

Foundation Series on Buddhist Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation (TWIM)
As taught by
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the Gift of Dhamma is Priceless!

Sep 7, 2010, Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center, Annapolis, MO

Training → 2010-FS-13- What is CLINGING?

Q: You have been away for awhile.

A: Yes. It's been a challenging summer Rains Retreat. New adjustments to having more people helping on the land and the challenge of finishing the very first new year round large building at the same time as supporting the summer program.

Q: Oh Good.

A: What about you “Q”? How is it going now with your meditation practice?

Q: I have been attempting to keep the practice going, as you recommended, all the time. I've been observing what's going on in my mind even at work during my days. It's getting very interesting.

A: What's happening? How long are you staying on your object of meditation before mind's attention gets pulled away?

Q: About 4-5 minutes now.

A: Good. What do you do when the attention gets pulled away?

Q: I run the cycle of Right Effort using the 6R's and the result is more living in harmony, in my opinion. I can notice the release of tension now and the lightening of mind with the release /relax steps and I notice the drop that happens into a deeper level.

My mind lightens up considerably when I smile on the return step. Also, I'm beginning to realize the little energy jerk you talked about concerning CRAVING just as it begins. But there is much more happening too.

A: That's right “Q”. There's still more.

Last time we mentioned CLINGING slightly. I told you that CLINGING comes in right away following the point where CRAVING hits.

Remember I told you that the usual way of describing CRAVING is to say that it always manifests as tension and tightness in mind and in body? I said that **it is the “T” like it or “T” don't like it mind first appearing just after a pleasant or painful feeling arises.** Remember that? Immediately following this, the link of CLINGING dives into a story in your mind about “WHY” I LIKE IT or WHY I DON'T LIKE IT.

Q: How does that happen?

A: Each time you run a story in your mind about all the ideas, concepts, opinions, assumptions, and imagination about “WHY” you like or dislike something. this is CLINGING in action and when it hits, the tension and tightness progressively increases.

CLINGING moves us further along the line of human cognition from FEELING towards our personal reactions revealing themselves in the form of played out emotional states. Emotions are not FEELINGS. They arise further down the line of cognition. They surface like a flower blooming out of a bud. Emotions arise within a substructure of CRAVING and CLINGING.

Feeling is impersonal. It is always one of three things: Pleasant, Painful, or Neutral. Emotions, on the other hand, are descriptive states of mind like anger, anxiety, sadness, panic, fear, depression, grief and the like. In order for these states of mind to exist, one must first like or dislike a feeling and then expand this into ideas, imagination, concepts and so forth. This is where we get into trouble because we identify with these stories as they were ourselves. We take them personally.

Q: How can we observe this clinging?

A: Recently a student sent me an example of being bitten by CRAVING and CLINGING. He witnessed first hand how fast CLINGING can overwhelm a person. During the event he noticed how CRAVING hit him and how CLINGING expanded into a very personal matter. Because he was enlightened by some new training knowledge, he was able to STOP and choose a new response in this situation that involved Generosity. By permission, I am relaying this for you to see now.

Dear Rev. sister Khema,

Resolved early this morning: One of my first acts of renunciation needs to be giving up "I" as the center of the universe.

Deliberate generosity of spirit in thought, word, and deed is something new for me. Later this morning I had a big opportunity to use loving kindness:

As my wife and I were crossing a side street, a car stopped to let us get to the other side; but the van behind the car was not so generous. The driver in the van wanted to continue going on the avenue road, but had been forced to wait for the car to let us pass [walking across the street].

After we safely reached the curb, the car made the turn into the side street, and the van could proceed forward; but not before the driver of the van yelled an obscenity at the top of his lungs. It was no doubt intended for the car's driver, but I was so shocked that I got angry at the van's driver. I stopped and looked at the van as it drove away. At that moment, if it were in my power, I would have punished that person. I had taken everything personally!

