the death of the tissue in a large section of the intestinal tract, which results in a laceration of the intestinal wall.

This normally produces severe pain in the abdomen and the passage of blood. The patient usually dies of acute blood loss. This condition matches the information given in the sutta. It is also confirmed later when The Buddha asked Ānanda to fetch some water for him to drink, indicating intense thirst.

As the story goes, Ānanda refused, as he saw no source for clean water. He argued with The Buddha that the nearby stream had been muddied by a large caravan of carts. But The Buddha insisted he fetch water anyway.

A question arises at this point: Why did The Buddha not go to the water himself, instead of pressing his unwilling attendant to do so? The answer is simple. The Buddha was suffering from shock caused by severe blood loss. He could no longer walk, and from then to his death bed he was most likely carried on a stretcher.

If this was indeed the situation, the sutta remains silent about The Buddha's traveling to his deathbed, possibly because the author felt that it would be an embarrassment for The Buddha. Geographically, we know that the distance between the place believed to be the house of Cunda and the place where The Buddha died was about 15 to 20 kilometers. It is not possible for a patient with such a grave illness to walk such a distance.

More likely, what happened was that The Buddha was carried on a stretcher by a group of Monks to Kusinara (Kushinagara).

It remains a point of debate whether The Buddha really determined to pass away at this city, presumably not much larger than a town. From the direction of The Buddha's journey, given in the sutta, he was moving north from Rajagaha. It is possible that he did not intend to die there, but in the town where he was born, which would have taken a period of three months to reach.

From the sutta, it is clear that The Buddha was not anticipating his sudden illness, or else he would not have accepted the invitation of his host.

Kusinara was probably the nearest town where he could find a doctor to take care of him. It is not difficult to see a group of Monks hurriedly carrying The Buddha on a stretcher to the nearest town to save his life.

Before passing away, The Buddha told Ānanda that Cunda was not to be blamed and that his death was not caused by eating Sukaramaddava. The statement is significant. The meal was not the direct cause of his death. The Buddha knew that the symptom was a repeat of an experience he'd had a few months earlier, the one which had almost killed him.

Sukaramaddava, no matter the ingredients or how it was cooked, was not the direct cause of his sudden illness.

Progression of the Disease

Mesenteric infarction is a disease commonly found among elderly people, caused by the obstruction of the main artery that supplies the middle section of the bowel-the small intestine-with blood. The most common cause of the obstruction is the degeneration of the wall of the blood vessel, the superior mesenteric artery, causing severe abdominal pain, also known as abdominal angina.

Normally, the pain is triggered by a large meal, which requires a higher flow of blood to the digestive tract. As the obstruction persists, the bowel is deprived of its blood supply, which subsequently leads to an infarction, or gangrene, of a section of the intestinal tract. This in turn results in a laceration of the intestinal wall, profuse bleeding into the intestinal tract, and then bloody diarrhea.

The disease gets worse as the liquid and content of the intestine oozes out into the peritoneal cavity, causing peritonitis or inflammation of the abdominal walls. This is already a lethal condition for the patient, who often dies due to the loss of blood and other fluid. If it is not corrected by surgery, the disease often progresses to septic shock due to bacterial toxins infiltrating the blood stream.

Retrospective Analysis

From the diagnosis given above, we can be rather certain that The Buddha suffered from mesenteric infarction caused by an occlusion of the superior mesenteric artery. This was the cause of the pain that almost killed him a few months earlier during his last rainy-season retreat.

With the progress of the illness, some of the mucosal lining of his intestine sloughed off, and this site became the origin of the bleeding.

Arteriosclerosis, the hardening of the vessel wall caused by aging, was the cause of the arterial occlusion, a small blockage that did not result in bloody diarrhea, but is a symptom, also known to us as abdominal angina.

He had his second attack while he was eating the Sukaramaddava. The pain was probably not intense in the beginning, but made him feel that there was something wrong. Suspicious about the nature of the food, he asked his host to have it all buried, so that others might not suffer from it.

Soon, The Buddha realized that the illness was serious, with the passage of blood and more severe pain in his abdomen. Due to the loss of blood, he went into shock. The degree of dehydration was so severe that he could not maintain himself any longer and he had to take shelter at a tree along the way.

Feeling very thirsty and exhausted, he got Ānanda to collect water for him to drink, even though he knew that the water was muddied. It was there that he collapsed until his entourage carried him to the nearest town, Kusinara, where there would have been a chance of finding a doctor or lodging for him to recover in.

It was probably true that The Buddha got better after drinking to replace his fluid loss, and resting on the stretcher. The experience with the symptoms told him that his sudden illness was the second attack of an existing disease. He told Ānanda that the meal was not the cause of his illness, and that Cunda was not to blame.

A patient with shock, dehydration and profuse blood loss usually feels very cold. This was the reason why he told his attendant to prepare a bed using four sheets of ifsanghati nf. According to Buddhist monastic discipline, a ifsanghati nfi is a cloak, or extra piece of robe, very large, the size of a bed sheet, which The Buddha allowed Ordained Practitioners to wear in winter.

This information reflects how cold the Buddha felt because of his loss of blood. Clinically, it is not possible for a patient who is in a state of shock with severe abdominal pain, most likely peritonitis, pale and shivering, to be ambulatory.

The Buddha was most likely put into a lodging, where he was nursed and warmed, located in the city of Kusinara. This view is also confirmed with the description of Ānanda who, weeping, swoons and holds onto the door of his lodge after learning that The Buddha was about to pass away.

Normally, a patient with mesenteric infarction could live 10 to 20 hours. From the sutta we learn that The Buddha died about 15 to 18 hours after the attack. During that time, his attendants would have tried their best to comfort him, for example, by warming the room

where he was resting, or by dripping some water into his mouth to quench his lingering thirst, or by giving him some herbal drinks. But it would be highly unlikely that a shivering patient would need someone to fan him as is described in the sutta.

Off and on, he may have recovered from a state of exhaustion, allowing him to continue his dialogues with a few people. Most of his last words could have been true, and they were memorized by generations of Monks until they were transcribed. But finally, late into the night, The Buddha died during a second wave of septic shock. His illness stemmed from natural causes coupled with his age, just as it would for anyone else.

Conclusion

The hypothesis outlined above explains several scenes in the narrative of the sutta, namely, the pressuring of Ānanda to fetch water, The Buddha's request for a fourfold cloak for his bed, the ordering of the meal to be buried, and so on.

It also reveals another possibility of the actual means of transportation of The Buddha to Kusinara and the site of his death bed. Sukaramaddava, whatever its nature, was unlikely to have been the direct cause of his illness. The Buddha did not die by food poisoning. Rather, it was the size of the meal, relatively too large for his already troubled digestive tract, that triggered the second attack of mesenteric infarction that brought an end to his life.

Author's Thoughts

Due to their importance, The Words of The Buddha book series have the last words of The Buddha in multiple places throughout the book series.

You can investigate these chapters, which some of them are the same. There are basically two different chapters being repeated throughout the book series in all of these books and chapters.

Volume 2 - Chapter 45

Volume 3 - Chapter 97

Volume 9 - Chapter 47

Volume 10 - Chapter 46

Volume 12 - Chapter 48

In all of these locations within the books series, I have inserted the last words of The Buddha and shared what one encounters upon death. This will help you to understand and gain the wisdom of, what transpires for a being as part of the process of dying and death itself.

A Student who reads this article titled "How Did The Buddha Die?" and is unEnlightened may perceive the depiction of how The Buddha died as being an extremely painful death. That it was painful for The Buddha during his last moments of life. But, that is without the wisdom of what an Enlightened being experiences as a result of having attained Enlightenment and then having issues in the physical body to include death.

I suspect that the author of the article may not be aware of how an unEnlightened and Enlightened being experience pain differently. Therefore, when describing what The Buddha experienced, he described it in graphic terms of, his own frame of reference and lifetime experiences with physical and mental pain - as being severely painful.

An Enlightened being does not experience severe physical pain but instead, it is significantly diminished or muted. An Enlightened being does not experience any mental anguish whatsoever.

When I read this article, I know that The Buddha, while experiencing a medical condition that led to his ultimate death, had a peaceful mind during the entire time leading all the way up to and including death. He would not have been in agonizing pain as one might think who has not experienced physical pain while at the same time experiencing the Enlightened mental state.

An Enlightened being will experience physical pain but, it would be very minimal compared to what an unEnlightened being would experience in the same circumstances. An Enlightened being would experience some physical pain but, they will not experience the mental anguish associated with the physical pain. An Enlightened being's mind will continue to reside peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy, despite any and all physical pain. In this way, the physical pain experienced by an Enlightened being is insignificant and a mere fraction of that which would be experienced by an unEnlightened being given the same exact situation.

For further understanding of physical and mental pain in the unEnlightened and Enlightened mental state, you might choose to investigate The Teachings in Volume 8 - Chapter 40 titled "Transcending Physical Pain by Avoiding Mental Pain". This will help you to understand how an unEnlightened being experiences physical pain versus, an Enlightened being.

Detailed explanation of Transcending Physical Pain by Avoiding Mental Pain is available in this same book series found in Chapter 40 of the book "The Foremost Householder" (Volume 9).

You can also gain an appreciation and the wisdom of this topic through understanding The Teachings of The Buddha when he shares "The Simile of The Saw" in the Kakacūpamasutta Sutta (Reference: MN 21) available in Volume 3 - Chapter 84 of this same book series.

The Buddha shares, "Monks, even if criminals were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handed saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be practicing my Teachings".

The Buddha shares this Teaching because his own mind, experiencing Enlightenment, would not experience mental anguish in this exact scenario or any others. It would be impossible for an Enlightened being to experience hatred towards anyone for any reason, even if being sawed "limb by limb". Therefore, The Buddha was well aware that if a Student's mind experienced hatred in this situation or any other, the mind would be unEnlightened. He emphasizes this in this Teaching.

This Teaching directly from The Buddha, and others, can provide you further insight to understand how an Enlightened being would not experience any “agonizing pain” during the process of dying or at death.

Detailed explanation of Training a Mind Filled with Loving-Kindness, without Hostility or Ill Will is available in this same book series found in Chapter 84 of the book “Foundations in The Teachings” (Volume 3).

Chapter 46

One Who Sees The Teachings Sees Me

Enough, Vakkali!

Why do you want to see this foul body?

One who sees The Teachings sees me;
one who sees me sees The Teachings.

For in seeing The Teachings, Vakkali,
one sees me; and in seeing me,
one sees The Teachings.

Monks, even if a Monk, taking hold of my outer robe, were to follow right behind me, placing his feet in my footsteps, yet if he were to be craving for sensual pleasures, strong in his passions, evil in mind, corrupt in his decision making, his mindfulness muddled, unalert, uncentered, his mind scattered, and his sense bases uncontrolled, then he would be far from me, and I from him.

Why is that?

Because he does not see The Teachings. Not seeing The Teachings, he does not see me.

But even if a Monk were to live one hundred leagues away, yet if he were to have no craving for sensual objects, were not strong in his passions, not evil in mind, uncorrupt in his decision making, his mindfulness established, alert, centered, his mind at singleness, and his sense bases well-restrained, then he would be near to me, and I to him.

Why is that?

Because he sees The Teachings. Seeing The Teachings, he sees me.

(Reference: SN 22.87)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how one who is learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings can “see him”.

This is a Teaching that was delivered upon people being saddened by The Buddha’s pending death understanding that they would no longer see him, those who were not yet Enlightened with craving/desire/attachment would have been sorrowful of the news of his pending death.

The Buddha attempts to calm his Students and delivers a Teaching to help them.

“Why do you want to see this foul body?” because he had already spent 45 years sharing The Teachings with countless people that they did not need his physical body to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to experience the results of an Enlightened mind. All they needed, he had already given them - The Teachings.

During The Buddha’s lifetime, he was not only sharing The Teachings but he was also deeply practicing The Teachings. In order to provide guidance to others on The Path to Enlightenment, a Teacher needs to be a deep Practitioner of their Teachings - a role model. The Buddha makes that clear when he says “one who sees me sees The Teachings”.

Being a deep Practitioner of his own Teachings helps others to observe The Teachings being practiced in real life through another being’s well developed life practice and can assist Students in developing their own practice. Parents who practice these Teachings closely can be a real life example and role model for their children to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings creating a peaceful home and family environment. Employers, community leaders, and others can create a wholesome environment for those close to them to more readily practice these wholesome Teachings leading to a more peaceful environment. Those around you will look to you as a role model just by the nature of your position and their relationship with you.

Having learned, reflected, and practiced The Teachings one will have deep wisdom to understand what are The Teachings that lead to Enlightenment. Having deeply understood The Teachings “one who sees The Teachings sees me”, thus, The Buddha shares “why do you want to see this foul body?”.

The Buddha’s physical body was not needed as if one deeply understood The Teachings through practicing The Teachings, they would be close to him observing him everywhere around them as these Natural Laws of Existence are observable in the world.

If one does not practice The Teachings there would “be craving for sensual pleasures, strong in his passions, evil in mind, corrupt in his decision making, his mindfulness muddled, unalert, uncentered, his mind scattered, and his sense bases uncontrolled, then he would be far from me, and I from him”.

But for those who deeply understand and are practicing The Teachings, there would be “no craving for sensual objects, were not strong in his passions, not evil in mind, uncorrupt in his decision making, his mindfulness established, alert, centered, his mind at singleness, and his sense bases well-restrained, then he would be near to me, and I to him”.

You do not need to guess or just believe if this man, Master Teacher Gotama Buddha, lived and existed or not. As you learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings on The Path to Enlightenment improving the condition of the mind, more and more you will see The Teachings everywhere around you as they are observable through the natural world around us. As you observe discontentedness caused by craving/desire/attachment, a Practitioner practicing loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, generosity, etc. and seeing the wholesome results experienced you will “see The Teachings. Seeing The Teachings, he sees me”.

We do not need The Buddha’s physical body to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings. Having spent 45 years to share The Teachings into the world, one only needs to seek guidance to discover the same truths as The Buddha acquiring wisdom to liberate the mind. Through the hard work with determination, dedication, and diligence of a Buddha, The Buddha points the way towards Enlightenment and all others must strive.

Upon death, a Buddha’s work is complete and it is up to the remaining Community to continue to share The Teachings into the world with all those who choose that they are finished with discontentedness and The Cycle of Rebirth being interested in laying down the burden to no longer experience the sorrow and displeasure of the unEnlightened mind.

Chapter 47

One Who Resides in The Teachings

Here, a Monk learns The Teachings - the discourses, mixed prose and verse, explanations, verses, inspired spoken phrases, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers - but he does not pass the day [solely] in learning The Teachings. He does not neglect seclusion but devotes himself to internal serenity of mind. It is in this way that a Monk is one who resides in The Teachings.

Thus, Monk, I have taught the one absorbed in learning, the one absorbed in communication, the one absorbed in recitation, the one absorbed in thought, and the one who resides in The Teachings.

Whatever should be done, Monks, by a compassionate Teacher out of compassion for his disciples, aspiring for their welfare, that I have done for you.

These are the feet of trees, Monks these are empty huts.

Meditate, Monks, do not be complacent, lest you regret it later.

This is my instruction to you.

(Reference: AN 5.71)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how one can learn The Teachings but to fully and deeply understand a Practitioner needs to spend time alone “devoted to internal serenity of mind”.

All too often, the discontent unEnlightened mind wants to fill its time with people, activities, and things to occupy it ensuring there is no boredom or loneliness setting in. Instead, The Buddha is suggesting that one spends time alone reflecting and developing “serenity of mind” including meditation.