A few minutes later, when I realized what was going on in my mind, and felt the suffering I had created for myself arising, [the tension and tightness] I began to send thoughts of loving kindness to the van driver. I did so for awhile, because the van's driver is also suffering.

Forgetting to take "I" out of the equation is not being mindful and also dangerous [for my own mental and physical health].

Loving Kindness Meditation is my path. Following the breath may come later. But opening the heart, based on what you've written, is an essential first step to opening the mind.

Wishing you a nice weekend, metta, and lots of smiles, E.K.

Q: WOW! He did uncover the very nature of altruism here! What a good lesson, eh?

A: Exactly. This proves that with only a little new knowledge about how things work, things can begin to change.

This is what I mean when I talk to you about bringing the Buddhist Teaching home. Taking the practice into life is essential to seeing the magical changes that can happen. I was very proud about how this particular student woke up just by applying the first few installments of this training and acting through a different perspective.

Q: So CRAVING and CLINGING, if recognized early enough, can be the difference between the reaction of a lion or a lamb?

A: You bet it can.

This is why our Abbot and teacher persistently points out to us that we need to understand *Buddhism is about CHANGE*. Sometimes you have to be brave enough to take a deep look into what the heart of your own particular craving is. The student must dare to open the gateway into mind and let out all the garbage behind it that, up until now, has barred the way to uncovering a pure mind state. Experiencing pure mind offers us a great space for creative peaceful responses to occur rather than reactions.

By committing to the practice of meditation to development of our observation skill we will uncover where pure mind is and how powerful it can become by following the instructions of the Buddha. It takes courage, commitment and determination to do this. Although the instructions are simple, because of old habits, it isn't always easy to follow through. It takes patience.

Q: When a painful feeling comes up, it is just "A" FEELING and not "ME". It is not MINE. It is not MY SELF. It is just A FEELING. Right?

A: Yes. When the energy of CRAVING hits, personality jumps in with the "I don't like it" mind. All progress stops!

Then CLINGING jumps in and mind runs a story about WHY you don't like it. At that point you are off to the races and you are not meditating anymore. Instead, you are thinking and analyzing! See?

Q: So to reach the greatest calm, what should be done is running the 6R's as soon as the tension is noticed. LET GO, run the cycle and keep it going?

A: Right. Keep the wholesome attention on the meditation object going. As you do this, just notice how things are happening. Don't get involved, just notice.

Q: But don't ARISING phenomena have information for you about enlightenment that you need to investigate?

A: NO. Actually they don't.

What is most important is seeing "HOW" did this phenomena arise and HOW did this tension and tightness arise, and, "HOW" can it be released. That is the vital question. HOW does this happen? That is what this Harmonious Practice is training you to realize and mind realizes how all this works, it will eventually release automatically. You are learning to replace an unwholesome tendency with a new wholesome tendency that will eventually set you free.

Q: I heard once that "the truth will set you free".

A: Apparently the Buddha understood this too. Haha. That is very well aligned "Q".

The Buddha tried many routes to reach the cessation of Suffering. On the night of his enlightenment he found a direct route into Release so that Joy, Tranquility and Happiness could arise after letting go of all tension and

tightness in mind and in body.

During his 45 years of teaching it's true he did offer over 50 objects of meditation to various people to use during training. However all of those objects were used as balancing points while traveling down the same route to experience this cessation of suffering through complete understanding of what suffering is, what the cause of it is, what cessation looks like, and how to reach a state of cessation of suffering.

In the end, when examined closely, all meditation objects are used to reach the same goal, that is, the waking up and Liberation of the Mind. This liberation (**vimutti**) occurs because of Knowledge and Vision (knowing by seeing) which then develops into Knowledge and Wisdom (that is the higher knowledge by seeing and understanding this Impersonal Process of Dependent Origination, the Four Noble Truths and the Three Characteristics of ALL Existence in a nutshell along with their inter-relationship).