If one only ever learned The Teachings intellectually but failed to reflect and implement The Teachings into a life practice, they would not be “residing in The Teachings”. A Practitioner needs to step away from time-to-time allowing what they learned to deeply soak into the mind, while using the acquired wisdom to practice The Teachings to acquire more wisdom, in the application of these Teachings in daily life.

Gotama Buddha encourages Students to “not be complacent” as in doing so, one would “regret it later”.

Gotama Buddha never used guilt, shame, or fear to encourage people to learn and practice his Teachings. His Teachings are to eliminate guilt, shame, and fear among other discontent feelings, so he would not be interested to produce guilt, shame, and fear in the mind of his Students.

He humbly accepted invitations to teach based on people’s interest to host him in their village or home. He held regular talks people could attend at Temples to learn and then apply The Teachings in their daily life.

He explains that he shared these Teachings “out of compassion for his disciples, aspiring for their welfare”.

What I feel he might be pointing to here as “regret it later” is that if one lacks the determination, dedication, and diligence to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings to include meditation, a Practitioner could surely “regret this later” through continuing to experience discontentedness and being reborn.

Here he is providing clear guidance that one needs to meditate in order to attain Enlightenment. One would not be able to attain Enlightenment without meditation. But, one would not be able to attain Enlightenment with only meditation either. A Practitioner will need to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings in daily life to be able to “reside in The Teachings”.

It is when the mind is fully soaked into The Teachings that a Practitioner can readily apply The Teachings in daily life and experience the results.

Can you explain complacency and how to eliminate it from the mind?

Complacency is a hindrance to Enlightenment and will obstruct an individual from attaining this mental state.

Complacency is experienced in the mind where it is dull, lethargic, and unmotivated, it will hinder a Practitioner from the attainment of Enlightenment.

Complacency includes: being disinterested to learn and practice The Teachings of The Buddha. This can be experienced as a disinterest to read books, come to classes, seek guidance from a Teacher, meditate, etc. The Buddha describes complacency to the point where, if the mind experiences an unwholesome thought/idea/feeling and the Practitioner does nothing about it, then the mind is complacent. What a Practitioner is taught to do on The Path to Enlightenment is to “cut off and let go” of all unwholesome thoughts/ideas/feelings, therefore, if one does nothing about an unwholesome thought/idea/feelings, the mind is complacent.

Again, this will hinder an individual from the attainment of Enlightenment, which is a purification of the mind.

If the mind is unEnlightened, then there is the fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as ignorance (unknowing of true reality) still in the mind. A Practitioner does not understand things as they truly are, the mind lacks wisdom of The Natural Laws of Existence. This is an all encompassing pollution of mind and is the last one that will be eliminated from the mind prior to Enlightenment.

As long as one's mind is unEnlightened, it does not have the needed wisdom to attain Enlightenment because it is not yet practicing The Teachings (i.e. The Natural Laws of Existence), thus, there is ignorance, confusion, misunderstanding, misperception, a lack of wisdom, or “the unknowing of true reality” still in the mind. Ignorance is eliminated through learning, reflecting (i.e. independently verifying), and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha to acquire wisdom. Wisdom is just the opposite of “the unknowing of true reality” and will eradicate the mind's fetter/taint/pollution of mind described as ignorance.

While ignorance is involved in all the fetters/taints/pollutions, the fetters that are directly involved in complacency are “Doubt” and “Sensual Desire”.

The mind doubts The Teachings of The Buddha and their ability to guide an individual to Enlightenment. And, the mind is having sensual desire, in that, it is holding on to certain things with craving/desire/attachment being unmotivated to learn and practice The Teachings while also indulging in unwholesome thoughts/ideas/feelings.

Doubt (Elimination of doubts about The Teachings and the ability of them to attain Enlightenment. Confidence in The Buddha, The Teachings, The Community, your Teacher, and your own ability to attain Enlightenment.)

Sensual desire (Elimination of the desire for pleasures from The Six Sense Bases: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind.)

There is a remedy, or solution to eliminate complacency, that can be implemented to ensure the mind is able to overcome this obstacle and continue its journey to Enlightenment.

The solution is to practice The Eight Fold Path to include, the Enlightenment factors of investigation, energy, and joy from The Seven Factors of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment factors of investigation, energy, and joy are just the opposites of the dullness, lethargy, and lack of motivation that exists in the mind during the time of complacency. Some older texts use the phrase “sloth and torpor” for complacency but, “complacency” is a much better way to understand this aspect of the unEnlightened mind with language we use today.

Investigation: (Dedicated examination, exploration, research, study, and questioning to learn The Teachings.)

Energy: (Effort, determination, ambition, initiative, motivation, vigor, and enthusiasm; willingness to do something.)

Joy: (Pleased and delighted not associated with any specific object; unconditioned gladness; the Practitioner is not attaining it by craving/desire/attachment.)

Meditate, Monks, do not be complacent, lest you will regret it later. This is my instruction to you. (Reference: SN 43.1)

You can learn more about complacency and its remedy using these resources.

Volume 1 - Chapter 3 and the recorded classes where I teach The Five Hindrances, this is one of those.

Free Books - The Words of The Buddha

<https://www.buddhadailywisdom.com/freebuddhabooks>

The Five Hindrances & The Seven Factors of Enlightenment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t6VKPshUn0>

Chapter 48

One Who Has Attained Nibbāna in This Very Life

Monk, if one teaches The Teachings for the purpose of fading away of strong feelings towards aging-and-death, for its fading away and elimination, one is fit to be called a Monk who is a speaker on The Teachings.

If one is practicing for the purpose of fading away of strong feelings towards aging-and-death, for its fading away and elimination, one is fit to be called a Monk who is practicing in accordance with The Teachings.

If, through fading away of strong feelings towards aging-and-death, through its fading away and elimination, one is liberated by non-clinging, one is fit to be called a Monk who has attained Nibbāna (Enlightenment) in this very life.

(In the case of birth, existence, clinging, craving, feeling, contact, The Six Sense Bases, name-and-form, consciousness, volitional formations (choices/decisions), and ignorance (unknowing of true reality), the discourses are identical except for the reference to each of the conditions of Dependent Origination.)

(Reference: SN 12.16)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares that one practicing with the purpose of “fading away of strong feelings” towards each of the conditions of Dependent Origination which explains the sequence of events that lead to birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, grief, pain, displeasure, and despair - essentially discontentedness - will be liberated by non-clinging.

Through training in these Teachings one unravels the chain of events that leads to birth, sickness, aging, and death. Not only has one eliminated discontentedness from the mind but they have also escaped The Cycle of Rebirth.

If one practices these Teachings and attains Enlightenment, “one is liberated by non-clinging” - essentially the elimination of craving/desire/attachment leads to the elimination of discontentedness. All mental longing with a strong eagerness is eliminated from the mind through training the mind. The unraveling of Dependent Origination has been successful and there is no longer any discontentedness or rebirth.

One who is “liberated by non-clinging” is one “who has attained Nibbāna” or Enlightenment.

Detailed explanation of Dependent Origination is available in this same book series found in Chapter 14 of the book “The First Stage of Enlightenment (Stream-Enterer)” (Volume 5).

Chapter 49

Three Urgent Tasks

Monks, there are these three urgent tasks of a farmer.

What three?

First, the farmer swiftly yet thoroughly plows the field and swiftly yet thoroughly harrows it. Next, he swiftly sows seeds. And then he swiftly irrigates and drains the field. These are the three urgent tasks of a farmer.

This farmer has no psychic potency or spiritual might [by which he could command]: Let my crops start growing today! Let them mature tomorrow! Let them bear grain the day after tomorrow! But, with the change of seasons, there comes a time when the crops grow, mature, and bear grain.

So too, Monks, there are these three urgent tasks of a Monk.

What three?

The undertaking of the training in the higher virtuous behavior (moral conduct), the undertaking of the training in the higher mind (mental discipline), and the undertaking of the training in the higher wisdom. These are the three urgent tasks of a Monk.

This Monk has no psychic potency or spiritual might [by which he could command]: Let my mind be liberated from the taints by non-clinging today, or tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow! Rather, as this Monk trains in the higher virtuous behavior (moral conduct), the higher mind (mental discipline), and the higher wisdom, there comes an occasion when his mind is liberated from the taints by non-clinging.

(Reference: AN 3.92)

During Gotama Buddha's lifetime, many of his Students were very familiar with farming so we see many analogies he shares in The Teachings that can relate to a common person during that time in history. Not only does he use stories from the farming life but also training a horse and various stories related to animal life.

These are relatable references that his Students would easily understand and help them in learning and retaining The Teachings, so they could apply The Teachings in their daily life.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares the development of the mind related to the development of crops on a farm. A farmer would plow the field creating trenches or

“harrows” that would receive the seeds. Next, the farmer would “sow seeds” or plant the seeds. Lastly, a farmer would “irrigate” or water the field helping the crop to grow.

The Eight Fold Path, which is The Path to Enlightenment, is categorized into three (3) unique sections. While there are eight (8) individual steps to learn, reflect, practice and master to attain Enlightenment, these can be categorized into three (3) distinct sections.

The Eight Fold Path

8.) Right Concentration	Mental Discipline
7.) Right Mindfulness	
6.) Right Effort	
5.) Right Livelihood	Moral Conduct
4.) Right Action	
3.) Right Speech	
2.) Right Intention	Wisdom
1.) Right View	

Gotama Buddha refers to these three (3) categories of wisdom, moral conduct, and mental discipline as the “three urgent tasks”. “Training in the higher virtuous behavior (moral conduct), the undertaking of the training in the higher mind (mental discipline), and the undertaking of the training in the higher wisdom” is The Buddha referencing The Eight Fold Path.

Just like a farmer will develop and cultivate their fields, a Practitioner of these Teachings will need to develop and cultivate the mind in these three categories of The Eight Fold Path - The Buddha’s core and central Teaching.

He explains just like a farmer cannot instantly grow a crop to bring results “today, or tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow”, a Practitioner will need to dedicate time, effort, energy, and resources to gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress.

While the translation of this Teaching uses the word “urgent” there is no such thing as “hurry up and get to Enlightenment”. It is not running The Path with The Buddha nor crawling The Path with The Buddha, but instead, walking The Path with The Buddha.

A sluggish approach to learning, reflecting, and practicing these Teachings would not produce the results of an Enlightened mind. But also, approaching and pursuing The Path to Enlightenment with craving/desire/attachment with the expectation or wanting immediate results would cause the mind to be discontent.

So, the solution is to train the mind towards Enlightenment by practicing “the middle way” where there is no sluggish complacency and no longing with a strong eagerness but instead motivation, determination, diligence, and enthusiasm with Enlightenment as a goal, interest or objective. Progressing in this way will produce results.

Chapter 50

The Tathāgata Resides Compassionate Towards All Living Beings

‘Venerable Sir, doesn’t The Perfectly Enlightened One reside compassionate towards all living beings?’

Yes, Headman, The Tathāgata resides compassionate towards all living beings.

‘Then why is it, Venerable Sir, that The Perfectly Enlightened One teaches The Teachings thoroughly to some, yet not so thoroughly to others?’

Well then, Headman, I will question you about this. Answer as you see fit. What do you think, Headman? Suppose a farmer here had three fields: one excellent, one of middling quality, and one inferior-rough, salty, with bad ground. What do you think, Headman? If that farmer aspires to sow seed, where would he sow it first: in the excellent field, in the field of middling quality, or in the field that was inferior, the one that was rough, salty, with bad ground?

‘If Venerable Sir, that farmer aspires to sow seed, he would sow it in the excellent field. Having sown seed there, he would next sow seed in the field of middling quality. Having sown seed there he might or might not sow seed in the field that was inferior, the one that was rough, salty, with bad ground. For what reason? Because at least it can be used as fodder for the cattle.’

Headman, just like the field that is excellent are the male and female Ordained Practitioners to me, I teach them The Teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing; I reveal the holy life that is perfectly complete and pure.

For what reason?

Because they reside with me as their island, with me as their shelter, with me as their protector, with me as their refuge.

Then, Headman, just like the field of middling quality are the male and female Household Practitioners to me.

To them too I teach The Teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing: I reveal the holy life that is perfectly complete and pure.

For what reason?

Because they reside with me as their island, as their shelter, with me as their protector, with me as their refuge.

Then, Headman, just like that field that is inferior, rough, salty, with bad ground are the Ascetics, Brāhmins, and wanderers of other communities to me. Yet to them too I teach The Teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing; I reveal the holy life that is perfectly complete and pure.

For what reason?

Because if they understand even a single sentence, that will lead to their welfare and peacefulness for a long time.

(Reference: SN 42.7)

Here again, we have another story connected to The Buddha's Teachings from the life of a farmer that the average person would understand during the lifetime of The Buddha. He is asked a question from a "Headman" or leader of a village, town, city, or community.

The Headman is curious why The Buddha shares Teachings with different groups of people in different ways. Rather than just give him an answer, The Buddha uses questions to help the Headman see the approach he uses is the same as him tapping into the Headman's existing wisdom so the Headman could essentially teach himself.

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, he shares how he is compassionate towards all beings Teaching all those who are interested to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings. But he does see a distinction in the groups of people and how thoroughly he chooses to share The Teachings.

A Buddha would be interested in the objective of ensuring his Teachings continue in the world, upon his death, with the guidance of well learned and knowledgeable individuals who are dedicated to see The Teachings continue. He viewed the Ordained Practitioners as the most dedicated to this goal. After all, they have made the biggest commitment to learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings through leaving the household life and entering the lowest livelihood to be a roaming and wandering Ascetic. This was a clear sign to Gotama Buddha that they were committed to progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Next, he viewed the Household Practitioners as the "middling quality" or middle quality.

While Household Practitioners did attain Enlightenment during the lifetime of The Buddha and after his death, Household Practitioners have many obstacles to overcome. During the lifetime of Gotama Buddha, Household Practitioners were very occupied with countless tasks just to sustain life. To acquire the needed food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care required much effort which left little time for learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings.

Today, we exist during a time where modern conveniences have made it easier for us to acquire the needed supplies to sustain life. While Household Practitioners still have obstacles to overcome, so do Ordained Practitioners. While there is one set of benefits and challenges to the ordained lifestyle, there is another set of benefits and challenges associated with the household lifestyle. Today, in my opinion, it is much more likely for a Household Practitioners to attain Enlightenment than even during the lifetime of Gotama Buddha due to our ability to more readily acquire the needed supplies to sustain life, thus, providing more time to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings.

Lastly, The Buddha viewed “the Ascetics, Brāhmins, and wanderers of other communities” as the lowest quality Students as their dedication and commitment was not to attaining Enlightenment through The Teachings he shared but instead to other communities outside of The Buddha’s Community that he was cultivating with these Teachings.

There were others during his lifetime that felt it was their Teachings that would lead to Enlightenment. As we know, it was The Buddha’s Teachings that have stood the test of time and now 2,500 years later we are still preserving his Teachings for the world.

Gotama Buddha also shared that if one were to “understand even a single sentence, that will lead to their welfare and peacefulness for a long time” as he knew his Teachings are those that lead to complete liberation of mind, to Enlightenment, because he was experiencing the results of an Enlightened mind clearly understanding exactly what it took to attain the same mental state.

He shared these Teachings with countless people and left them with individuals who took care to ensure these Teachings were preserved, in such a way, that they are now reaching you.

Why did he dedicate his lifetime to such an ambitious goal?