Wisdom (**panna**- pronounced pan-ya~n~a) means 'seeing clearly this impersonal process of Dependent Origination as it is going on beginning with seeing it happen during phenomenological events in life.

To be wise means to recognize this process and to thoroughly understand of the Four Noble Truths as they occur within it too.

Q: When will we be learning all the links that are in this impersonal process?

A; Ah! Even though you may not realize it yet "Q", you have touched on several of the links in this process already. <grin>

Thus far, you have learned something about 9 of the links of the Impersonal Process of Dependent Origination. They have sometimes been presented to you within other contexts outside of D.O. Sneaky, huh?

They are:

- 1. IGNORANCE (avijja) meaning here, no knowledge of the FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS, D.O. and the Three Characteristics of Existence;**
- 2. FORMATIONS which occur as mental, verbal or bodily formations (SANKHARA);**
- 3. CONSCIOUSNESS (VINNANA);**
- 4. MENTALITY/MATERIALITY (NAMA-RUPA);**
- 5. SIX SENSE DOORS (SALAYATANA);**
- 6. CONTACT (PHASSA) ;**
- 7. FEELING (VEDANA) ;**
- 8. CRAVING (TANHA) ; AND**
- 9. CLINGING (UPADANA);**

(Please note: So far, if I missed any of these in detail, they will be covered in the prime lesson on this process later on)

In brief, we have touched on **FORMATIONS** as being mental, verbal, or bodily in nature. Each of us has **CONSCIOUSNESS** which allows mental awareness of what is going on in our existence to operate. For our purposes here, **MENTALITY/MATERIALITY** involves the material sense door, the actual eye for instance, and that sense door's mental process such as the eye's mental process involved in actually seeing a sight. The **SIX SENSE-DOOR BASE** includes the internal doors of the physical Eyes, Ears, Nose, Tongue, and Body, and the internal sense door is MIND. The external part of the sense doors means the sights, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles and the mind objects realized by the physical doors. **CONTACT** arises when any sense door meets with it's own sense door's object, and that sense door's consciousness arises; the meeting of these three is that sense door's contact. With contact as condition, **FEELING** arises and appears as being impersonally pleasant, painful or neutral. With feeling as condition, **CRAVING** arises, which manifests as arising tension

and tightness in mind and in body and appears as the “I like it” or “I don’t like it” mind. With craving as condition, **CLINGING** arises, which jumps further into the personal nature of attachment or aversion and increases the grasping symptom first felt at craving.

Q: how does this play out in life?

A: An example of this would be how a meditator moves into CRAVING and CLINGING via the EYE sense door.

- The EYE impersonally meets COLOR and FORM and EYE CONSCIOUSNESS arises.
- The meeting of these three is EYE CONTACT.
- With EYE-CONTACT as condition, EYE-CRAVING arises;
- With EYE-CRAVING as condition, CLINGING arises and so forth on down the line of cognition...

- This happens in the very same way in reference with each of the sense doors.
(refer to MN-38:19 &20
(We have not covered all of this line of cognition just yet. Sit tight! <grin> it’s coming up.)

Q: So, CLINGING puts more energy into this line of human cognition, into personally grasping and the idea of personal attachment and it keeps this going stronger then just the initial jumpstart with CRAVING, right?

A: Right. CLINGING is an expansion of the initial tension and tightness first caused by CRAVING.

Q: So where does this go next?

A: It moves on to the HABITUAL TENDENCY link (bhava) which is what we will look at next. This link will show us why we really are not as alive as we were when we were young. It will show us where we get caught up in re-acting instead of responding. It can be a trigger source for war on any level too if it not recognized and dealt with properly

Metta and smiles,
Rev. Sister Khema

Next installment: **2010- FS- Training 14: “What is HABITUAL TENDENCY link?”**

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brought to you by
United International Buddha Dhamma Society (UIBDS)
Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center (DSMC), 8218 County Road 204, Annapolis, Missouri 63620
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2,317 words in full / 2,332 article words by sk