He shares that with us as he opened the conversation with the Headman, “The Tathāgata resides compassionate towards all living beings”. As a wise Practitioner interested to attain Enlightenment, you should also reside compassionate towards all living beings.

Chapter 51

Four Observable Benefits for One Who Learned The Teachings by Ear

Monks, when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view, four benefits are to be observed.

What four?

Here, a Monk masters The Teachings: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired spoken phrases, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. He has learned those Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view. He passes away muddled in mind and is reborn into a certain group of heavenly beings. There, the happy ones recite passages of The Teachings to him. The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

This is the first benefit to be observed when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

Again, a Monk masters The Teachings: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verse inspired spoken phrases, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. He has practiced those Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view. He passes away muddled in mind and is reborn into a certain group of heavenly beings. There, the happy ones do not recite passages of The Teachings to him, but a Monk with psychic potency who has attained mastery of mind teaches The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings. It occurs to him: This is The Teachings and discipline in which I formerly lived the spiritual life. The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

Suppose a man were skilled in the sound of a kettledrum. While traveling along a highway, he might hear the sound of a kettledrum and would not be at all confused or uncertain about the sound; rather, he would conclude: That is the sound of a kettledrum. So too, a Monk masters The Teachings ... The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

This is the second benefit to be observed when one has followed The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

Again, a Monk masters The Teachings: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired spoken phrases, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. He has learned those Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view. He passes away muddled in mind and is reborn into a certain group of heavenly beings. There, the happy ones do not recite passages of The Teachings to him, nor does a Monk with psychic potency who has attained mastery of mind teach The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings. However, a young heavenly being teaches The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings. It occurs to him: These are The Teachings and discipline in which I formerly lived the spiritual life. The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

Suppose a man were skilled in the sound of a conch. While traveling along a highway, he might hear the sound of a conch and he would not be at all confused or uncertain about the sound; rather, he would conclude: That is the sound of a conch. So too, a Monk masters The Teachings ... The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

This is the third benefit to be observed when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

Again, a Monk masters The Teachings: discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired spoken phrases, quotations, birth stories, amazing accounts, and questions-and-answers. He has practiced those Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view. He passes away muddled in mind and is reborn into a certain group of heavenly beings. There, the happy ones do not recite passages of The Teachings to him, nor does a Monk with psychic potency who has attained mastery of mind teach The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings, nor does a young heavenly being teach The Teachings to an assembly of heavenly beings. However, one being who has been spontaneously reborn reminds another who has been spontaneously reborn: Do you remember, dear sir? Do you remember where we formerly lived the spiritual life? The other says: I remember, dear sir. I remember... The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

Suppose there were two friends who had played together in the mud. By chance they would meet one another later in life. Then one friend would say to the other: Do you remember this, friend? Do you remember that, friend? And the other would say: I remember, friend. I remember. So too, a Monk masters The Teachings... The arising of his memory is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction.

This is the fourth benefit to be observed when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

These are the four benefits to be observed when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view.

(Reference: AN 4.191)

In this Teaching from Gotama Buddha, we can observe the method of learning during The Buddha's lifetime. "When one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view" is how Students would learn with him over 2,500 years ago.

Gotama Buddha shared The Teachings orally and nothing was written down during his lifetime. It was not until later, after his death, that it was decided to capture The Teachings in written format.

An Enlightened mind has such a high degree of memory that all the Enlightened beings who had attained Enlightenment during Gotama Buddha's lifetime were committed to recite what they remembered and to document The Teachings for future generations.

The spoken words of The Buddha were recited by his more developed Students and captured for the ultimate development of what we refer to as The Pāli Canon or The Pāli Text.

"The Words of The Buddha" book series is comprised of those spoken words that came from the mind of Gotama Buddha, into the minds of his Students, produced countless Enlightened minds, remembered for the duration of The Buddha's lifetime, then recited and captured to eventually end up in The Pāli Canon and into your hands at this moment.

These Teachings have been preserved throughout history because they work. These Teachings in the format of this book series provides a method of learning that was not available during the lifetime of The Buddha. Today, you have access and we can distribute these Teachings worldwide in an instant with the ability to reference these Teachings throughout your life as you develop your life practice.

Today, recitation of The Teachings "word for word" is not needed. Instead, one needs to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings for deep understanding.

Gotama Buddha shared this same method of learning during his lifetime.

1.) Learn: “when one has learned The Teachings by ear, recited them verbally”.

2.) Reflect: “examined them with the mind”.

3.) Practice: “penetrated them well by view”.

While today we have books, videos, podcasts, and other methods of sharing The Teachings, it is important to also learn directly with a Teacher in an environment where a Teacher can verbally explain The Teachings and you have the opportunity to ask questions for clarification.

It would be impossible for someone to read a book, watch videos, listen to a podcast, and/or use other resources in a way that would produce an Enlightened mind without any interaction with The Community to include a Teacher.

There are many questions and points of clarification that are needed along The Path to Enlightenment. There are many challenges and having a relationship with a Teacher will allow you to gain insight through seeking guidance.

As one does, they come to develop the mind in this life and have an improved ability to attain Enlightenment experiencing the life changing results of developing one’s life practice with guidance from a Teacher.

If one applies effort towards learning and does not attain Enlightenment, like those described in this Teaching, then there is an improved rebirth for one’s next existence.

The goal is to attain Enlightenment as an Arahant and to no longer experience rebirth into a new existence. But, should that not occur, one will have gained the benefits of learning, reflecting, and practicing in this life. In fact, you may have learned, reflected, and practiced in a previous life and this is now part of your continuation of The Path to Enlightenment in this current life.

In this Teaching, The Buddha is describing four unique situations where one who has been learning, reflecting, and practicing yet the mind is still “muddled” having not attained Enlightenment, died, and was reborn into the heavenly realm. But the heavenly realm is not the goal of this path as Enlightenment is the goal where one has escaped The Cycle of Rebirth. If one is reborn into the heavenly realm, there is still existence and one has the potential to then fall down into another realm from the heavenly realm.

Each of the situations described in this Teaching involves a being who learns, reflects, and practices The Teachings during a human birth, is reborn into the heavenly realm, continues their learning in the heavenly realm, and then with “the arising of his memory [being] is sluggish, but then that being quickly reaches distinction” or in other words, quickly reaches Enlightenment from the heavenly realm.

Understanding the individual situations described in this Teaching is not necessarily important for one's progression to Enlightenment. The important lesson being shared here is that one's efforts to learn, reflect, and practice are moving the mind towards Enlightenment in this very life but if for some reason one does not attain Enlightenment, then, all is not lost. With improved development of the mind, a Practitioner will be able to experience an improved rebirth and continue their progress from within that new existence.

Learning Resources for Further Exploration

Youtube Video(s)

(Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 41-51)

<https://youtu.be/1y0rPCPElqI>

Podcast(s)

Ep. 211 - (Pali Canon in English Study Group) - Walking The Path with The Buddha - Volume 2 - (Chapter 41-51)

<https://anchor.fm/buddhadailywisdom/episodes/Ep--211---Pali-Canon-in-English-Study-Group---Walking-The-Path-with-The-Buddha---Volume-2---Chapter-41-51-e1758ko>

Now that you have completed reading (Volume 2) of this book series and may decide to read this book multiple times, I would like to take a moment to personally “thank you” for your determination, dedication, and diligence to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of The Buddha on The Path to Enlightenment.

The time, effort, energy, and resources that you devote to this path are serving to help you and countless other beings. As you choose to learn and practice these Teachings, you will significantly reduce then eliminate any harm that you are putting into the world through your unknowing of true reality. The unEnlightened mind does not understand what it does not understand.

You are now applying time, effort, energy, and resources to improving the condition of the mind, the condition of your life, and, thus, the condition of the world through investigating The Teachings to acquire wisdom. The world becomes a better place when we each individually choose to improve our own life practice taking responsibility for our own intentions, speech, actions, and livelihood while improving our wisdom and mental discipline.

I admire individuals who choose to walk towards harmlessness. I admire individuals who choose to realize there is a better way of life and create that better way of life for themselves through seeking guidance. And, I admire individuals who do not shrink back from the struggle to move the mind towards Enlightenment when the natural tendency might be to remain complacent.

Why have I chosen to share these Teachings with you?

“That it may be for the benefit and peacefulness of the multitude (many people), out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and peacefulness of heavenly beings and humans”. (Gotama Buddha)

“Because if they understand even a single sentence, that will lead to their welfare and peacefulness for a long time”. (Gotama Buddha)

May you discover the freedom associated with a mind that is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy permanently - the Enlightened mind.

As you need help to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings, you are welcome to seek guidance which is available openly and freely to “all beings”.

Author



David Roylance is a dedicated Practitioner and Teacher of Gotama Buddha's Teachings who has been part of the Thai community since 2001. He visited Thailand for the first time in 2002 and brought the Traditional Thai Healing Arts back to the United States of America to share with people in the Western World.

His Traditional Thai Healing Arts centers, located in the Washington DC area, provided traditional Thai healing arts to clients and educational opportunities to Students to explore the Thai healing arts, Thai culture, and The Teachings of Gotama Buddha. David is a published author with books on the topics of Traditional Thai Healing Arts and The Path That Leads to Enlightenment.

David has taught Gotama Buddha's Teachings since 2005 in the United States of America. In 2015, he closed his businesses and relocated to Chiang Mai, Thailand to be closer to the Thai culture and the Thai Community of Buddhist Practitioners.

David shares Gotama Buddha's Teachings with Household Practitioners and Ordained Practitioners in Chiang Mai, Thailand and around the world through courses, retreats, and special events providing guidance to help people attain Enlightenment - a peaceful, calm, serene, and content mind with joy.

For more information on participating in courses, retreats, special events or to invite these Teachings to your learning venue, use the contact information below:

Teacher - David Roylance
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www.BuddhaDailyWisdom.com

Restoration of The Buddha's Teachings

The Path to Enlightenment

The Buddha taught over 2,500 years ago. He taught The Path to Enlightenment guiding countless beings to a mental state that is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy that is permanent, where the mind has eliminated 100% of all discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc.

Immediately following the death of The Buddha (i.e. Gotama Buddha), The Teachings were shining in the world continuing to guide countless people to Enlightenment. But, over the course of many generations, just as Gotama Buddha predicted, people's understanding of his Teachings gradually diminished due to modifications and adjustments made by people after him. The modifications made to his Teachings, handed down through oral transmission, have made it increasingly difficult for human beings to attain Enlightenment.

The goal of David's Teachings is to root the learning and practice he shares in "The Words of The Buddha" based on The Teachings that existed during the lifetime of Gotama Buddha, so that countless beings can now attain Enlightenment based on the original Path to Enlightenment discovered and declared by Gotama Buddha.

David does this through connecting what he teaches to the largest most complete source of Teachings from Gotama Buddha - The Pāli Canon. The Pāli Canon is the original source text of The Teachings from Gotama Buddha as spoken by him during his lifetime.

David has spent countless hours dedicated to restoring The Words of The Buddha by updating a significant portion of the translations of Gotama Buddha's Teachings from The Pāli Canon. He now offers several resources for Students to learn, reflect, and practice The Path to Enlightenment to experience the results of an Enlightened mind.

David offers books, audiobooks, videos, podcasts, online learning programs, personal guidance, and retreats without any requirement for financial support. All the work that is being done is offered openly and freely for all beings without any requirement to provide any financial support. David accepts donations but Students are not required to provide donations for any work that he does in supporting them on The Path to Enlightenment.

David does not request donations and instead, just accepts whatever is offered to him, if anything at all.

His dedication to sharing these Teachings is not motivated by finances. He shares openly and freely with everyone who has a sincere interest in learning and practicing The Path to Enlightenment.

Ultimately, David plans to preserve The Teachings of The Buddha in a format that is easily, readily, and openly accessible to anyone in the world while offering support to learn, reflect, and practice to experience the results of the Enlightened mind.

His plan is to guide countless people to Enlightenment during his lifetime and leave a Community of Enlightened beings who can continue to share The Teachings long after his death. Through developing a Community of Enlightened beings and preserving The Path to Enlightenment in resources that are easily, readily, and openly accessible to anyone in the world, David is revealing the hidden Teachings of Gotama Buddha and doing the best he can to remove any obstacles one might have to learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings, allowing countless people to experience the results of an Enlightened mind.

Upon his death, David predicts that his closest Student, his son and a continued lineage of Teachers, will share these same Teachings continuing to support and grow The Community of Enlightened beings long into the future - for the next 1,000 years.

These efforts will culminate into restoring The Path to Enlightenment back into the world so that all of humanity can experience Enlightenment evolving the human species to one where every being has the opportunity to attain Enlightenment creating “heaven on earth”.

The Goal

An Entire Species of Enlightened Beings

Having experienced Enlightenment and knowing the peace, calm, serenity, and contentedness with joy that comes with having attained Enlightenment, a Buddha's goal is to share his Teachings worldwide so that "all beings" can experience Enlightenment.

The Enlightened mind no longer experiences any discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, anxiety, stress, etc.

All discontent feelings have been eliminated 100% from the Enlightened mind (i.e. all suffering is eliminated).

An Enlightened mind will have loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, and generosity among many other wholesome qualities.

Can you imagine an entire world where all human beings have liberated their mind to no longer experience these discontent feelings and are practicing wholesome qualities of mind at all times?

With "The Buddha" (Gotama Buddha) having attained this permanent mental state of Enlightenment on his own as The Perfectly Enlightened Buddha, he would have known that through his dedicated and persistent pursuit to Enlightenment, he had acquired the wisdom needed to guide "all beings" to this same mental state.

However, his teaching career of 45 years would not be enough time to share his Teachings worldwide. He knew, that it would require many centuries for his Teachings to reach all parts of the world. During his lifetime, travel of people and information was limited based on several constraints.

Today, we are in a unique time in history where these same constraints have been eliminated. A time when people and information are able to travel around the world in an instant.

Not only can information travel quickly but all of humanity is slowly coming to the point where there is a common language spoken around the world - the English language.

Criteria exist today that did not exist during Gotama Buddha's lifetime that make now the perfect time for all of humanity to gradually attain Enlightenment realizing a better existence.

- People can travel worldwide.
- Information can be shared worldwide in an instant.
- Commonly spoken language among a large percentage of the worldwide population and this is only growing.

These criteria did not exist during the lifetime of Gotama Buddha and it is only now that the world has come into an age where his original goal is realistically possible.

But, during Gotama Buddha's lifetime it seems they had something that we may not have....

The people during Gotama Buddha's lifetime had perseverance and dedication to learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings to realize the results of experiencing the Enlightened mind. They were not afraid of hard work.

With our modern day conveniences, I am unsure how many people are willing to apply their determination, dedication, and diligence with time, effort, energy, and resources towards The Path to Enlightenment with the goal to experience the Enlightened mind.

When a being decides they are finished with the sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fear, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, etc., that is the time when one can turn towards The Teachings and goal of experiencing Enlightenment.

Through each individual deciding to learn and practice The Teachings of Gotama Buddha, as a collective world, our species will gradually evolve. We evolve to a higher consciousness where we train the mind to not harm others through our intentions, speech, nor actions.

Through each individual deciding to learn, reflect, and practice The Teachings of Gotama Buddha, each person benefits and we all benefit as there will be less and less harm in the world.

Through individuals deciding to focus on developing a comprehensive approach to learning and practicing The Teachings of Gotama Buddha with guidance from a Teacher, your life drastically improves and the entire world improves essentially creating "heaven on earth".

We do not need to "fix" the world. That is not the problem. The problem is the unEnlightened mind does not understand The Natural Laws of Existence and it is quite a struggle to live in a world that one does not understand.

Through learning and practicing The Teachings of Gotama Buddha, a Practitioner comes to deeply understand The Natural Laws of Existence to acquire wisdom that will end the struggles and misery one may face on a regular basis.

Are you ready to apply determination, dedication, and diligence with time, effort, energy, and resources towards The Path to Enlightenment with the goal to experience Enlightenment?

If one enjoys anger, sadness, boredom, loneliness, resentment, etc., there is nothing to do.

But, if you are interested to eliminate these unwelcomed feelings from the mind, then I suggest you turn towards The Path to Enlightenment and apply your dedication and diligence to learning, reflecting, and practicing The Teachings of Gotama Buddha.

And then, as all of humanity gradually experiences Enlightenment we will have accomplished “the goal”.

“An entire species of Enlightened beings”.

Why Have I Decided to Teach The Path to Enlightenment as Taught by Gotama Buddha?

I have chosen to share these Teachings out of compassion for the world.

Compassion (Pāli: karuṇā) is concern for the misfortunes of others.

And due to this compassion, it is important to share Teachings that are based in wisdom, not belief.

There are countless traditions and ways of sharing those traditions throughout the world. All of these, in one form or another, are essentially sharing to cultivate and practice 1.) Universal Love for All Beings 2.) Do No Harm and 3.) Be a Good Moral Person.

However, the way each tradition is shared and the clarity of those teachings is unique to each tradition.

The Path to Enlightenment as taught by Gotama Buddha (“The Buddha”) over 2,500 years ago as documented in The Pāli Canon, is the most clear, concise, and precise Teachings I have ever encountered that leads exactly where he said they do, to Enlightenment.

The Enlightened mind is peaceful, calm, serene, and content with joy - permanently. The Enlightened mind will no longer experience any discontent feelings such as sadness, anger, frustration, irritation, annoyance, guilt, shame, fears, boredom, loneliness, shyness, jealousy, resentment, stress, anxiety, etc.

This is accomplished through not believing The Teachings of The Buddha but instead, through learning, reflecting, and practicing to discover the truth. The mind can be trained to eliminate all the conditions that are causing it to be stuck in the unEnlightened state. Through eliminating the pollution of mind by training the mind, one can experience liberation of mind, freedom from strong feelings, peace, Enlightenment.

The Buddha’s Teachings are the only Teachings that I have encountered that do not rely on belief. With belief, one does not know what is true or false because they are just believing. Instead, Gotama Buddha’s Teachings are shared in such a way that, a Practitioner can investigate and examine them to determine the truth which leads to wisdom and thus, Enlightenment. If one was to only believe The Teachings of The Buddha, they could not acquire wisdom nor attain Enlightenment.

These Teachings are perfectly suited for today's society where there is a proliferation of misinformation and untruths. These Teachings, with guidance from a Teacher, guide a Practitioner to independently discover the truth through deeply investigating The Natural Laws of Existence (i.e. The Teachings of The Buddha). Through doing this inner work on The Path to Enlightenment, one can discover that these Teachings are the solution to the challenges we experience in the world and the solutions of how to heal from what hurt us so that we never need to hurt again. The mind can completely and entirely eliminate 100% of all discontent feelings once it is Enlightened.

This cannot be accomplished through belief.

Instead, a Practitioner needs to be determined, dedicated, and diligent to doing the inner work to develop the mind and progress towards the Enlightened mental state by acquiring wisdom.

As far as I have discovered, there are no other teachings on the planet that can guide an individual to the complete elimination of discontent feelings through independently verifying the teachings to acquire wisdom. The Buddha did something very unique during his lifetime that no other person or Teacher has accomplished.

He independently attained Enlightenment, dedicated the rest of his life to sharing his independently discovered Teachings guiding countless people to Enlightenment, and he left his Teachings in such a condition that countless more people have attained Enlightenment after his death. He meets all the criteria of a true Buddha. Gotama Buddha was a true Buddha.

My work during this life has been to rediscover these Teachings, in such a way, that they can now be shared worldwide in the international language of English so that countless people all throughout the world can attain Enlightenment during this lifetime and after my death.

The only way to accomplish this goal is to share Teachings that are not based in belief but instead, are based in independently verifiable truth so that a Practitioner can acquire wisdom.

These Teachings are clear, concise, and precise. They invite investigation and examination. Through doing this work, one can gradually train the mind to gradually practice these Teachings and gradually progress to Enlightenment. As discontentedness is gradually diminished and then eliminated from the mind, one can see the truth for themselves that these Teachings work to guide one to Enlightenment.

These Teachings lead exactly where Gotama Buddha said they do, to Enlightenment, and through each individual choosing to attain Enlightenment, humanity will evolve the human species and at the same time create “heaven on earth”.

Why Have I Decided to Reside and Teach in Thailand in Order to Restore The Teachings of The Buddha Back into Humanity and Create “Heaven on Earth”?

1.) Largest Population of Theravada Buddhist Practitioners Anywhere in the World: Thailand is the largest population of Theravada Buddhist Practitioners and Teachers anywhere in the world. Theravada Buddhism considers The Pāli Canon to be the original source Teachings of The Buddha in The Words of The Buddha. Theravada Buddhism teaches the importance of not changing The Teachings of The Buddha and practicing The Path to Enlightenment as a Buddha has taught, without any modifications.

The Pāli Canon is an important text that should not be believed to be the true Teachings of The Buddha but instead, one can learn, reflect, and practice to independently verify The Teachings to acquire wisdom observing the truth in The Teachings as the mind awakens and discontent feelings are gradually diminished and ultimately eliminated.

Once I dedicate the remaining time of this life sharing these Teachings to restore them back into the world, the Thai people and all other diligent Students who choose to learn with me will not ever allow these Teachings to be changed, modified, degraded, or lost over time. The Thai people and diligent Students are well aware that since the lifetime of Gotama Buddha, that is what has occurred and, through having these Teachings restored during the remaining time of this life, the Thai people and diligent Students will not allow this to occur again.

The Thai people will support these Teachings and ensure they continue to be offered in the world for the benefit of “all beings” while being hosted in Thailand and supported by dedicated Students from many international locations.

These Teachings have existed in Thailand for 800-1200 years and they have received significant support from countless people over many generations. The Thai people understand just how impactful The Teachings of The Buddha are to their society and for all of humanity. The Thai people can observe my dedication and commitment to sharing these Teachings, and where possible, they will support me in sharing these Teachings throughout Thailand and throughout the world.

Due to these Teachings existing in Thailand for approximately 800-1200 years, there is a significant amount of infrastructure already created through over 30,000-40,000 Temples where local Thai people and visitors to Thailand can actively learn, reflect, and practice these Teachings to acquire wisdom and then integrate them into their lives. The Temple and Ordained Practitioner infrastructure is not isolated to only Thailand but extends throughout the world and is readily accessible to the benefit of “all beings”. The Thai people have laid the groundwork for these Teachings to now be shared worldwide through the Temple and Ordained Practitioner foundation and infrastructure that has been created over multiple generations.

Thailand is a favorite destination for international travelers with many people visiting Thailand to gain exposure and understanding of these Teachings allowing them to be learned and then practiced “worldwide”. There is an international audience that regularly visits Thailand who can learn these Teachings to then return back to their home country where these Teachings will be able to take root within all international societies. As these Teachings flourish around the world, Thailand has the knowledge and resources to support all of humanity to develop a Temple and Ordained Practitioner infrastructure that can be created within each individual country based on the interest of each country to more deeply integrate these Teachings into their local communities.

2.) Students Have the Ability to Learn and Practice Among Millions of Practitioners: One aspect of learning and practicing The Teachings of The Buddha that will aid one’s development and progress towards the attainment of Enlightenment is, to be part of a Community of Practitioners and Teachers that can provide guidance for gradual training and gradual practice to experience gradual progress on The Path to Enlightenment.

Through me residing and teaching in Thailand, Students have the opportunity to live in a Community of Practitioners and Teachers who are deeply committed to these Teachings and can serve as a role model for Students to gain deeper understanding of how to practice these Teachings in everyday life - even if on a semi-temporary basis during short visits to learn.

Through Students traveling to Thailand to learn while being surrounded by millions of Practitioners, they can more readily absorb how one might choose to integrate these Teachings into their daily life through observing how the people of Thailand live with countless nationalities residing peacefully and harmoniously with each other throughout the Kingdom of Thailand. Students will not only be able to learn these Teachings in a classroom setting at a Temple but, they will also experience day-to-day interactions with people who are choosing to deeply practice these Teachings creating “real life lessons” in a “classroom without walls”.

The entire Kingdom of Thailand can serve as a real life classroom environment where these Teachings are readily practiced and observable by those who choose to visit this Kingdom. I often refer to Thailand as “heaven on earth”.

3.) Can Live With Minimal Expenses: To be able to offer these Teachings at “no cost” I needed to find a location where I could reside with minimal expenses. This allows me to live based on donations rather than charging Students a price for the time, effort, energy, and resources that I expend to share these Teachings worldwide. This allows me to serve the widest audience possible without a need to require payment for my services and The Teachings that are shared.

The basic necessities to live life are readily available and are offered at a minimal cost in Thailand. This provides me the ability to live a basic lifestyle from donations shared by Students. I am able to purchase food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care at a relatively nominal cost. And, services that I might need to support the development of learning resources are also readily available at a nominal cost.

Whether it be an audio studio to record an audiobook, printing services, technology, classroom supplies, or a full range of other needs to support the continued sharing of these Teachings, Thailand offers these at a nominal price so that there is the best utilization of any and all donations received.

As a result, I am able to help any and all beings regardless of their financial situation through creating a lifestyle where I only need basic necessities to survive and those are provided at a nominal cost while being supported by donations that are fully utilized by purchasing goods and services that are made available at a reasonable price.

4.) Healthy Environment to Live Life and Work: A wise choice for a place to live and teach would need to include a healthy food supply, weather, environment, and lifestyle. All of these are readily available in Thailand which is able to support me in leading as healthy of a lifestyle as possible.

The food in Thailand is healthy and readily available. There are many fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, nuts, seeds, and other foods that are a regular part of the Thai food offerings and readily accessible among countless fresh food markets. This allows me to ingest quality food that is supportive to a long and healthy life, thus, being able to support the learning of many Students for as long as possible due to an elongated duration of life.

Thailand's weather and environment provides the least impact to the physical body without significant weather changes or weather events that can be taxing to one's physical health.

The Thai economy is conducive to living a balanced lifestyle that supports a significant amount of time with family and friends. A work-life balance is highly understood, appreciated, supported, and straight forward to create while living in Thailand. I am able to remain dedicated and determined in my work life while also being dedicated to quality time within our immediate family. This creates the very best environment to ensure consistent health and longevity of life while enjoying a fulfilling life.

5.) Can Share Teachings Within Thailand Throughout the Day and Can Share Teachings with the Rest of The World in the Mornings and Evenings:

Through living and sharing these Teachings from Thailand and needing minimal sleep, I am able to help countless people throughout the day based on the Thai timezone, while helping countless people in other timezones during the early morning hours and evenings. This allows me to be effective at sharing these Teachings around the clock and throughout the world without any limitations based on restrictive timezones.

The timezone in Thailand is favorable to allowing me to share these Teachings worldwide without limitations based on the time of day. I can be helpful from morning, afternoon, and evening where there are Students who are readily interested to learn - whether in-person or online.

6.) Students Have Easy Access to Visas to Gain Access to Classes, Courses, and Retreats: To be successful at sharing these Teachings worldwide, in-person learning is ideal. While there is much that can be learned online and that is one way to be able to share these Teachings, there is no better way to develop your life practice than to learn through in-person access to a Teacher.

Through residing and teaching in Thailand, Students from all over the world have easy access to classes, courses, and retreats from within Thailand due to easy access to visas and as a result, me as their Teacher. Thailand does not have restrictive visa requirements that would bar people from certain countries which would inhibit "all beings" from gaining access to these Teachings.

Instead, Thailand is open and accessible to a wide majority of the world and where needed, I am able to travel.

I live in Chiang Mai, Thailand which is an international destination for countless people around the world. I live within a 4000 km distance to fifty percent (50%) of the world's population. This means that half of the world's population is a short drive or plane ride away. This creates the ability for a large majority of humanity to more easily gain access to these Teachings. And, where needed, I am able to easily travel to all other parts of the world and teach online.

People often travel to Thailand for the sole purpose of learning The Teachings of The Buddha on The Path to Enlightenment. So, by sharing these Teachings from within Thailand, there are countless people who are coming here specifically to learn and practice in the exact location where I reside and teach.

In conclusion, through residing and teaching in Thailand as a “home-base”, I am able to readily share these Teachings worldwide and work towards the restoration of The Teachings of The Buddha back into humanity so that countless people can attain Enlightenment during this lifetime and after my death.

Thailand is the perfect location for these Teachings to be shared and to serve as a “home-base” or “headquarters” for the international community to be invited and welcomed with “open arms”. There is no other location on earth that could provide for a better location to share these important Teachings and to then be preserved for future generations.

The Kingdom is here in Thailand and ready to support you in the development of your life practice towards the attainment of Enlightenment so that we can all create “heaven on earth”.

The Teachings are hosted in the east and visible in the west.

They are readily available to you and there will be a period of 1,000 years that they will “shine in the world” for all those who choose to learn, reflect, and practice to experience the peace and joy of the Enlightened mind. Then, with all of us doing the work towards developing our own individual practice of these Teachings, they will never again diminish, be degraded, or lost. Once restored, these Teachings can continue to support humanity for the rest of time.

May you discover the peace and joy of the Enlightened mind in this lifetime.

May you be peaceful, may you be safe, may you be well, and may you be free of all discontentedness and the suffering it causes.

Invitation to Learn

I would like to invite you to a kind, compassionate and loving community of Practitioners to learn and grow with these Teachings.

I would like to invite you to join this online group.

You will find it to be an online learning center for these Teachings and there is a Teacher there to help provide guidance as you have questions.

Daily Wisdom - Walking The Path with The Buddha

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DailyWisdom999/>

Additional Learning

Visit BuddhaDailyWisdom.com where you will discover a full range of courses, retreats, and online learning resources to assist you on The Path to Enlightenment.

Donations for Learning

Learn The Teachings of Gotama Buddha that lead to a stable, calm, and peaceful mind. A more peaceful and loving world where all beings have care and compassion for each other.

By supporting this learning opportunity, you will learn how to progress along The Path to Enlightenment and help offer these Teachings to others through online and in-person learning. Through these Teachings, the world will become a kinder, more peaceful, and loving society.

Consider contributing \$5, \$10, \$15 or any amount you wish to help us continue to offer these Teachings to you and others around the world.

You can make a donation for the development and creation of these Teachings to help you and others using this link.

<https://www.buddhadailywisdom.com/supportbuddha>

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I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for the community of Ordained and Household Practitioners benefiting from the leadership of Venerable Bhikkhu Kukrit Sotthibalo at Wat Na Pah Pong in Krung Thep, Thailand for their dedication and diligence in sharing The Teachings of Gotama Buddha. Their work was the inspiration for “The Words of The Buddha” book series.

Wat Na Pah Pong

<http://watnapp.com>

THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

The Path to Enlightenment Revealing The Hidden

Volume 1

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Volume 2

Walking The Path with The Buddha

Volume 3

Foundation in The Teachings

Volume 4

Exploring The Path to Enlightenment

Volume 5

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(Stream-Enterer)

Volume 6

The Natural Law of Kamma

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